

The Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process

13-15 APRIL, 2007 | YEREVAN, ARMENIA



Conference Proceedings



The Role
of NGOs in the
**Public Policy
Process**

C o n f e r e n c e

2007

Dear Colleague:

Counterpart International's Civic Advocacy Support Program (CASP), generously supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), held the National Conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process in the Spring of 2007. It was an unprecedented event for Armenia's civil society actors. The participants explored the most pressing challenges, reviewed best practices, and gained new insight into lessons learned from Armenian and international practitioners and experts of civic advocacy.

The three day conference took place in Yerevan, Armenia, at the American University of Armenia, in April 13-15, 2007. Four-hundred representatives of the NGO, government, business and media sectors, including experts from all 11 marzes of Armenia and 6 different countries, convened for the opportunity to exchange advocacy experiences and successes of NGOs. Participants took part in workshops and skills academies in advocacy and related topics, as well as panel discussions on NGO cooperation with government, media, and within the NGO sector itself.

This publication is a compilation of all of the proceedings of the conference, comprising the following two general sections:

- 1) A comprehensive collection of transcripts of discussions that took place during the workshops, panels, and debates
- 2) The supporting handouts, presentations, and materials provided by presenters.

In addition, the publication contains biographical information on the speakers/presenters and moderators, as well as local and international experts.

Finally, the last section contains a list of all the civil society organizations that have been supported by Counterpart under CASP, and were represented at the Conference Advocacy Expo.

This publication is available in both Armenian and English as a comprehensive resource for civil society practitioners and advocacy organizations, and is accessible through the CASP website.

We hope that you will find this resource publication both informative and useful in your work.

Sincerely,



Arlene Lear

Senior Vice President
Counterpart International



Alex Sardar

Country Team Leader
Counterpart International,
Armenia

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Key to using this book

The 4 tracks will be colored accordingly:

- Track A - orange
- Track B - peach
- Track C - green
- Track D - blue

 - handout

 - powerpoint presentation

Additional documents disseminated and/or used during the conference can be found at www.counterpart.am.

Counterpart International- Armenia would like to thank its co-sponsors: the American University of Armenia, Goris Teachers Union, NGO Center Vanadzor Branch, the Civic Development and Partnership Foundation, experts and presenters, all participating NGOs, the numerous volunteers, and Counterpart colleagues from Washington, DC and around the world for their important contribution to this conference.

List of Abbreviations

CI	Counterpart International
CASP	Civic Advocacy Support Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Project
NA	National Assembly
IREX	International Research & Exchanges Board
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
ISO	Intermediary Service Organization
MP	Member of Parliament
GIS	Geographic Information System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
GUM/GTU	Goris Teachers Union
GONGO	Government-operated Non-governmental Organization

National Conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process

The USAID Civic Advocacy Support Program (CASP), implemented by Counterpart International will hold the National Conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process April 13-15, 2007 at the American University of Armenia to facilitate the exchange of advocacy experiences and successes of Armenian NGOs with various levels of government, provide three days of workshops and skills academies in advocacy and related topics, hold panel discussions on NGO cooperation with government, media, and within the NGO sector itself.

Participants of this three-day gathering will explore together the most pressing challenges, review successful cases, and gain new insight into lessons learned from Armenian and international practitioners and experts. Conference participants will engage in substantive discussions and skill building in the following four thematic areas.

1. **Government - NGO Relations:** Systems approach to the public policy process
2. **Business - NGO Relations:** New frontier in sustainability and development
3. **Citizens/Community - NGO Relations:** With the people, for the people
4. **Media - NGO Relations:** Redefining interaction for the public interest

CASP will support the participation of a wide array of Armenian NGOs from all over Armenia. Additionally, representatives from local, regional, and national government, regional and national print and broadcast media, the business sector, as well as international donor organizations will be invited to participate in the panel discussions that will anchor the three-day event and will contribute to specific outcomes from the conference.

The conference will also bring together a variety of practitioners and trainers to conduct workshops, including targeted skill-building sessions for a limited number of participants. Trainers and experts will come from Armenia, as well as abroad, including the United States and Central Asia, where advocacy projects and campaigns have been undertaken with Counterpart International's support.

The flagship public event of the conference will be an exposition of Armenian NGOs' advocacy campaigns and activities, featuring their impact and successes over the preceding two years. This exposition will also provide for an interactive forum for the exchange of lessons learned, successes and challenges, and general experiences in conducting advocacy work in Armenia.

Conference Opening

Plenary Session

Ms. Yulia Ghazaryan, Counterpart International

Opening Speech

Ladies and gentlemen, honorable guests, distinguished representatives of the Government and National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, non-governmental organizations, international community, and mass media;

I have the honor of welcoming you on behalf of the organizers of this conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process, the staff of Counterpart International, our partners providing services to non-governmental organizations as well as the American University in Armenia.

The main goal of the conference is to provide assistance to the local NGO capacity building in the public policy process and the discussion of the opportunities and challenges of advocacy initiatives in Armenia.

It is appropriate to mention that we will try to accomplish this goal in three key ways:

- In the first place, by sharing the practice and success of advocacy activities implemented by both international experts and Armenian NGOs;
- Secondly, by engaging in a three-day workshop and seminar for developing skills on advocacy-related topics;
- Further, by organizing expert discussions on cooperation between the NGO sector, the government, and the mass media.

Hence, during this comprehensive three-day conference we will endeavor to:

- Identify the most urgent challenges in the field of advocacy;
- Study the best practices;
- Discuss new ideas from lessons learned by field professionals and experts in both Armenia and abroad.

The discussions within the conference will be broken into four tracks:

1. **Government - NGO** relations;
2. **Business - NGO** relations;
3. **Community - NGO** relations;
4. **Mass media - NGO** relations.

We are hopeful that we will enjoy interesting and promising discussions during this three-day conference, as well as exchange the best practices between regional, national, and international NGOs. We are convinced that this unique conference will produce contemporary practical recommendations, in particular for:

- Promoting new opportunities in relations between businesses and NGOs;
- Exploring new horizons in relations between the government and NGOs

and in cooperation between mass media and NGOs;

➊ Improving public participation in civic development and democratic processes.

This conference is an unprecedented and unique event in the 15-year history of the Armenian NGO sector. Interestingly, it is an exceptional opportunity for representatives of NGOs from all regions of Armenia to convene and look for more effective ways of cooperation with the government, business community, and mass media for the benefit of the civil society of the Republic of Armenia.

In the course of the forthcoming meetings you will listen to a number of expert presentations. You will have the opportunity to take part in topic discussions, as well as in seminars aimed at identifying more effective approaches to local and nationwide advocacy activities.

A significant event of the conference will be Counterpart International's expo of the advocacy campaigns conducted by Armenian NGOs, which will open at 17:30 p.m., exhibiting the outcomes and achievements of their advocacy programs of the previous two years.

The expo itself will be an interactive forum for exchange of the lessons learned, successes and challenges, as well as the best practices by Counterpart International's grantee NGOs involved in the public policy process in Armenia.

On the second day of the conference, a number of videos made in the framework of local and nationwide advocacy campaigns of Armenian NGOs will be shown alongside the discussions.

In the evening of the same day we will enjoy the performance of Armenia State Song and Dance Ensemble named after Tatoul Altounyan dedicated to this unprecedented event.

And finally, the conference will close with a ceremonial plenary sitting, which will conclude our three-day joint mission, its outcomes, contemporary problems, their solutions and recommendations.

Afterwards, in a closing reception we will celebrate our joint accomplishments from the conference.

With your permission, I would like to extend our profound gratitude to the United States Development Agency for funding this conference, Counterpart International's partners providing services to NGOs, as well as the American University in Armenia for all their support.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the staff of Counterpart International and its army of volunteers for all their painstaking work and devotion, which made this conference possible.

We wish all of us fruitful work and good luck.

Mr. Seyran Avagyan, Advisor to the RA President

Good afternoon! With your permission I would like to welcome everybody here on the opening of this conference. Judging from the agenda I have seen, we can look forward to productive work while the questions included in your agenda prompt me that this is an exceptionally good opportunity for us to try and assess the path taken by Armenian NGOs, their achievements and outcomes, as well as to assess the current situation and define where we are going and what should be our steps for the future.

For a moment, while I was going through the agenda, which included the topic of the relations between NGOs and the government, NGOs and the business community, NGOs and mass media and NGOs and the community, in my mind I saw the future in 15-16 years from now. I also tried to refresh my memory and remembered that in Armenia we started everything by founding an NGO. Some 16-17 years ago, a hundred thousand people convened in front of the government building and demanded that the government register an NGO. That was not an easy success, but we managed to have the organization registered. Today, when we speak about the business community in our country, and by the way this is a new concept, it would be remiss of me not

to mention that this community, the business community, emerged on the basis of this NGO.

When we speak about our relationship with the government or government structures, again I would like to remind you, that everything started from this NGO.

The same is true of mass media. We used to have only one television and one radio station. Thank God, the situation is completely different in Armenia today. This different situation is again the product of this NGO, which turned out to be very fruitful and active.

This means that when people hit the road in Armenia, showed will and decided to build a new society, we started this job with an NGO.

The role of the Armenian NGOs along the path of our achievements has been invaluable. We haven't forgotten about that. On the contrary, we remember that very well and this is probably the main reason why the relations between NGOs and the state have been so fruitful and efficient, and thus we have come to where we are now.

But, as they say, this is just the beginning. The excellent beginning from which we anticipate an important and effective outcome for Armenia in the nearest future.

So, I would like to extend my gratitude to the organizers of this conference and to those NGOs which supported this initiative. I think that today this can act as an incentive for us to use our role - the role of the NGO structures - for the benefit of our country, for building a new society and a new life in this country through cooperation, through our poise and our work. We should not renounce our goals and the dreams we had some 15 years ago when we were setting the foundation of the Armenian Republic. I thank you all once again and wish you success in your work. Thank you!

Anthony Godfrey, Charge d'Affairs of US Embassy in Armenia

Thank you very much. First, it's great to be here in the American University of Armenia and Dr. Lucig Danielian, thank you for allowing us to have this conference here, it's a great pleasure.

The conference has brought together over three hundred participants representing the most active and vibrant groups of Armenian society, here to share with one another their successes and their challenges in advocacy work.

My government has been supporting Armenian NGO advocacy efforts since 2004. By this time, I think I have met many people here in this audience and it's great to see so many of you here. But over the course of this five year project, more than \$4 million in grants will be distributed to Armenian civil society organizations, and we very much appreciate the work of Counterpart International represented here today and we look forward to continuing this cooperation together. These grants support the community based initiatives, as access to education for disabled children, community healthcare concerns, environmental protection, education programs, and transparency of decision making in local communities. These programs also support national legislative issues, such as the rights of journalists, consumer protection, correction, and effective application of laws which affect the mentally disabled. Promotion of the interests and rights of the small and medium size entrepreneurs, and in their efforts Armenian NGOs have partnered with all levels of government, and this is something that the representative from the President's office was talking about with the levels of government. Together, they addressed their concerns, that touched the core of their communities, and at times they very successfully found solutions in working together with their political leaders.

More recently, Armenian NGOs have become increasingly active in the electoral process, by raising the awareness of citizens, both about the electoral process itself and about the rights and responsibilities of individual citizens before, during and after elections. Such activism in the electoral process is both encouraging and welcome. But it's not enough for NGOs to serve as watchdogs only during election periods. The true challenge for all of Armenian civil society is to work continuously within their communities and with their constituents to ensure that citizens are ever more closely linked to their government, that they are part of the policy process and that the results and

outcomes of the process are enhanced from all concerned.

So, I would wish you all the best during this conference, and I'm confident that it will serve you all very well, and I thank you for your attention.

Alex Sardar, Counterpart International

Honored guests, NGO colleagues, Ladies and Gentleman:

On behalf of Counterpart International, and our institutional partners at this Conference the American University of Armenia, the NGO Center Vanadzor Branch, the Civic Development and Partnership Foundation, and the Goris Teachers Union, let me once again welcome you to what we know to be an exciting and unprecedented gathering here in Yerevan over the next three days.

The Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process - Conference 2007, which is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is anchored in a straightforward principle:

We believe that for the public policy process to be effective, need-driven, and transparent, it is incumbent upon NGOs involved in supporting and advocating for communities and citizens in Armenia to proactively and innovatively partner with decision makers, the media, the business sector, other NGOs and most importantly with citizens of this country-those very people to whom NGOs are most accountable-to ensure that the process is constructive and that the core values of NGOs, as representatives and intermediaries between communities and decision makers, contribute to the debate and dialogue-unlike the contribution of any other participant in that process.

Armenia's advocacy and NGO community is fortunate in that they are the heirs of a grand tradition deeply rooted in participatory policy making and advocacy.

Whether we look at the unparalleled contributions in the 12th Century by Mkhitar Gosh to enabling and initiating the practice of advocacy, or the results of advocacy efforts in the first independent republic of Armenia, when Armenian women won the right to vote, well before many developed nations, or whether we exemplify the environmental movement in the late 1980's which advocated for the closing of the Nairit Chemical Plant, and which later led to the independence movement, it is clear that Armenian citizens and NGOs have a distinct blueprint of advocacy processes and successes.

When we turn the page to more recent Armenian history, we see that valued-added and constructive engagement in the policy process has resulted in great successes as well. Some notable examples that come to mind are street ramps for wheelchairs in Yerevan as the results of Astghik NGO's diligent advocacy efforts, improved social services in Vanadzor through social contracting, advocated for by a number of NGOs, including Lusastgh, Liyar, and the NGO Center, the revision of a strict military-draft bill for university-aged men by a coalition of advocacy groups, participatory student council provisions in schools made possible by the Goris Teachers Union.

So, participation in policy making is neither a new concept nor impossibility in Armenia. In fact, it's quite the opposite-real possibilities have opened up and significant change has taken place because of the efforts of Armenian NGOs.

Therefore, over the next three days it is not the basic principles of advocacy that we want to discuss. Rather, it is the next phase; the more sophisticated and constructive stage and practices in advocacy that we hope will be the subject of our conversation and our common learning process.

We look forward to talking to business leaders about their thinking and their approach in supporting social causes, not only on an ad-hoc basis, but on a systemic, ongoing basis.

We want to hear from colleagues in media organizations as to what NGOs can do more and better of, to ensure that the media's and NGOs' missions of mirroring society and intermediating between different sectors of society are served properly. And we want to share with media representatives our expectations and perceptions of their work.

We want to discuss what it is that Armenian government leaders, decision makers in the executive and legislative branches of government expect from advocacy NGOs and what it is that they would like to see and what NGOs can do in strengthening the fledgling partnership that now exists.

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Finally, we want to be constructively self-critical, and better understand NGOs' responsibilities and accountability to the communities they serve and represent. It is high time that NGOs begin looking at partnerships among themselves as not only a luxury or a donor-driven necessity, but a grounded and strategic must, in order to serve their missions more effectively.

At the end of these three days-after we have talked, learned, seen examples of successful advocacy in Armenia at the expo, and watched Armenian advocacy films at the film festival-we will reconvene in the closing plenary to hear about the recommendations each one of us and collectively want to make, so that the next decade of NGO development and public policy work, mirrors and exponentially surpasses the value, contribution and strength of partnership that we have seen in centuries of this nation's history.

This Conference, we expect, is the continuation of a proud tradition, and the beginning of a new era of constructive engagement for Armenia's citizens and policy making community.

In that spirit, I welcome you to Yerevan and to YOUR conference.

Track **A**

NGO-Government Relations: Systems Approach to the Public Policy Process

Conference: The National Conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process is a three-day gathering of Armenian NGOs, representatives of government, media, and business to explore together the most pressing challenges, review best cases, and gain new insight into lessons learned from Armenian and international practitioners and experts. Conference participants will engage in substantive discussions and skill building in the following four thematic areas:

1. **Government - NGO Relations:** Systems approach to the public policy process
2. **Business - NGO Relations:** New frontiers in sustainability and development
3. **Citizens/Community - NGO Relations:** With the people, for the people
4. **Media - NGO Relations:** Redefining interaction for the public interest

Track A Discussion Framework:

Civil society is the commonly used term referring to the grouping of formal and non-formal organizations that are voluntary in nature and pursue to address the interests of members and constituents (wider public). These organizations are independent from state control. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) comprise the most substantial sector of civil society. The state, from the other side, is in charge of ensuring rule of law, a benevolent policy environment, and protection of minority groups and the vulnerable. While implementing its essential functions, the state and its institutions deal with a large number of commercial and nonprofit entities. Even if NGOs are important actors per se, they are not a "system on their own" operating in a vacuum, but are part of a wider environment. Dialogue between the two, and a non-economic "supply-demand" relationship born out of their inherent roles is essential for the maintenance of a participatory, pluralistic, and democratic system of governance.

As communities undertake their own forms of transition and transformation into more systemic and developed representative democracies, citizens' full participation in public policy formulation is one of the fundamental grounds on which an accountable and truly representative government can be sustained. Citizens demand more accountability and transparency from their governments and the opportunity to participate in the formulation of public policies that have an immediate impact on their lives, and governments engage citizens in the decision making process, as full partners as well as potential beneficiaries of those decisions. In turn NGOs, help to build social capital, trust, and shared values, which are transferred into the political sphere, facilitating an understanding of the interconnectedness of interests within a community.

Armenia Context:

The Armenian NGO sector began developing in response to humanitarian need during the collapse of the Soviet Union and in the early years of independence. The sector has flourished through private and public, financial and expert assistance over the last 12 years, and in 2006 the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia reported the registration of more than 4,000 public organizations (NGOs) in the country. Most public organizations in Armenia interact with state institutions and agencies in the course of their regular activities. NGO activists and practitioners, including Counterpart International, have observed that NGOs who focus on delivery of services are actively engaged with various levels of the Armenian government apparatus (including the national parliament and local government bodies) and most look to develop this collaboration into more sophisticated and systemic forms. NGOs engaged in policy making, democratic reform activities, and community mobilization processes also work with government institutions, though to a far lesser extent. In general, the latter category of collaboration is not systematic and proactive/continuous, but rather sporadic, and not always well-timed or of great substance.

The ability of NGOs to provide valuable, essential, and user-friendly expertise and to facilitate citizen involvement in the policy process is increasing, and sector-wide assistance programs are focused on exploring better mechanisms and models to increase the skills of NGOs to undertake such activities. Government agencies and institutions have dramatically reformed internal processes and infrastructure to better absorb NGO input, citizen correspondence, and collaboration mechanisms, and the focus in institutional reform efforts is on creating necessary systems for ongoing, proactive, and perpetual models of interaction with civil society and citizens in general. As a result, interaction between NGOs and the government varies from institution to institution and from individual to individual. A study of the Armenian NGO sector funded by USAID in 2004 identified this trend as well. Analysis from the report stated that, "...while some government officials reported active cooperation with NGOs...others simply do not understand what the role and functions of NGOs are."

The discussion on the further development of the current nature of NGO-Government relations in Armenia should revolve around the following broadly formulated topics:

- **Broader recognition in government of the benefits of cooperation:** Government agencies must be able to see the tangible benefits (i.e.: human and political capital, service provision opportunities, etc.) of cooperation in order to continue building on the current relationship. This relates not only to service provision by NGOs but also their involvement in policy and decision making processes.
- **Strengthening appropriate capacity and format of NGO input:** NGOs must continue building on their considerable capacity in policy formulation from a fact-based, value-added, and representative (of constituent needs) perspective. At the same time NGOs need to balance their role as advocates with their function in partnering with government agencies, by clearly and consistently generating constituent backing and maintaining those constituents' mandate for their activities.
- **Further bolstering systemic mechanisms for interaction:** Beyond the preparedness and willingness to interact and build on the current relationship between government and NGOs, institutional systems for the absorption of input must be further strengthened, and NGOs must continue to proactively assist in the development of such mechanisms within state institutions.

Track **A**

NGO-Government Relations:

**Systems Approach to the
Public Policy Process**

**Challenges and Opportunities in
Government-NGO Relations**

13 April 2007

Amalya Kostanyan. moderator, Transparency International Armenia, President

I am happy to welcome you to this working session, which is focused, in my opinion, on the most important topic: relations between civil society representatives and the government. I represent an NGO, which is the representative of an international organization in Armenia. I can say that the area we are dealing with is perhaps the least favorable in terms of cooperation with the authorities, as it is to fight against corruption. However, I am confident that even in this challenging area there are possibilities for cooperation. I am very glad to greet you all here and our speakers, at least two of whom have experience working in the state governance sector as well as experience in working at international organizations in the public sector.

Let me present the agenda. We will have four presentations, twenty-five minutes each, followed by question-and-answer sessions and discussions. As you know, we are trying to create equal conditions. Today's event is a campaign, and we are intent on creating equal conditions. Let us try to achieve this today. I am pleased to give the floor to Mr. Levon Mkrtychyan, who will deliver his presentation and I guess he is the only presenter whom I have not personally met before. Of course, we are all aware of both his and his party's activities, and it will be very interesting to hear his presentation.

Levon Mkrtychyan. Minister of Education and Sciences of the Republic of Armenia

Topic: *Challenges of the government in working with NGOs in the legislative process*

Thank you very much for inviting me to participate in this conference. First, before I proceed to my presentation, I will explain what advantages I have in this respect, due to circumstances. I have been in politics since 1990, and I have had an opportunity to work both in a political party and for an NGO, at the National Assembly and the government, both on international and local issues. Therefore, I appreciate the intense urgency of this conference and its thematic divisions. This is urgent and important in the sense that, after all, on our way to building a civil society in Armenia we have come to a watershed, and the time that is available for shaping the country is drawing close to a stage where a decisive choice of clearly defined directions should be made, and it is also with this choice that the future of any given country is predicated. In terms of political orientation, we may adopt strategic directions, for example, European integration or endorsement of democratic values, however after these strategic directions are chosen, and when issues are being segmented, a range of various

issues arise. It is extremely perilous for newly-independent countries to construct a building, in this particular case, implement reforms in the education sector and not be able to fill the space with relevant content. This is a most difficult challenge to tackle. We have gone through a requisite stage, that of legal, governance, executive, legislative and judicial reform. As for government-civil society relations, the building in Armenia has been erected. The overall model and layout of the building, the legislative pillars supporting the model, as well as the budget, economic, cultural, education and healthcare policies, on the whole, meet international standards; and we are making progress apace with these standards as a country committed to a European value system and building a state conforming to it. Nonetheless, we have now reached a watershed where we have to overcome the most difficult challenge. For what we had been doing thus far was the visible part. In this visible stage, we could use international experience, obtain assistance from international organizations, and so on. Still, everyone should shoulder his or her share of responsibility as far as the content is concerned. And this share of responsibility requires, not so much formal but rather, content-based approaches. This is the frontline of the issue, that it would be desirable for this conference to make headway on fueling an honest discussion.

First of all, we need to understand what public policy involves, what involvement by NGOs in the governance system entails, what vision should be the rallying point for NGOs, what course of action and work ethic they should adopt to wield influence in the society, how much leeway the government should give to the rights of these organizations, and to what extent their stance should be taken into account when undertaking hands-on actions. In this legal framework, how much quality do NGOs bring to the law-making process and do positive or negative results ensue from their intervention? This is the array of questions that compels each one of us to improve the quality of our work. I will reflect on the activities of the government.

I would also like to see qualitative improvements in the endless list of NGOs. That is to say, a certain set of qualitative standards should be established for NGOs, so that the value of NGOs and public initiative does not erode in the society. For example, we should demand that NGOs be established on the basis of an objective and then set out searching for grants, and not the other way round. We ought to demand that NGOs truly rely on public support and understanding in conducting their activities, that they have a stable support base so that they can wield the influence of this base to put pressure on both the executive and legislative branches to take their position into account; so that they rally together and are able to work on a key problem, which is needed to change our traditional perceptions, for the changes introduced in recent years are only a starting point. Transformation of the traditional veneration of the seventy-year-old system based on management of thinking requires decades of consistent work, and this specifically refers to the governance sector. Situated at the crossroads of the East and the West, Armenia is a fusion of both. And it is this fusion that has found its reflection in the governance system. From the viewpoint of the governance system, two systems are also at variance: on the one hand, the traditional, centralized, pyramid-shaped governance system, which we have gotten used to and with which we are familiar, which has molded itself into a tradition, and on the other hand, the decentralized governance system. We should try to counterbalance the principles of each area and to govern the system and the society through these checks and balances. And we must learn to respect the rights of minorities and each individual. To achieve this goal, we need to define target-oriented issues. And the most significant progress in recent years in this direction has been the introduction of program budgeting into the budgetary policy. This is because once NGOs start working on specific programs or towards specific goals, their utility coefficient immediately goes on the ascent.

It is very important for NGOs to have a clear grasp of the state policy in their specific sectors, both at the executive and legislative levels. And the budget is the ABC of these policies. The more programmed the budget is, the easier it is to raise public awareness, encourage public involvement, and wield pressure. Unfortunately, even at the ministries, a considerable segment of the second echelon staff is not fully familiar

with the budget, and a part of the leading specialists have a limited role and do not have an understanding of the larger issue at stake or what objective their share of work is meant to serve. This is a serious obstacle as, after all, each ministry or NA committee is a group of supporters or adherents rallied around a shared goal, where each of the members fulfills his or her tasks. And if the team members do not have an understanding of the goal their activities are targeted at, or are meant to serve, then in that case the notion of a team is not valid. And the given area is found to be lacking in a target-setting benchmark, towards which the executive or legislative bodies governing the policy in that sector should have been working. And it is at this juncture that the NGOs can play a very big role and help the system.

Since a staff member working in the executive branch is a bureaucrat, in a positive or negative sense, and each of them is dealing with relevant activities in progress, he or she has a post passport and acts within the limits of the latter; he or she has his or her own share of responsibility. And it is vital to have several authoritative forces representing the opinion of the public in this system from the outside, which will compel the executive branch, when solving problems, to always be aware of the fact that these problems are to be tackled in pursuit of a specific goal. For example, here we talked about corruption risks. It is very difficult to fight against corruption based on specific cases only or through punitive measures. One of the best ways to combat corruption is that each area and every constituent sector of that area should have its defined objectives and the problems setting the course for where to start and which way to go. And these issues should be open to public criticism and support. In setting up such a framework and in building the policies on the basis of this framework, we will accomplish a civil society, as it is not possible to build a civil society through either decrees or administrative actions. For example, on the path of introducing reforms in tertiary education, we are now making a fast transition to the credit system, a three-step framework, i.e. we are bringing the building into shape, more or less, through administrative means. But we do face a formidable challenge when we start working with our professors at the chairs, and they should understand that they must change the qualitative content of teaching and education and that they should move apace with at least the global average rate. And this refers not only to elderly people, but the way of thinking generally, and the endorsement of the new approach will not be achieved within one or two years. Just as the culture of Soviet education was formed and shaped in the course of decades, so to will the new culture. Thus, all of us, individually and also as NGOs, need to put forth not only criticism, but we also need to point out the gaps. We need to compel the NGOs to bring their vision, goals, public support, so that they can guide the direction of the force to be applied; this method has its opponents today but we do know that this is the right way. Therefore, a qualitatively new team of NGOs will be rallied around these problems, and at some stage it will be able to engage in lobbying. At the National Assembly, we think that if the law on lobbying is adopted, then a lobbying culture will develop in Armenia. Unfortunately, this is not so. Adoption of the law is a must; however, after the establishment of the relevant law, development of this culture depends on years of consistent work. If such conferences succeed in making the processes of rallying such organizations and transforming their potential into quality more targeted and programmed, the executive authorities will definitely benefit from this. Thank you. I did not spell out numerous gaps and shortcomings, which we can cover in our question-and-answer session.

Amalya Kostanyan, Thank you, Mr. Mkrtchyan. You were even more concise than the time allotted to you and I will not take advantage of my position as the moderator. But, I would like to make a very small comment, since this was the first presentation. I am very pleased that right in the first presentation, Mr. Mkrtchyan highlighted the common features, unequivocally negative, that both the government and society have today. First, I would like to refer to what you said about the need to formulate a goal and then start searching for grants. Regrettably, if we look at how our parties are

formed and how they operate, we will realize that we have shared weaknesses. Sadly, in many cases the parties do not have goals either. And neither do they have distinguishably different programs, and it is very difficult to tell these apart. Secondly, expertise and yes, I absolutely agree with you, knowledge is lacking on both sides. And both sides would agree that there is a lack of not only criticism but also support. We have no shortage of criticism, but no support. I very much want to refer to the law on lobbying, as we have lobbied against the adoption of the law on lobbying. Even though this was an effort to create a civilized lobbying institution, a number of NGOs engaged in advocacy rather than lobbying, were included in the law for some reason or another. And an attempt, perhaps non-intentional, was made to limit the role of NGOs and their ability to engage in such activities. I am very glad this law was brought to a standstill. We are ready to fight against this law, even after the elections, if it is submitted for parliamentary deliberations in the same format. Nevertheless, I think it is possible to claim that this was a successful example of a number of NGOs coming together and taking their viewpoint all the way to the president's staff itself and garnering support from there. And on this happy note, I want to once again thank you for your presentation. I'd better stop talking about corruption. And we give the floor to Ms. Eleanor Valentine, who worked in Armenia for several years; today, if I am not mistaken, she works in Pakistan. Ms. Valentine was the chief of party to a project directed at reforming the legislative body. Let us listen to Ms. Valentine. Her speech is going to be in English, so please put on the headphones.

Eleanor Valentine. Project Director, USAID-Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project

Topic: *Opportunities of parliament in working with NGOs in the policy making process*

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Amalya Kostanyan, Thank you, Ms. Valentine. I would like to stress that this presentation imbued me with, to a large extent, conflicting thoughts as having listened to all of this, I have personally been to parliaments of various countries and I have felt good-natured envy at the sight of open doors of any session throughout the working hours to any citizen and doors to committee sessions are open, too. And any pensioner or student is welcome to simply come and listen, even if for five minutes, to what is happening at the parliament. However, on the other hand, I would like all of us to be aware of the fact that all of these quite progressive and effective methods for cooperation are feasible only if we succeed in creating, and today it is a very current issue, a National Assembly made up of dedicated and cognizant members. And the guilt we ought to share with the authorities and all segments of the society, (the fact that today we, and our last survey showed just that, the electoral system is perceived by the people to be the most corrupt framework) is that we, the NGOs, think of elections one year before the elections, at best, and we start implementing some projects. However, we should launch such projects tomorrow so that within 4-5 years, we are able to form public opinion and engage in lobbying and wield pressure on the authorities, rather than wait until several months before the elections and then set an alarm when it is already too late. Although I think it is never too late. And Ms. Valentine mentioned benefits, this is a very interesting topic and Mr. Yesayan seems to be eager to reflect on this, as mutual benefits stem from any positive cooperation effort. Let us listen to Mr. Yesayan.

Ashot Yesayan. President, "Social Dialogue and Social Support" NGO

Topic: *Benefits of NGO-government partnership*

Thanks. Good morning Honorable Chairwoman, Your Excellency Mr. Minister, dear colleagues and guests. First of all, I am very pleased and honored that I have been asked to deliver a speech on this exceedingly important topic, on this key, or one might say extremely vital problem. Generally, thinkers accept society to be a unity of individuals endowed with consciousness and will. In each state, unification of individuals hinges on common interests. These interests may be divided into four categories: strategic, tactical, operational, and individual interests. To communicate the interests of individuals to the upper levels, these individuals should unite, that is to say, they need to have motivation. This motivation in itself is not a sufficiently compelling factor to fuel a dialogue. Generally, if we have recourse to the theoretical legal doctrine, it distinguishes between the government and the civil society. Nevertheless, today these are unified in civilized nations and thus, it is difficult to discern the dividing line between the government and the civil society. Symbiotic institutions have been formed. Most importantly, we truly want our society, our government to have these structures facilitating a dialogue, and to have a framework in place that runs so smoothly as to enable us to take our problems to individuals and organizations that have the authority and capacity to tackle them. What should we do? First of all, we need to admit, despite all the negative things that have been said, that in recent years a sufficient amount of work has been accomplished in developing legislation. That is to say, on the one hand, the legal framework providing for a civil society has been established, a law on non-governmental organizations has been created, laws on charity, foundations, freedom of information have been adopted; on the other hand, an attempt has been made to scope out the functions to be performed by officials, civil servants, police and prosecutor's services have been introduced and so on. In my opinion, it is the mid-level, rather than top level officials, that create the most obstacles impeding the consolidation of this dialogue. What should we do about this? In my opinion, we are missing a very important law, which will be entitled the "Law on Social Partnership," so that this dialogue is based on legal foundations rather than relegated to a whim. So that this pressure, either in the case of an NGO or a non-commercial organization, can find an outlet by the legal force. Because these two pyramids are in place and partnership is introduced through law, then the horizontal linkage will be created and we will only have to address the issue of developing mechanisms. Overall, as far the issues related to this dialogue are concerned, NGOs proved their worth after the 1988 earthquake. A lot of work has been done, for example, in the social sector. The NGOs now take part in policy-making, legislation, even in distributing benefits. However, these are minor elements. And to be able to overcome all of these obstacles and conduct ourselves in a more civilized manner, I think not only legislation, but also a structure, a governing body is needed, through which it will be possible to conduct this dialogue. Today, as all of you know, there are four thousand registered NGOs. An attempt at a dialogue with these four thousand will not be a dualism, but will grind down into I do not know what. This is why the larger interest should be drawn from the bottom and through negotiation processes; we should start solving problems associated with big interests. Certainly, NGOs today do not have the technologies, say, to solve conflicts or to delve into the deep layers of these conflicts and even lack negotiating skills, the government itself is deficient in this respect. This is why, in my opinion, it would be desirable if international organizations could teach about well-established technologies. We should never be ashamed of the learning process. For social partnership to triumph, I would link it to culture. In solving any problem, we need to have recourse to culture. If we weave this into the cultural fabric and if interaction takes place through a dialogue rather than a brawl or exchange of curses, and this becomes part of the culture, problems will be solved through negotiation or through mediators. As for the most important area, the employment sector, here

the world has discovered one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century, trilateralism. The Armenian Constitution provides for an alliance, a pact between society and the government. According to Article 1 of the Armenian Constitution, Armenia is to build a social and legal state. If this is what we are building, then we should by all means use the notions of civil society, cooperation and partnership as trilateralism while involving trade unions, employers and government, which all play a crucial role in this issue. And we have to succeed in tackling this problem, as the relevant laws have been adopted but are not applied, as trade unions are in a sorry state, excuse me for phrasing it like this, but they are in a moribund state.

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Theresa Khorozyan. Election Program Manager, Civic Advocacy Support Program, Counterpart International

Topic: *NGO oversight of the public policy process*

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Suren Poghosyan - expert on program budgeting

My question is addressed to Mr. Mkrtychyan. Don't you think that Armenia has reached a level in its state budget system where the government may itself request NGOs to develop policies and thus transfer the government's monopoly on policy development to a competitive domain? This is an accepted practice for the international community. In each sphere, the government should have a program and should allocate money to the ministries and each ministry should contract NGOs every year to provide assistance in developing programs.

Levon Mkrtychyan, Absolutely. This point is well-taken and in order to achieve this end-result we need to go through two stages. You may know that for the past two years, in addition to submitting the budget in its regular format, we have also been carrying out a budgeting pilot project for several sectors. For instance, next year the social security sector and the education sector will already have draft program budgets. So this is the way that the budget should be gradually developed, after which, as expected, there will be public involvement. But already today during discussions on program budgeting, the same guiding principle is applied to give a big role to the NGOs to play. And this is a two-way street. That is to say, an NGO that is to participate in preparing the budget should be of a corresponding quality to be able to put forth arguments in a professional manner, and it is through arguments that we shall, in due course, arrive at the proper solutions. And there is no alternative to this, I am sure, for certain objectives are to be defined and in this particular area no objective can be established without public support, or at least perception or a positive atmosphere with no less than around 40% support, so that even the most desirable reforms are not prematurely cast aside with no funding made available. The quantitative minimum level of a critical mass of supporters can be met only through NGOs and other structures with good reputations in the society.

Overall, today an attempt is made to use the international authority, that is, international consultants, the authoritative expertise of international NGOs. But there will come a stage when the local experts, I am deeply convinced that we do have this potential, will be able to demonstrate their skills not only in international structures but also through NGOs, and this will contribute greatly to better quality budgetary processes.

Tamara Abrahamyan - President, "Araza" NGO, Member of the PRSP Working Group

I have both a question and an answer, and I will present those if I may. I have to underline that we talked about social responsibility and the functions to be performed

by NGOs. I do agree that we need to be aware of the gaps on both sides, the government and the NGO sector, which were spelled out clearly and very objectively. The insufficient capacity demonstrated by the NGOs, as Mr. Mkrtchyan mentioned, requires a categorical, qualitative improvement if critical policies are to be developed. And I have to say that NGOs have been able to develop on their own, taking shape from scratch and without external influence, and I am surprised at your bewilderment as to why so very few of them are engaged in advocacy. Yes, because NGOs were established against the backdrop of social demand and started providing solutions to urgent, situational problems, they primarily honed their skills in this very setting. And today, the Ministry of Social Affairs will attest that many of these NGOs have consolidated through self-development in this service area and have become motivated government partners. There are a number of organizations protecting the rights of the handicapped as well as organizations providing care to senior citizens. And to require that they pursue policy-making or advocacy, I think this is not a valid demand and is not realistic. And the percentage of NGOs engaged in advocacy does not necessarily have to increase proportionally if we want to have an enabling atmosphere of social partnership, because social partnership, as Mr. Yesayan noted, is multi-layered: from providing services to policy-making, where we are slightly lagging in view of our capacities, skills and the classical methods of advocacy. And why should personal relations have the upper hand over the classical methods today, even in policy-making? Because here too, NGOs develop and take shape idiosyncratically and are aligned based on personal ties, contacts or legislation, and a number of other reforms effected through interrelations formed through specific activities, a method that the government is willing to apply repeatedly. And staff from the Ministry of Social Affairs, I can assure you based on my personal experience, that have already been directly engaged in the process at the level of the legislative body and the government, have even encouraged them to express their opinion. But here the problem lies in experts; NGOs do not have experts to engage them in these processes or this would put a considerable pressure on their potential. I thought that today we should have talked about the clear-cut regulation of interrelations at the various well-defined levels, as international organizations, naturally, bring in external experts or they use their own human and other resources instead of providing funding to NGOs to employ experts to be able to take a position on this or that law. And if we want, as Mr. Mkrtchyan said, to present highly-quality proposals that the government will be ready to negotiate, we need to have that resource. When we do have something significant to say, they listen to us. You mentioned that some proposals did not make it into the PRSP, these proposals were not approved due to the same reason, because perhaps they were not well-justified. Or, due to all sorts of decisions made. The law on employment was developed in 2000, it was tested, negotiated and underwent many processes before it was finally adopted in 2005, many years later. And as far as PRSP is concerned, it is now being reviewed, your organization (addressed to Amalya Kostanyan), which is from the NGO sector and has been left out of the game, slashes at the ability of NGOs to have an impact on it. And under all of these circumstances, I think that we need to focus more on how these resources should be regulated, the resources and open spaces, which should be harnessed to pave way for all of these activities to be undertaken. Mr. Yesayan talked about the weak points, pointed out the legislative gap. I agree that a package solution addressing all levels would be suitable. But I see yet another problem, about which I would like to ask. There exists a Law on Trade Unions, a Law on a Labor Inspectorate, the trilateral agreements are available, but the trade unions are dead. Why? What do we have to gain from the law? We have already seen what obstacles we may run into in our efforts to not repeat the same mistake and not to have the same fate in matters related to law-making. We need to envisage everything at the outset.

Ashot Yesayan. First of all, there is a misunderstanding, in my opinion. These interests are not only interests of "others": interests of the handicapped, women, children, protection of

their rights. If we look at the 4,000 NGOs, we shall see that 80% of these operate in the social sector. Why? Because, based on data from 1992, the relative poverty level was over the 90% threshold. Beyond all doubt, progress has been made. NGOs operating in the social sector have undertaken large-scale, desperately daring initiatives, starting from the earthquake all the way to the tragedies of war. 10th grade school children were knocking on doors to collect bottles, not to speak of clothes and so on. Who organized all of this? It was the society, our organizations. Today we have NGOs that are doing a spectacular job, Mission Armenia and a dozen other organizations. SOS Children's Fund has already established representations in 132 countries and I am honored to be their chairman here. What am I trying to get at? Let us take the PRSP; we cannot possibly claim that some of the initiatives succeeded and others failed. Thousands of other problems have been addressed and I led the activities of a technical task force, among the membership of which were also Mrs. Lyudmila Harutyunyan, Suvaryan, and others. And a great many successful activities have been launched. When our work was concluded, I stood up and bowed before all the members of the team to express my appreciation for the opportunity to work with them. There was another setback, in that 90% of the working group was economists, and probably Lyudmila and I were the only lawyers, the former is also a candidate of economic science. Thus the "faction" of economists was making arguments on behalf of renouncing the narrow-mindedness of allowing subjective and objective rules to block our vision. Thanks to this and as a result of a struggle, please forgive me for my immodesty, but I am talking as an expert, progress in poverty reduction was made in 2003-2007 and it would be inappropriate for anyone to deny this. Obviously, there are still many problems, but since I am now outside of this process, I cannot tell you which stage the review is in now.

Eduard Hovhannisyan - President, "Achilles" NGO

About responsibility. I want to cite an example: it has been a year that we have been trying to hold an official from the Ministry of Environmental Protection accountable, and our efforts have come to nothing. Perhaps you could give advice on what course of action to follow. We want to set a precedent, but we haven't been able to succeed. Refer to any law, and it reads that criminal proceedings will be instituted against the violators in accordance with the procedure established by law. What does this procedure entail? Amendments have even been introduced in the administrative code to specify that criminal proceedings will be instituted in accordance to Article 189.7 in the amount of 10,000 - 50,000 Armenian drams. If you make an attempt to institute criminal proceedings, you will fail; the judge asked us where the proceedings (minutes) were. And who is responsible for preparing the proceedings? Waiving the rules of criminal proceedings will do us no good, this is a one-way street, and cooperation with the National Assembly is also unilateral. This question is addressed to Eleanor Valentine, cooperation with the police and the government is not successful either. This is a similar one-way street, we do not get any responses to our letters. What happened to our proposals? We haven't received a single answer in seven years. After all, how will all of this continue? Will they ever establish some order?

Levon Mkrtchyan. To tell you the truth, when I spoke about responsibility, accountability, and cooperation, I did not mean specific instances. If you are pointing out one example, I can cite thousands. This is what I was referring to: program budgeting and defining objectives enhance accountability. And in this case, the enhanced accountability is sector-based and stems from each sector. For example, if the budget provides for introduction of a credit system which is going to bring us face-to-face with the specific problems, and if by the end of the year this is not achieved, then the objective has not been accomplished and this amounts to a failure. If we just discuss figures, how much of it is performance and how much is non-performance, it is very hard for the general public to understand whether there has been a failure or whether the objectives have been met. In any given sector, program budgeting leads to enhanced accountability. Specifically, a key component to this is the assignment of tasks within the governance

system and accountability. And in this case, it will be impossible to shrug off responsibility and point your finger at somebody else. If the question that you just raised were laid before a bureaucrat, he would say that is not within his jurisdiction and should be addressed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In turn, the Ministry of Internal Affairs will say that this is something that the Ministry of Environmental Protection should deal with, and then it will be drawn into a legal case, with the need to validate all points, etc. Hence, we need to differentiate between two issues. Generally, I would like to see the strategy of gradually attenuating conflicts and differences by relying on a foundation of shared features used in Armenia as we have two approaches we can apply: one is to say that this is not good, the situation is impossible and we start from a negative background, and in any given sector we can find the 10, 20, 100 cases we need to prove that things are amiss; the second approach is when we do share common points, three points against the twenty points of divergent opinion, let us start working our way from these three points and strive to make these 5, 7, and then 9, and so on. If we opt for the first approach in international relations, and I have this kind of professional experience, then our lives throughout the world would be about fighting wars and nothing else. If one is trying to build on common ground and strives to learn about the other, in this setting of shared standpoints and cooperation, an effort is made to learn both about yourself and the other party, you seek to gradually iron out differences. This road is quite tough, but prospective and promising. As, first of all, it safeguards the society from shocks and cataclysms and gives an opportunity to create a consensual atmosphere. I hold this opinion. As for the fact that there are many gaps, if we are to take your assessment as the starting point, then we should focus our society's attention on our judicial system, or administrative issues. If the law stipulates that activities should be undertaken in accordance with the procedure established by law or the government, then we should proceed to the next stage; we need to get to the government and find out what gaps are undermining the procedure. If a procedure established by the government is referenced with a document approved by a ministry, then we need to go to that ministry and look at the scheme of things there. If we go through all the structures involved and we see that there is a proper legal framework in place, and the activities of a public (state) organization are involved, then the problem in this individual case is the mismanagement by the given bureaucrat. It is the centralized, autocratic governance which is to blame, and this an arena where a public movement and initiative should be launched. Thus, this is a rough summary of how I perceive the situation. Otherwise, I know what it is like when you work hard and do not get the expected results. But after this, if you throw in the towel and say that nothing is working out, you contribute to a negative atmosphere in the society, which may be lethally dangerous for newly-independent states - an atmosphere of despair. For instance, the cooperation framework built around the PRSP was mentioned, or it was pointed out, that there is a positive experience in the social sector. Of course, there is also negative experience, but we need to build on our efforts to expand and spread the positive experience.

Moreover, it is said that it is not that easy to work. Let us look at our constitution. At first, the opposition was invited to participate with vetoing rights, there was an active public movement, and this was the proposal at that moment, they made maximalist demands and boycotted the processes at the National Assembly. As a result, since they professed to tackle a problem that they were unable to solve, they wasted the people's trust as the society was exposed to a cataclysm. And gradually, the opposition embarked on a path, the results of which we are witnessing today. If they had taken up the offer of vetoing rights and used them in the parliament and sparked off a public movement targeted at various articles in the constitution, if they had exposed each and every article to public scrutiny, then they would have succeeded in reaping richer rewards in this tactical struggle. This is mainly it, this is an issue of perceptions.

Eleanor Valentine. I guess I will take the chance to try and answer your comment or question. Your comment made me think of a classic: if a tree falls in a forest and nobody is there

to hear it, does it make a sound? Obviously, to have an effect at all on public policy, someone has to receive your message. Someone has to be there to hear what it is that you have to say. I think it is very easy to say, oh nobody in parliament listens to us, and we have recommended and never got a response. What I am trying to illustrate is that there is more than one access point. I think very often, the message needs to be reviewed; if I don't reach them this way, how else can I get my message across. Some of the issues are a sort of ABC of advocacy; to find your champions, who are your allies, who is going to carry your message, to ask the question - who cares? How to find that person or that group, and very often that can be just one or two persons who can hear that message and take it on. Use the media if you have done an appropriate study. I think it is a traffic violation and harassment of motorists, if I remember correctly. If you have that statistics package, then, get a journalist to write a story about releasing your statistics and take that to policy makers, find that avenue and, again, the support structures of the parliament. Make sure that your reports get to the national assembly library. I can assure you that if NA library gets something new, they make sure that members know about it. And it helps to raise the level of awareness that there are issues, that there is a new study out, or that you can show what the impact of the policy change or the lack of policy change might have on society. Invite members to a policy dialogue, that kind of thing, where can you highlight your issue with their participation and then they are able to identify with that issue. This is where I stand, I support you or I don't, then you at least know - are they your allies or opponents on that issue. And then again, we have a golden opportunity during this election period to identify the candidate who is going to care about it. This is a great opportunity to get your message out to candidates and then remind them of where you stand once they get elected. And I know you work hard to get your message across, but you constantly have to be creative about how to find those receivers who listen and receive your message.

Theresa Khorozyan. Mr. Hovhannisyan, thanks to consultation sessions by telephone with an Aquilles attorney, I have been able to get my car plates back from the police by proving that the license plates were removed illegally. And if you are saying that just a single letter from your organization does not change much, today there are many drivers who are very unhappy about the situation. I will help you personally to make sure that several thousands of drivers join your petition. And I think that this will change something. Several years ago I was talking to somebody with city mayor's experience in the United States and he told me that for a long time he was unable to tackle a waste management problem, and one day when he was on his way to his office, he discovered that he would be unable to get to his office. People had simply decided to dump all of the trash in front of his office door. Have we ever taken such measures?

Lilit Mkrtychyan - Goris Women's Center NGO

Can NGOs contact ministries directly or should they go through an intermediary link?

Levon Mkrtychyan. No, our legal framework provides for vast opportunities, even ordinary citizens can file a petition with a ministry and the ministry is required to respond within a certain time-period, both in terms of providing information and regarding implementation of its program. In fact, all ministries now have public relations departments, the activities of which are not limited to those of a press secretary. Instead, there is a specifically designed program, and this is an international program aimed at promoting cooperation with non-governmental structures. If you file a formal letter, they are bound by their duty to work with you. If no response is forthcoming, which does not happen, you may pursue this through the public domain.

Saint Sandukht Women's NGO

I would like to direct my question to the international organizations. We have had two, rather than one, successful attempts: draft law on lobbying and Shikahogh. But would we ever succeed if international NGOs did not cooperate with their local counterparts?

It was stressed several times that, for NGOs to be able to participate in policy-making, an enhanced level is required, they should have specialists. But are such specialists available at the government or the National Assembly? The overall level in the whole country, rather than just the NGO sector, should be raised up to international standards. And as a representative of an NGO, I think that there is a much greater number of specialists in NGOs, I beg the pardon of the government representatives present here. But we wouldn't dare to poke our nose into the affairs of the Ministry of Justice, courts, police, or the army. Thus, it is easy to see that only structures of an equal standing may engage in policy-making, and today our government, our government officials do not consider NGOs to be their equal partners. Thank you!

Levon Mkrtchyan. You have raised a painful issue. We may divide this issue into two dimensions: there are sectors that have traditionally been closed areas and are mostly related to security issues. At least two of the structures you just enumerated are force structures. Processes are currently underway in these sectors. And when our country embraces commitments on its path to European integration, it also comes under the obligation to initiate certain processes. And if you have watched closely, in the last several years, both the Defense Ministry and the Interior Ministry have undertaken some programs which could not even be imagined in the past. For instance, parents were given access to military units. And measures are being taken in this direction. But much caution is warranted in these sectors and we need to appreciate the fact that we are also dealing with security issues. In other sectors, I do agree that the main problem afflicting a number of areas in our ministries is the lack of quality, this is a big problem. At this moment we are facing the challenge of establishing a center for testing knowledge to improve the quality of education, and we have to bid in an international tender through the World Bank so that an international expert could come and work here for a year, who will act as the director of this structure, and will establish the structure and corresponding format. This will be an innovation in Armenia and it will have to go a long way. A similar attempt was launched at the agency for development, where an international specialist was invited. He worked for one or two years. In other words, government can afford such options. For example, in all areas where we have deficient quality in the framework of loan programs, we try to invite specialists through international assistance, and the assistance of these organizations is invaluable. For instance, for the large-scale national program for education, which is to be implemented by 2015, we have filed a request for a group of three to four experienced members of faculty to work with local specialists, as we have a number of purely professional issues to tackle. Thus, governments do have recourse to such options; where it has lack of resources, it may ask for help, if the resources in question are not available in the country, these resources are brought in. In this sense, we also benefit greatly from international assistance in our sector: USAID, IREX, etc. NGOs should also try to address their quality-related issues through these services. And if an NGO wants to obtain a grant for a certain project, then to be able to conduct negotiations with the Justice Ministry, with experts as an equal partner, the NGO may wish, request and invite an authoritative international law specialist and start a discussion on this topic, thus relaying an enhanced quality. This will ensure a totally different quality. I do agree with you that the parties are faced with the same problem as the 4,000 NGOs. We have over 80 parties and over 80 private universities. We overestimate the potential of our country. I think that Armenia cannot possibly have more than a dozen universities meeting international standards, not more than a dozen ideological frameworks, political parties with a base in the political sphere, consolidated through the years, not more than 30 or 40 consolidated NGOs or a group of NGOs with a determination to solve sector-specific problems. And it is not terrible that we are currently in this situation, as fifteen years is a very short period of time for building statehood. For example, before this we had 100 NGOs and then the number dropped to 80. The important thing is to see the subsequent step behind each step. People fall into despair and they do not see any cause or need to reaffirm their will. I do not want to mention names not to offend

anyone. There is an opportunity to join the international movement in our sphere, to gain membership, and this will set up the national structure that will comprise many NGOs. Just imagine what it entails if thirty other public organizations are formed, including forces enjoying the endorsement by the authorities, just one after the other, so that in terms of numbers they can claim that they represent Armenia. This will discredit both the NGO and party movements, and this is what causes the disappointment among the public.

Eleanor Valentine. A quick comment. There are also opportunities really for both; you said about expertise, and lack of expertise in governance. And I think it is really important for NGOs, government, and also parliament to access the expertise that is available in the knowledge community. Expanding your issues, your potential, by using indigenous knowledge community and not just international experts. Local community, very talented people in Armenia, you constantly need to reach out to them and invite them to the table.

Theresa Khorozyan. First of all, I want to note that the law on lobbying is not the only successful attempt, I just cited that as an example. In this case, in the case of the law on lobbying, international organizations certainly shared the viewpoints of NGOs and supported them. But there is a difference in the case of this cooperation. Do the international organizations lead this process or NGOs? To me, at any rate, there is a great difference. I find it to be natural for international organizations to play an active role today and work jointly with NGOs. International organizations do have an involvement in the reforms in the justice sector, which you mentioned, but they are not active. What I want to say is that the cooperation that you stressed can be launched in other areas as well, but this does not happen. Why? It does make a difference when it is the NGOs that identify a problem, they approach international organizations for help. And the NGOs publicized the problems connected with the law on lobbying, and the international organizations responded.

Edgar Khachatryan - Political Assembly (Helsinki Citizens' Assembly) Vanadzor Office

My question refers and is related to the previous question dealing with the role of international organizations. I guess I have received a partial answer to my question, but we may point out cases in which international organizations themselves have taken a conformist stance. It is quite a dangerous trend when NGOs demonstrate commitment, but they do not receive any assistance from international organizations. I can say this from the experience of our organization and from the experience of organizations with which we have cooperated. This is extremely precarious.

The next issue to which I would like to draw your attention: don't you think that donor organizations in Armenia wield excessive influence on our NGO sector? That is to say, they contribute greatly to the deterioration of NGOs. Whenever I see that an observer's mission, an organization that is manifestly a representative of a political force is applying for a grant, it succeeds. This means that, first of all, the donor is discredited in the eyes of the people and secondly...

Amalya Kostanyan. Do you expect an answer? The first question will be answered.

Theresa Khorozyan. It seems to me that the 'international organization' is a broad concept. Certainly, among these there are intergovernmental organizations with a more limited mandate. I cannot speak for all of them, anything may happen in this life, but at any rate, I think that NGOs let us revert back to the beneficiaries (stakeholders)... I want to say that there are a plethora of reasons, but it is better to focus on more effective means. If they succeed in mobilizing the support of the stakeholder, then they can rely on the stakeholders as a source of support and strength.

Edgar Khachatryan. You know, this is also a very complex issue. If in such a small community as Vanadzor, an organization takes the initiative to file a petition to express confidence in the mayor and no NGO, with the exception of one, takes an interest in this when you invite people to a discussion. Not that they should agree with us, they can

come and say they disagree. What are we to do? When one works with the society to raise public awareness, but you see that there is no support and the government wields too much power over the society, you realize that you cannot work. It is very difficult to stay active in such circumstances.

Theresa Khorozyan. I don't understand why other NGOs are unwilling to help you with this.

Amalya Kostanyan. Because they are afraid to do so, I think this is quite straightforward. You know, I would like to simply point out that the two organizations which raised the issue about lack of support and assistance, are the ones that are sufficiently active and are not afraid to expand their activities. I understand you really well. Perhaps our society needs to experience shocks, and if you go down that path we will help you with great pleasure with that issue. If we make some waves, they will take us into consideration and we will show everyone that we are not afraid.

Zaira Klashyan - Asup NGO

This leaves the misperception that everyone is cowardly in Vanadzor. Not at all! Vanadzor is quite a stable marz. The disaster, the earthquake proved that. Vanadzor did not despair. Perhaps there is a personal issue between the given NGO and the mayor. Why should they turn relations into a haggling market? We haven't petitioned for our mayor's impeachment and there are no cowards among us.

Amalya Kostanyan. Excuse me, I didn't mean that people are afraid particularly in Vanadzor. I said people are afraid throughout Armenia. I had no intention whatsoever to offend Vanadzor.

Hovhannes Bayburtsyan - Youth for Peace and Development NGO, Gyumri

To tell you the truth, some of the issues that I wanted to raise here were presented at a sharper angle by my colleagues from Vanadzor. I want to say that we are now talking about cross-sectoral cooperation. But it has been mentioned that even local self-governance bodies are much smaller than the ministries, thus the state structures can put up lots of resistance. But let us see in the context of our discussion of NGO-government cooperation, whether the culture of cooperation has consolidated in the NGO sector or not. I can say that our NGO is extremely active and is reasonably specialized in advocacy. But whenever we raise a controversial issue, we and our members are the only ones left in town and the young people, even if they are not our members, take a bolder stance next to us than NGOs. This is a painful issue. When we worked with the NGO sector in the Czech Republic, we were given a business card which read "Union of Youth NGOs". We asked them how many organizations this union comprised, and were told that all 2,000 NGOs of the Czech Republic were members. So, just imagine: can the government afford not to take into consideration a force that comprises and brings together 2,000 NGOs advocating for the interests of the whole nation? And here in Armenia, even in the case of crucial and key national issues, if we succeed in rallying together 10 or 20 NGOs, this is considered an achievement. Citing an example from soccer, we can point out that Pele was an ingenious soccer player, but if he was the only one on the team, there would be no game. Thus, we need to take into consideration both the quantity and the quality of NGOs, and I want to stress that in many cases our guiding psychological principle is competition, rather than cooperation. Hence, when a tender for advocacy grants is announced, all NGOs, even those that have always had a dance ensemble or a choir or embroidery classes, appear among advocacy NGOs. Each NGO should do its work, but they also need to cooperate. For example, our organization does not do research, but whenever we undertake an advocacy initiative, we take this into account and we cooperate with those who have done the most authoritative research projects. In concluding my speech, I want to ask NGO sector representatives a question: what recipe would they offer or possible ways of consolidating cooperation and good-neighborly relations among us, in the NGO sector, and to introduce this culture.

Amalya Kostanyan. Thank you very much for helping me to sum up today's session. And I am

pleased that we also have an opportunity tomorrow and the day after if you have the patience to continue the discussion which we started today. We still have a lot to share with each other and I am inviting you to continue group discussions tomorrow. And may God help us, if not in finding a recipe but in making proposals. And now I am extending an invitation to you to participate in the opening of an exhibition

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Working with National Parliaments

April 14, 2007

Amalya Kostanyan. Good morning. Today, I would like to recap a little bit: four presentations were delivered yesterday, one was by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia, the other three were by representatives of international organizations. The presentations were followed by very dynamic discussions, relations among the NGOs is a very painful issue, as well as the relations between NGOs and donors.

We need to proceed to summing up [the topics]: government-society, NGO relations and NGO-donor organizations. Today we have three presenters. Eleanor Valentine is the first, followed by Lena Nanushyan and Zhirayr Edilyan. I hereby provide the floor to Eleanor Valentine.

Eleanor Valentine. Project Director, USAID-Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project

Topic: *Tips in working with parliamentary committees (providing expertise and testimony)*

Thank you very much. First, let's see who we are and who is here.

To start with I'd like to mention that I work for DAI, I'm delighted to be back in Armenia, I worked in the National Assembly Legislative Strengthening Program. Now I'm working in Pakistan, a variety of legislative environments. I'd like you to introduce yourself and say how the topic of our discussion is related to you.

Each of the participants, one by one introduce themselves and the area of their work.

We have different sector representatives here, who we are, what we do, what our expectations are and our job is to make our agenda that of elected representatives. So, what is our strategy to work with parliament. Where do you get the information of what the parliament does?

Answers. Internet; TV, news; newspapers; Personal networks; International organizations; Official bulletins; NGOs that work to monitor the work of parliament; rumors, etc.

Eleanor Valentine. Do any of you participate in the meetings that come to your city, or NGOs organized meetings?

Answer- participant. NGO representatives meet with their parliament representative.

Eleanor Valentine. So, I see mostly that you have information from the secondary sources and not the primary ones. But has any of you access to the information from the first source, from them?

Answer- participant. 2 NGO representatives gave positive answer.

Eleanor Valentine. How many of you participated in the session with Hranush Hakobyan? (Hands are raised)

You are from Sisian, do you know who your representative is in Parliament?

Answer- participant. Azoyan (correct).

Eleanor Valentine. Does he come to Sisian regularly?

Answer- participant. Yes, we meet in our organization's office but there are no public speeches organized with him and discussion groups.

Answer- participant. We are from Vanadzor, our representative is Victor Dallakian, he meets us regularly and this is not connected with the coming elections.

Participant. I would like to mention that all our representatives in the Lori marz are very active and we are satisfied with them.

Eleanor Valentine. It's not the matter of being active, they have to tell you what they do, and you should not learn about that from secondary sources. So, they have to be present at talk shows, say what they do, what kind of plans they have. So, what kind of information do the parliamentarians need to know from you, what is their need?

Answer-"Achilles" NGO. We have invited lots of representatives to public discussions, but no one was present except for Arshak Sadoyan. We even found out the parliamentarians do not even know what law they adopted.

Eleanor Valentine. They have to know the context of the legislative frame. When you say there are gross mistakes in the laws, do you think they can be corrected?

Answer- participant. We even proposed our comments on how to improve the law, but they did not take it. It does not interest them. How can they do that if they do not know what a law is?

Eleanor Valentine. So, with what is this connected? Lack of knowledge on the frame of the law or lack of legal literacy?

Answer- participant. There are such important laws that they do not even discuss.

Eleanor Valentine. So, they need to know the tools of their work, the context of the law and the scope of the problem.

Answer-"Achilles" NGO. They should also give the draft to us to get our opinion.

Eleanor Valentine. How many of you collect statistics? Do you ask an NGO to collect statistics or are you reliant on your own statistics?

Answer-Maternal health in Goris. We take statistics from the Goris hospital and a nurse is involved in the project to assist it.

Answer-RIA Social Reform Center. We ourselves collect statistics. This information needs to be disseminated by the ministry, but it isn't and we ourselves collect that.

Eleanor Valentine. Who else does investigations, studies?

Answer-Internews. We have the right to collect information on the state level, but this doesn't work and we use the information gathered by the state or NGOs. For instance, there are said to be some announcements that are not run on TV. We wanted to know the reason, we raised the problem and had the right to get information from the state agency but they did not give it.

Eleanor Valentine. Is this consistent? What different mechanisms does parliament have to communicate with NGOs? So, how do you meet with them? What mechanisms do you use to get access to your representatives?

Answer-participant. Our NGO collects comments and we give information to our representative in the form of offers. I also want to be optimistic and say that it also depends on us.

Answer- participant. Our organization gave a proposal comprised of 44 points, 40 out of which were accepted in the package.

Answer-Anush Dulgarian, AUA graduate. Yesterday, Hranush Hakobyan said that they meet with NGOs and ask what they need. However, she mentioned that no NGO stands on

parliamentarian's backs.

Internews published a version of the law on Journalism. "Asulis" is a communication mechanism.

Answer. (representative from parliament). standing committees are the main chain of information.

Eleanor Valentine. How many of you (NGOs) publish newsletters? (some hands were raised)

Eleanor Valentine. How many of you send your newsletters to your parliamentarians? (no one).

Eleanor Valentine. If I am a parliamentarian and receive a package of proposals, but do not know you, how am I going to give weight to your proposal? You have to establish credibility, to show that it is not a one-time effort, its consistent and constant work. How do you establish your reputation? If you are creating a newsletter, what's the need of that?

Answer- participant. We raise youth issues in our newsletter.

Eleanor Valentine. So, your representative needs to know that.

Answer- participant. Individual approaches are necessary.

Answer- participant. The voter's tradition is connected with NGO activity. Issue voting is also important.

Eleanor Valentine. So, do they know you? Why don't they know you? Is it they don't stay on a platform, or is it we didn't find them properly? First of all, you need to be concise, specific, and direct. Think about 5 minutes to get your message to the parliamentarian.

How many pages were your letters?

Answer- participant. I accept that we are also guilty that we fail to give information to our parliamentarian.

Answer- participant. I'd like to mention that the electronic connection works well. We have written the letter and received a response. If you have real problems, you can also do that through the National Democracy Institute that links NGOs with parliament.

Eleanor Valentine. Your member of Parliament focuses on a variety of responsibilities in their commission. So, you can find a way (an Elevator test), in a two minute elevator talk to your member. My final issue is the basics of power mapping. How many of you know what power mapping is? (No one). It basically identifies who your allies are, your partner, your expertise, what your potential to influence or impact people is. You said you are from a youth organization in Sisian, how many youth are there in Sisian?

Answer- participant. 7,500 youth.

Eleanor Valentine. What would you recommend, who is their contact in the National Assembly.

Answer- participant. Hranush Hakobyan, Syunik marzpet, our issues are taken to the National Assembly by our marzpet.

Eleanor Valentine. So, the Committee on Youth has 8 members who represent 6 parties. You can find out who is in it, and approach him, and make him an ally. So, you can connect your issue with his, make it relevant to him. Your issue is important for them, future legislation, current implementation of legislation.

Lena Nanushyan. Expert, NA Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Healthcare and Environmental Protection

Topic: *Experience of National Assembly Social Affairs Committee in working with Armenian NGOs*

Have any of the NGOs represented here participated in parliamentary hearings?

Answer- Head of the Gyumri Rescue Team. Of course, yes, if we are talking about public utilities, then we have participated. The last hearing was about the energy strategy concept note, which was discussed with your committee. We participated in it.

I am the head of the Gyumri Rescue Team. We have participated in the discussion of the draft law on the rescue service, but not during the adoption of this law. And we have made our contribution to this undertaking as the former rescue organizations. The state rescue teams in Lori and Gyumri used to be NGOs before they became part of the state service.

We have also participated in the sessions of the National Assembly's Committee on Social Issues.

Lena Nanushyan. Well, at least there are several organizations that have participated, this is more reassuring.

Question-participant. A question was raised here about how laws are adopted just by three to four deputies. I can assure you that no vote can be taken with three or four deputies. And in sharing my experience with you, I will point out that before a draft law can be discussed by the deputies at the National Assembly, a draft law has to be cleared through a discussion at a committee session. Thus, deputies specialized in our sector discuss the draft law with the experts at a committee session, and if they approve it or if they have proposals, these are all discussed at a National Assembly sitting. Now, if you see that at the National Assembly sitting only three or four deputies are present in the Sessions Hall, this does not mean that only these deputies are interested in or aware of the draft law; all the work is being done in the backstage phase and in committees. How do we work when a draft law is put into circulation at the National Assembly? This is already our part of the work: to organize meetings, discussions, submit proposals regarding the draft law. I assure you that we organize meetings with NGOs, representatives of the government, and other interested specialists in the committees. Thus, you will not see all of this on the television screen or you catch a three-minute glimpse during the official "Parliamentary Hour" broadcast. But I assure you that even during the committee sessions. A point in case is the very same draft law on pharmaceuticals, which I just cited, were attended by deputies from other committees since they knew about this bill being in circulation, and they were interested and wished to take part in the discussions. Take my word for it, they took an active part. I can enumerate many examples from my experience.

Lena Nanushyan. I would be interested to learn how many times your organization has, outside the frame of grant projects (let us suppose you have finished a project and upon completion you have discovered some flaws, already outside the grant-based funding when there is no outside funding), organized such meetings, not necessarily at the National Assembly?

Question-participant. Many, numerous. This is neither the first nor the last time. I think that everyone present here has done the same. Well, I have another question. You said that an NA deputy may raise a question. Have you made an inquiry to find out where these deputies conceive these ideas from? Perhaps an NGO has approached that deputy and this is the background to the deputy raising the issue at hand? Don't you think?

Lena Nanushyan. In the cases that I enumerated, no. In other cases, I do not know. But I already mentioned that there have been proposals on draft laws submitted by NGOs, which have been discussed by the deputies at committee sessions but not at hearings. I would like to stress that I am respon-

sible for issues related to healthcare.

Participant. On the slide, I see that only five hearings have been held. Do you know the frequency of such hearings being held in the Baltic States or Belarus?

Lena Nanushyan. I have not come across frequency figures; I don't have this statistical data. But don't you ask yourself how the topics were chosen? Are there any opinions?

Answer- participant. I think that there was a need for those. These may have been statistically researched and an effort has been made to address these issues.

Answer- participant. I have asked this question to myself and I think this has to do with the ministries. The ministries may have done the research.

Answer- participant. I think that identification of needs is performed by experts in your department or the corresponding departments within the ministries, or your experts. Probably it will be of greater interest to us if you could share the experience where needs have been communicated through civil society organizations, and this has been submitted to you. Let us talk about that. How did this happen?

Lena Nanushyan. This is where I wanted to lead our discussion. If we take the need leading to the law on pharmaceuticals, which we organized at our own initiative, this mainly came from the committee. I will not be able to enumerate cases when NGOs were the contributors to the process of raising questions in this or that sector. As regards the ministries, I wouldn't say that ministries have been initiators.

Answer- participant. I think that linkage is already delineated. We are now implementing a project on inclusive education. Inclusive education is an experiment in our Republic, has a history of 5 years. And the pilot project is now at a stage where we do not know whether it will be continued or not. But we do have the law on education for people with special needs. The law does not have a procedure as to how it will be implemented. Thus, the NGO saw the problem and we also realized that we couldn't work without the ministry. Willingly or not, the link was formed both with the ministry, and relevant bodies. Whether we want it or not, we need to find our paths. Perhaps one day we'll get to the National Assembly, but for now, we are working with the ministry.

Lena Nanushyan. Now I want to ask a question. It turned out that 3-4 NGOs had participated in the parliamentary hearings. And who has participated in meetings and discussions organized by the government? More frequently, don't you agree? I can say that the ties between the NGOs and the government are closer than with the National Assembly.

Answer-participant. That conclusion is still premature; the ties have been weak so far.

Lena Nanushyan. I simply wanted to run a comparison. To be honest with you, I probably phrased my question incorrectly. My question is the following: between NGO-government and NGO-NA relations, which one do you have recourse to more frequently?

Answer- participant. I do not think we can generalize based on our work with the ministries. As a professional, I belong to the education sector and I have an NGO even though I am a director of a kindergarten and a pre-school. And I also participate in the development of our draft law at the National Assembly. I was invited by the former speaker of the National Assembly, Artur Baghdasaryan. The meeting was wonderful and it brought us tangible changes. And the relations between our NGO and the state structures are excellent. Personally, I am very satisfied with the Ministry of Education and Science in relation to proposals filed by NGOs. The Ministry of Education is very supportive of our NGO.

Answer- participant. I am surprised at the assessment of our colleague here. I have an NGO and I think none of us will approve of the NA, for understandable reasons. I want to say that both the National Assembly and the government are not inclined to work with organizations that raise disadvantageous points. Hence, we have had an opportunity to discuss the birth registration fees and we have submitted proposals but save for dead

silence we have heard nothing back. When we talk about abolishing state fees or ways to reduce corruption risks, this is not to the liking of those structures that should launch legislative initiatives, and they refuse to cooperate.

Participant. Barely a day ago, I used the opportunity to approach Minister Levon Mkrtchyan about my problem. He accepts letters with pleasure and sends a response. I do not know how our colleague is submitting her letters and invariably ends up not receiving any response. Perhaps it depends on the type of question raised?

Comment-participant. I would like to point out that perhaps there is a difference in formats here. Perhaps the discussion refers to interactions in the framework of the PRSP or the Millennium Challenge Account, where the meetings are held more frequently. But if this has to do with the advocacy activities by an organization, then there are difficulties.

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Zhirayr Edilyan. Executive Director, Civic Development and Partnership Foundation (CDPF)

Our discussion diverted towards an examination of the NGO-ministry cooperation framework. I think that this is a topic for a separate discussion and there are also other mechanisms at work. And it is reasonable and very commendable that NGOs succeed in establishing ties with the executive branch of the government and in the framework of setting off legislative initiatives. But let us remind ourselves that the executive branch has a different focus in its interests. It is better to talk about cooperation with the NA, as the interests at stake here are more relevant.

Lena Nanushyan. I agree with you but I asked my question for a different reason. The point was not that closer cooperation with the government, as compared with the NA, is deplorable, but that there is less cooperation with the National Assembly. Now, in view of this, I want to ask another question. What do you think, does a National Assembly deputy or committee have any other opportunities to work in a given sphere, besides voting on laws?

Answer. The strategies are drafted in the ministries and I think that there should be an interaction between the relevant desks at the ministries and the NA committees. And perhaps before submitting the drafts to the National Assembly, we should try to involve NGOs in the process of developing strategies. This is our approach.

Eduard Hovhannisyan. There are cases when the laws are submitted to the National Assembly and are approved at the second or third reading, and are placed on the website, and then it is discovered that amendments have been made afterwards. This happens. A webpage may read that the following law with the following content has been adopted, and when the law is published we notice a difference between the website and published versions.

Lena Nanushyan. I will explain about our website to encourage you to use it if you have the opportunity, however, according to the National Assembly's Rules of Procedures, a draft law undergoes several stages before it becomes a law. After putting the draft law into circulation, various proposals are submitted by the deputies, perhaps the ministries. Deputies may submit proposals based on petitions received from NGOs, after which the vote is taken at the first reading for the adoption of the law. In between the first and second readings, an opportunity is once again given to specialists to submit comments. If you look carefully at the webpage, you will see that in the upper corner it says at which reading the draft law was adopted. If it was adopted at the first reading, an opportunity is given before the second reading to re-examine and submit proposals to the relevant committee or the government, or if the authors are deputies, then to the deputies. After being adopted at the second reading and before the third reading, there is less leeway for introducing amendments; at this stage, predominantly editorial changes are made. And it is after the third reading, that we may safely say, provid-

ed that the President does not send it back, that the law has been adopted. No amendments are possible after the third reading. I haven't had such experience. After the third reading, no such thing is within the bounds of possibility. I will now give the floor to the person responsible for the National Assembly's website.

Lusine Hovhannisyan. Head of the NA Web division

Thank you. I have a question to ask before I can answer your question. Will you please tell me where in the website you have encountered such a case, because you should have seen in the proceedings a statement saying that a draft law has been adopted at the third reading and in full, or at the second reading and in full. My question is, have you seen this in the proceedings or the law? If you are saying that you have seen it written on the webpage that the draft law was adopted at the second reading and in full, then this means that you have seen this in the proceedings. At this very moment, we do not have access to the Internet for me to show it on the spot. In reading through the proceedings, if the draft law was adopted at the second reading and in full, you should be able to see the code of the draft law, which is the last number, one, two or three. If the code was "3," you have probably seen the text of the second reading, i.e. the text of the previous reading. I would like to bring an example from specific legislation, adopted and published laws. Laws are published on the National Assembly's website after being signed by the Speaker, within seven days in the form it was sent to the President of the Republic. Just a simple clarification, if this was in the proceedings, proceedings are published on the web within a maximum of 24 hours, whereas it is not possible to see the text of the law within 24 hours. This is why, when it is written that a given law was adopted at the third reading and in full, you see the text of the previous reading. To see the final version of the text, you need to access the page on adopted laws. It is ruled out that there can be a law signed by the Speaker and not published in the Armenian version within seven days on the website.

Lena Nanushyan. So which one of the hearings was organized on the initiative of NGOs? I already answered, none. Here we were greatly disappointed, although we organized it and everything went very well. A number of NGOs had jointly submitted the question, and it turned out that they had a commitment under their grant project to organize this meeting before their donors at the National Assembly. I do not wish to disclose the name of this NGO. I am simply drawing your attention to this fact, expressing a hope that in the future our NGOs will take a genuine interest in issues and meetings at the National Assembly that reflect their authentic concern.

Answer-participant. I would ask you to explain the essence of the problem. Is grant-based funding an obstacle in the way of your cooperation? And if this is an obstacle to some extent, then what does the government do for the NGO?

Lena Nanushyan. It would be interesting to know how many times you have held hearings outside of grant projects. Let us suppose that you finished the project and then discovered that there were flaws, and outside your grant project when there is no funding available, how many times have you organized such meetings anywhere, not necessarily at the National Assembly?

Answer-participant. Many, numerous, this is neither the first nor the last time. And I think everybody else here has done the same.

Question-participant. Dear Lena, since our organization is going to enter the National Assembly through a legislative initiative for the first time, would it be possible for you to point out the most effective way for an NGO to get the most impact at the NA in the shortest period of time? Could you please spell out the steps we should take?

Lena Nanushyan. I will talk about it, but if you do not mind, I will finish my presentation and if your questions are left unanswered... Thus, I haven't done any research to find out which is the most effective way since I work at a committee as an expert. Some organizations, and the ministry or various individuals, know that Lena is responsible for healthcare-related issues at the committee and they contact me about these issues. This commits me to submitting their proposals to

the chairman and deputy chairman of the committee, and consequently taking some measures to organize hearings or discussions. We also receive petitions from NGOs that are directly addressed to the chairman of the committee. Sometimes the petitions are addressed to the NA Speaker, and then the Speaker redirects the petition to the chairman of the relevant committee so that the latter can examine the issues raised; some questions are raised by the deputies and during the meetings. We have had cases when a deputy immediately raised a question during committee session and proposed to invite people responsible for that particular area right after the session or on another day for a discussion. As to which is the most effective way, I cannot say as I do not think anyone is in a position to tell you that. I can present all the ways through which you can petition the committee or the National Assembly, but no such research on international practice or facts are available.

Eleanor Valentine. I think that the point is that there are many different ways to effectively have your voice heard or your suggestions for legislation heard. What Lena is presenting is the experience of the social committee and specifically on health issues, some of those avenues. Actually, the last slides of your presentation really address that, how some of the mechanisms worked.

Lena Nanushyan. Well, this was the assessment sheet. Let us proceed, in view of the time constraints, and if any questions are left unanswered, then you are welcome to use the break if the time allotted to me will not suffice. Since Ellie prompted here that all of this information is available on my slides, I can revisit these questions at the end of my presentation if you are still not satisfied with the detail of the information.

This gives rise to yet another question, how does a committee expert decide which international or non-governmental organizations to invite to the hearings? Do you ever ask this question? I would ask you to present your theory as to how the expert compiles this list. It might be personal ties, quite possible, of course, if the expert or the NA deputy are acquainted and have interacted before. It might be previous experience. or it might not.

Answer-participant. I think that the expert of each committee should have a list of relevant NGOs written out on the website and categorize them according to their performance, and use this information in the course of work.

Lena Nanushyan. I have gone down that path, believe me! Have you downloaded the list of NGOs in the health-care sector? How many NGOs do you reckon? Can you imagine that there are 1,000 of them? And you think an expert is going to sift through these 1,000 NGOs using, I do not know what criteria, or based on how active they are?

Question-participant. I wanted to ask a question during the session, but unfortunately due to time constraints I was unable to do so. Does our government have the statistical data on how many of the NGOs are active today and how many NGOs are engaged in which area? Do we have this database, so that tomorrow we could use these potential resources? Regrettably, I think we do not have it. We have 4,000 NGOs but we do not know what activities are carried out by them, what capacities they have. I am not talking about coordination. Today there is a need to create a database for the whole country, where all the operational NGOs could be listed without interfering with their activities.

Answer- participant. The Lori marz does have such a database. All NGOs were sent questionnaires and a database was compiled on the basis of the responses received. But we are not in a position to say how operational a given NGO is. No one can say whether an NGO is performing well or badly.

Lena Nanushyan. I already told you that I did try to pursue this, to create a database, to establish criteria for active operation in order to determine which NGOs are active and which ones are inactive, but I do not think it is the right way. I did not succeed. I am proposing an alternative route. There are various ways to cooperate with committee deputies.

Lusine Hovhannisyan. I do not know how acceptable this would be to you, but you could use the email addresses on the website and send messages to the committees and deputies. This webpage has been available since October 2003 and there are statistics showing that in the past 3.5 years, all of the deputies taken together have received a total of 400 letters, and this is a function of the active performance of NGOs.

Lena Nanushyan. For example, a similar subcommittee was formed by our committee in view of the amendments to be introduced into the water code. Deputies are free to participate.

Participant. Our organization has participated in those hearings, and this is not a grant project, and we do not receive any payment for doing this. The committee itself contacted us and invited us to take part.

Participant- Council for Ecological Alliance. I can say that the hearing that you mentioned was organized in response to a petition filed by the Alliance which includes 32 organizations and works on a voluntary and pro bono basis. A package of specific proposals was presented during the hearings and submitted to the NA.

Lena Nanushyan. This meeting provides an additional opportunity to clarify many unclear points.

Participant. I simply have a small appeal to make to everyone. Let us be a little more constructive and see our own weaknesses. From the standpoint of our organization, I can say that we do not cooperate with specific structures and they simply do not know us. And those who know us, always invite us. Let us reach out a helping hand to the government and a confident government will reach a stage where it often reaches out to the public, and this meeting attests to this. Thank you.

Amalya Kostanyan. I would like to point out that it is quite commendable that we are having such a passionate discussion, this means that we do care. Secondly, based on our prior experience, let us admit that we have our share of blame in that we do not understand and do not wish to listen to each other. Or that 'grant' word, which seems to be a litmus test and invariably causes tension wherever it is pronounced. One side hurls accusations while the other side parries with justifications. Let us acknowledge that there are some among us who remain passive after the grant project is over or between grants. And I want to join the appeals calling for our share of self-criticism. Let us try to use all the mechanisms and tools that we have available to us. Unfortunately, we also have a lack of information and today can obtain information, let us try to use this opportunity. They keep turning a deaf ear and a blind eye to us, they ignore us at parliamentary hearings and they compile a database of counterfeit NGOs and invite them instead. Oftentimes this is the case, so as to formally meet the accountability requirements before the international community. There are many structures that have their pocket NGOs or some elite NGOs who get invited and all of the two or three parties involved are extremely happy about this situation. Let us tear down this wall. For example, we were represented on the Anti-Corruption Monitoring Committee within the government structure; we tried for two years to do something about the situation, but came to a negative conclusion and left the committee. But if we had resigned a month later, no one would understand us, we would be branded as a grant-devourer, and we would be accused of not making any efforts to cooperate, and so on. I am honestly proposing to try to use this opportunity. And if Aquilles NGO is being ignored, I will be the first to step forward to hold a joint press conference and make a public statement that we have filed petitions five times and our letters have been ignored and this is unacceptable. Let us pay attention to how our deputies vote, if they vote at all.

Zhirayr Edilyan. Executive Director, Civic Development and Partnership Foundation (CDPF)

Topic: *Parliamentary voting record project-presentation*

Once again, I want to greet everyone and thank Lena for her interesting speech. I will try to be concise so as to save time for an open discussion. And right from the start I wish to shift the emphasis of our discussion a little bit since we were talking about the fact that the legislative initiatives are submitted by the government and that these are drafted by the National Assembly committees. Lena did a wonderful job explaining how this is done at the National Assembly. I do not want to make an assessment of everyone's contribution, but my personal opinion is that the bulk of the work is done by the committee specialists. I want to place stress on what the National Assembly deputies are doing, the people whom we elect and who, after, all, are the ones who go to this institution to vote on legislative amendments and reforms. The emphasis here is a bit different, as we can see that the bulk of the work is carried out by the specialists who are state servants. Let us think about what contribution NA deputies make. What do we do as NGOs when we work with NA deputies? As you found out, there are practices and these practices enable cooperation between the people, the National Assembly, and the executive branch to develop as years go by. And you, yourself cited many good examples of how civil society structures cooperate with the committee. The project, which we launched recently, is called the Civil Development and Cooperation Fund; we initiated the NA voting record. We are not going to add anything new to it, we are simply going to present the already available information in another format, making it possible to use this information in various ways. I would like all of us to think together about how we could use this information as I go through my presentation. I conducted a survey among NGOs to find out which NGOs worked with the National Assembly and how they use the NA website. It is worth noting that the survey was conducted among NGOs that are engaged in advocacy. And probably all of you have received the questionnaire, even though not everyone has completed the questionnaires. Nonetheless, we obtained quite interesting data from this exercise.

Statistical data. It is to be noted that questionnaires were sent to approximately 100 NGOs and 25% sent in their completed sheets. We may also draw a conclusion here that those NGOs that did not respond, most probably, were in a worse situation.

Statistical data, database, frequently asked questions about the NA

Interestingly, during the analysis of the collected data, we found out that two deputies, to this day, have not attended a single sitting at the NA since the day they were elected. The deputies that you work with, do you know which sitting they have attended and how they have voted on issues that are of interest to you? What positions do the parties that they represent have? As representatives of their parties, what influence can they wield on the decisions adopted by the party? We had a discussion with Ellie on how to discover supporters, how to shape them into a group that will follow our lead. It is remarkable that all of this information is available and accessible, and we simply haven't been using it yet.

I also mentioned that we studied the public opinion. See the corresponding slide on the NA structure, survey details.

These diagrams are not in your slides. I will talk about this. For example, let us take the Law on Armenian Television and Radio. As you may recall, we talked about the code; the code inserted here shows the votes on the first reading, the sector, the committee, the date, who proposed it and the status, and what stage the piece of legislation is at the moment. These are simple statistical data, which we are presenting in a simpler and easily accessible format. And with this information sheet we enclose the voting data on how the deputies have voted.

Question-participant. How do you verify whether the deputies are voting instead of each other or not? How do you determine?

Lusine Hovhannisyan. We do not determine. It involves a system, and the button, naturally,

cannot recognize which deputy pressed it. If the button is pushed down, the software records whether the deputy has voted in favor or against. This is a database, which we upload on the website and we cannot change a thing in the data.

Comment/Question-participant. But this is clearly an issue that is to be addressed in another thematic track. How can we discover such problems? Because we have NGOs who closely follow the NA Rules of Procedure, they can clearly see that 44-45% of the NA deputies have no interest in the rules of procedure of their own institution. And we have mass media that are in the NA Hall of Sessions at that moment and can see how the deputies are voting. If one deputy votes for three people, this is an issue to be addressed in the NGO-mass media cooperation setting. If NGOs and the mass media work together on issues of shared interest, it will be possible to find out when a given deputy has been absent and hence somebody else has voted in his stead. And I hope that we are talking about a constructive approach, this is what the question was about. We know that there are deputies that do not vote and that others vote in their place. But how are we going to cooperate as a community of NGOs and as a community of mass media to expose these cases and to prevent them? This is the question.

Question-participant. Lena presented the material and we came to the conclusion that that is ok. Even if they are not present and only three people are present during the voting, perhaps it would be more useful to be in direct touch with the committee members. Wouldn't this be more constructive?

Answer- **Zhirayr Edilyan.** I think what you said is more of a statement rather than a question. For certain objectives, and I do think you already have this experience of working with the committees, the example cited by Lena is proof that this kind of work is being done with its attendant benefits.

Comment - participant. There is one thing that is not clear to me. If the mass media does not have freedom of speech, if the mass media cannot openly work with NGOs, those NGOs that are unacceptable to them, hence, those whose relatives do not have ministerial posts and are not at the National Assembly, the mass media won't work with these NGOs. The only reason is that they will lose their job the very next day. This is what is important. This may sound audacious but I will tell you about one case. We organized a campaign jointly with the youth branch of the Republican Party in the juvenile and women's colony. And the initiator of this was an NGO, which also provided a part of the presents distributed. On the next day, all the mass media came. On the following day we watched the broadcast, most interestingly I was also asked to give an interview. Only on the following day was it mentioned that the youth branch of the Republican Party had participated in such a charity event and visited a colony. What are you talking about?

Answer-**Zhirayr Edilyan.** This is a very interesting issue. This is the topic of discussion, cooperation between NGOs and mass media, in our parallel group. Let us revert back to what we were discussing. I wanted to mention that these data are already available and you can obtain those from our stand.

Zhirayr Edilyan's appeal. We ask you to be pro-active and to stop by to take information relevant to you.

Question-**Zhirayr Edilyan.** How do you think you are going to use these data in your activities?

Answer-participant. For example, I would point out an interesting topic, the energy sector, which I represent. If it is a draft law or an amendment, we could look up the votes by deputies to be able to file requests regarding amendments or make proposals to these deputies. This is perhaps the most effective option.

Zhirayr Edilyan. To find supporters and to see who shares our way of thinking and establish ties with them.

Comment. Such statistical data, as you said, makes it easier to roughly gauge the predisposition and to save more resources when trying to find out how and what they will think. This is one step forward.

This will also give us an opportunity to see which deputy we should work with so as to garner "yea" votes rather than "nays."

Answer- **Zhirayr Edilyan**. You are raising a very interesting point. Well, what do you think, how should we work, and in this particular case, how could such information be helpful to you?



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Local Government Bodies-Partnership and Advocacy

Nune Pepanyan. Professionals for Civil Society NGO

Topic: Practical tools for partnering with local government



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Comment - **Artemis Lepejyan**. The fourth floor of the premises to be used for social partnership was never provided to NGOs in Vanadzor. Instead, it was given to 3 international organizations and one floor was given to a deputy. But the issue of providing premises to NGO is stipulated by the Armenian law.

Question- **Sasun Nersisyan** . The manual features a SWOT analysis, where the weaknesses are many. In that case, what are the advantages of the center and what measures have been taken to enhance these strengths?

Answer - **Artashes Torozyan**. Since the center is under the jurisdiction of the marz authorities, the community cannot solve these issues. During the question-and-answer sessions organized for stakeholders, everyone focuses on his or her own issues. The underlying ideological foundation of the center is to establish enabling conditions and all that remains is to ensure productive cooperation between government structures and NGOs. The "Work" system of the Employment Agency is also going to be installed here.

Question-participant. NGOs are not close to the center. We are more interested in the cooperation framework between NGOs and local self-governance bodies. What cooperation are they engaged in? What cooperation framework is in place between local self-governance bodies and public secondary schools? The local self-governance bodies are telling us they have nothing to do with us and we should approach the city hall.

Answer - **Artashes Torozyan**. According to a decision adopted by the government in 1996, the community and state governance system was introduced to public secondary schools. In Armenia, community governance bodies did not benefit from these experiments. For example, the mayor changed in Goris, and also the director who opposed the mayor, he was also replaced. This is because local self-governance bodies are new to us. The government has centralized the state governance system even more. It has yet to achieve this in the future. However, the pre-school is still under the jurisdiction of communities, there are also issues connected to specialized schools.

Comment . NGOs have a lot of work to do in rural communities where the population is below

100, in the sense that communities, whether small or large, are considered to be communities. We do not even know who has the stamp. There are people who have not been registered, there are children whose births are not registered.

Artashes Torozyan. Goris Teachers Union NGO

Topic: *Overview of advocacy projects with local government bodies-tips and tools*

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Question-participant. What does 'specialized school' mean?

Answer -**Artashes Torozyan.** Music and sports schools.

Question-participant. Can we see the by-laws of these schools?

Answer -**Artashes Torozyan.** We will send the by-laws, which may also serve as a template for other cities and communities.

Question-participant. What is the age threshold for membership in the Council of Elders?

Answer -**Artashes Torozyan.** 21 years, although the word 'elder' prompts us that the nominees should be experienced.

Question-participant. The attitude of the Gyumri City Mayor and the Council of Elders to the NGO sector is crucial, as it will not be able to operate if the mayor does not permit it. Naturally, if the mayor does not share the viewpoint on a certain issue, he does not approve it, and neither Yerevan nor international organizations apply any pressure to counter this.

Answer -**Artashes Torozyan.** This is a very important issue. It is very difficult to work and secure a quorum in Goris, too. We also have recourse to make phonecalls to be able to work. A lot of effort goes into making problems budge from a dead start. We need to be able to show that we, the civil society institutions, need to protect the rights of social groups through our cooperation, and not to work against each other. NGOs should join their efforts on important issues.

Question-participant. Yerevan is considered to be a marz and each district hall has as many staff as a marzpetaran. The City Hall tells the NGOs, "I receive hundreds like you every-day. Whose request should I fulfill?" And how are the NGOs supposed to work with institutions that have not consolidated, such as the Council of Elders and local self-governance bodies?

Answer-**Nune Pepanyan.** You should not give up, on the contrary, refusals should bring NGOs together and motivate them to work jointly.

Improving NGO-Government Relations-Recommendations

April 15, 2007

Amalya Kostanyan. I should confess that I am quite impressed with our discussions. I feel my expectations have been met. Most importantly, to tell the truth, we have all gotten tired of the plethora of conferences where there is much talk, but little action. I want us to try to put forth proposals and I hope that at the next session there will be representatives of international organizations. At any rate, I think there will be, and this is why we will try to be more constructive.

The first and the most important issue is the lack of trust between the NGO sector and the government.

We will now write down the disadvantages in blue color and will mark the advantages in red, if we find any.

No one disagrees that is lack of trust. Or if they do, then they are very few. The government and the NGOs do not trust each other. This is a formidable problem from the viewpoint of cooperation.

Secondly, we point a finger at the authorities, saying that they have no expertise, and they point a finger at us. We do have a lack of professionalism. The society does not know the laws, the government takes no interest in what is happening in the communities and the needs that the communities have. We can mark down lack of knowledge and awareness as a disadvantage and a problem. I agree that the factors, such as knowledge, skills and awareness are more extensively discussed in reference to the society, however I think that the officials also lack awareness, or if they do have a level of awareness, then it is within the limited bounds of their expertise rather than, for example, international conventions, or they do not know that yesterday it was underlined that we also have a lack of knowledge and expertise. We do not separate the issues, we are writing down the common obstacles, as a very well-founded proposal was made yesterday to the effect that we ought to inform the local self-governance authorities and the government about our activities. Quite often, we fail to report to them, and if we take a more global look at the word "accountability," then we have in fact been neglectful, not because they are our formal supervisors, but because we have to inform the authorities just as we ought to be accountable before our beneficiaries and donors.

Hence, lack of trust, expertise, skills, are there other problems? A point was raised that the donor community is not playing a constructive role in promoting this cooperation either. Do you agree with this assessment? If yes, then why? We should not hold back, just because we have representatives of donor organizations here. I think we need to be honest and transparent. Thus, opinions were expressed that donor organizations prefer to work first and foremost with those NGOs that are predominantly neutral to the authorities, this is one consideration. Secondly, we feel that if we will not, say 'come to blows' with them, but rather take radical steps against a state structure or public official, or should a black PR campaign be launched or should [an NGO representative] be imprisoned if the tax service approaches him or her, will the donor community support them?

Participant. Perhaps we can direct this question to donors?

Amalya Kostanyan. I will ask donors this question, but this is our session and it is about us. If you think that this is not appropriate, then I will take the responsibility upon myself and will state that yes, I am aware of very few donor organizations, at any rate in our field, that will stand by us or will jeopardize their relations with the government. Because of us, should there be a build-up of tension in the situation? I think that this stance taken by donor organizations is also an issue.

The next problem is the lack of unity and agreement in the NGO sector. We cannot deny that this is our fault. This is a national problem and, naturally, it finds its reflection in the [political] parties, NGOs, the media and so on. Are there any other thoughts?

Levon Podoyan. This is my personal opinion and I do not want to spread over others, but our NGO sector is very closed within itself.

Amalya Kostanyan. An issue of transparency, yes.

Levon Podoyan. Every NGO, if it is carrying out a project or, in general, if we take grants, NGOs announce about their reports. Lack of transparency breeds fear. First of all, on the one hand, due to external factors, the experience shows that the previous governments generally... there is a considerable lack of knowledge, institutional capacity among NGOs, and this gives rise to another problem in that it creates lack of transparency.

Amalya Kostanyan . You reminded me of another issue - conflict of interest in the NGO sector, and certainly it is interesting but not surprising that all weaknesses are the same, both in the government and NGO sectors. This does not come as a surprise, why? Because our society is afflicted with the same diseases raging in the public sector and is reflected in the private sector and the media. Thus, we can eliminate this only through collective effort. Conflict of interests: I personally know of many NGOs [set up by public officials] and interestingly the public officials confess this of their own accord. For example, I was present at a TV program together with representatives of public structures, where he himself confessed that he had established an NGO and as he was making the regular accusation about NGOs being grant-eaters, he noted that he doesn't treat NGOs badly and that he himself has an NGO. I asked him about his NGO's funding. He answered that their members were making donations. We responded by saying that we were very glad to hear that they had such wealthy members as, regrettably, we did not have such members. This implicates a conflict of interest. Party members have NGOs and often times NGOs support parties. In the private sector, yesterday we had a discussion about this, advocacy: if, for example, we have an association of businesses and there is a legal matter at stake or a lobbying cause or advocacy issue, then whose rights are they going to protect? That is to say, they are going to stand up for entrepreneurial rights. For example, there is the rule of hiring non-government employees, or quite often they hurt themselves by hiring acquaintances who lack the skills to develop their businesses. Perhaps they hardly need to have any skills, as they operate under a protective wing, but this involves another subject matter. Conflict of interest, which, in my assessment, is an issue with us, is something of which we accuse the authorities and demand accountability, extensive expertise, and an attitude as equal partners towards us. I think that we first need to ask ourselves these questions. Do we meet these requirements? And, you know, if we do not, then we become susceptible to apprehension. For instance, for the past two years, representatives of the tax service have been paying us regular visits. Whenever I make extensive presentations, they come within five or so days. We have already gotten used to this routine. We need to be grateful for being exposed to only this kind of pressure, as there may be other pressures in the near future as well. When they came for the first time, I thanked them, and told them that although we were conducting an audit, they would catch whatever we had overlooked, moreover they would be doing this for free. We were paying large amounts of money, but unfortunately we were required to do a private audit as the findings by the tax authorities were not valid at the international level. Too bad, otherwise we would have saved a lot of money. At any rate, I think there are no objections so far. What problems and obstacles are we faced with? Where is our lack of confidence coming from? Is it due to all of this, or are there other underlying reasons as well?

Participant. Due to lack of information. Due to lack of transparency.

Amalya Kostanyan. As I recall, an excellent idea was presented yesterday, that is to say, the idea of mutual benefit in the positive sense. When we approach the local self-governance bodies or a ministry, let us work outside the grant projects, we need to address this or that issue together with you. This is how we need to interpret these market relations, this benefit. When we are writing projects, what motivation can the ministry or the local self-governance bodies have in cooperating with us as there is no financial benefit to gain? Of course there are NGOs that pay up, but there is no need to quote that example. But what does Mr. Hovhannisyan, the Traffic Police Department, have to gain from cooperation with you?

Eduard Hovhannisyan. He does not cooperate.

Amalya Kostanyan. I know, this is why I am asking. Perhaps there are no gains whatsoever.

Eduard Hovhannisyan. The law provides for his cooperation, but he does not cooperate. Just the opposite, he perceives the cooperation to entail a loss.

Amalya Kostanyan. You see? They often think that this means more work for them for no pay, and are not motivated to cooperate. I know that for many years now, efforts at encouragement have been taken. We take the opportunities, then we come home and we do not apply any of the knowledge gained and we are still unable to engage in cooperation. Let us think whether it is worth changing our approach and think about how to motivate them. How can we do this? Are there any suggestions?

Participant. If we take into account the fact that state agencies, specific ministries, senior officials are political appointments, they can get dividends from cooperation or tangible positive results from it and have vested interests in cooperating with NGOs.

Amalya Kostanyan. In fact, there is an opinion that it is easier to ensure transparency at the local level, as people know each other, as there are elections and it is not always that the parties carry the day, but on the other hand, are our political leaders truly motivated to create a positive image to be re-elected? Certainly, they are!

Participant. If we are talking about a specialist working at the Department on Sports Issues at the marzperataran level, it depends what level of public official we have in mind.

Amalya Kostanyan. We are talking about senior level officials, as the middle echelons, are not political.

Participant. For example, a city mayor has an interest in enhancing his or her image.

Amalya Kostanyan. From your experience, you may say that the mayor is motivated to enhance his reputation through cooperating with you.

Participant. Of course, it is a small town and he is going to face elections again.

Amalya Kostanyan. You think this is a factor?

Participant. As we noted yesterday, the people do not say that "Kariskh" NGO did this job, they'd rather say the mayor did it. But we may ignore this fact if they are ready to cooperate.

Participant. I think, in order to further develop the relations between the NGO sector and the authorities, we need to think in this direction as well: to implement a joint project. Why am I suggesting this? Because when implementing any project, if it is done by an NGO, the government is considered to be the partner and vice versa, this cooperation is not conducted on an equal basis. If an attempt is made to implement a project, a so-called parallel project, when the NGO sector and the government can be on an equal standing, I think this will contribute to the development of relations.

Amalya Kostanyan. How can we achieve an equal standing with them?

Participant. I think that the first precondition is what we marked down in the records as equality, professionalism, awareness, etc. I think that both sectors have these strengths and weaknesses. We shouldn't think of why we ought not to think about this, we simply need to lay the foundation for this. We need to mark these down as first, second, third.

Amalya Kostanyan. You prompted me about another extremely important issue, which is inequality. The lack of trust, which is a euphemism for problems with the authorities. Perhaps, this inequality which is reflected in the treatment of the NGO sector as, I wouldn't even say, an unequal partner but with considerable hostility and also the other way around. I wouldn't say we were angels either, as we do not treat each other as equals. For various reasons, which are obstacles. Let us see whether the legal framework contributes to this, or whether it provides for mutual trust, that is to say, do we have mechanisms for cooperation as equal partners? Irrespective of whether we have these mechanisms or not, who is conversant with the legal framework, which regulates our relations?

Participant. I am sorry, but the NGO sector cannot be on an equal footing with the government. It may have its say but cannot be on par with the government.

Amalya Kostanyan. Let us clarify what we mean by saying "equal."

Participant. There is a lot to understand.

Amalya Kostanyan. Let us clarify this issue. What do we understand by saying "equal relations"?

Participant. I perceive it to mean having equal authority with the authorities.

Amalya Kostanyan. I would say we are both equal before the law. We are accountable and if it is not our fault, then we should not be punished.

Participant. But in the end it is again the government who decides upon punishment

Amalya Kostanyan. Hence, there is no equality. Do you agree?

Participant. The law provides for all of the conditions, but the problem lies elsewhere. Simply, the culture of cooperation is missing.

Amalya Kostanyan. Why did this culture fail to take root in the course of 15 years?

Participant. I will cite an example from the experience of "Asparez Club" based in Gyumri. After failing to obtain the information they needed, then filed a case with the court and this is a precedent, which I think it a positive precedent, supporting the establishment of this culture.

Amalya Kostanyan. This was a very good example as we came to an agreement that, more or less, there are mechanisms in place. Let us leave implementation of laws aside for now. According to the law, we may go to the sessions of the National Council of Elders, etc. According to the law, we can simply call on people to rise up to their feet and organize a demonstration to convey our message of protest. According to the law, we may write letters, organize a press conference, you can see that we have a vast scope of opportunities, but do we in fact capitalize on these opportunities? I reiterate that theoretically we do have these possibilities, equal opportunities. If we look at our Constitution, which is the supreme law of the country, and if we look at all of the laws, nowhere will we find that NGOs are to be supervisors or subordinates. In no law will you find a clause providing for inequality. Now we have come to a very painful issue. We have a legal framework: first, we do not use it, perhaps this is yet another obstacle or weakness, we do not use all the possibilities and we shall discuss the reasons later. Hence, there is latitude, although most of the members of the opposition would agree that there is certainly a need for legal reform, but there is no need to change our constitution or the law, we simply should have applied them. Perhaps we would not be in the same situation. In other words, mere introduction of legal reforms will not suffice, or these laws and procedures should operate. We are facing the key problems of applying the law and the issue of responsibility, sharing responsibility. When a government representative accuses a journalist of slander, claiming that what s/he wrote is not true, there have been a few cases where the journalists won the lawsuit. Perhaps the government officials do not even have to use these means. Mr. Hovannisian filed a lawsuit, "Asparez Club" filed a lawsuit against the community and received an affirmative decision and as far as I know they were even given compensation, even though the sum was only symbolic. Nevertheless, this is a success. "Investigative Journalists" brought a lawsuit against the Yerevan City Hall as they were not provided with information about the owners of all the cafes in the environs of the Opera House.

Participant. I would like to point out a different aspect of inequality: let us think of what government is. Government is a structure with administrative leverage, force, and authority, and in many cases government officials may take a different view of things. In many cases, the officials do care whether s/he will have a thousand supporters or ten thousand opposers. The strength of an NGO does not stem from administrative leverage or power. For NGOs to be able to have an equal standing, or maintain some kind of parity with the authorities, they should seek their strength in their members, beneficiaries, and supporters. I am aware of the journalist's lawsuit, the proceedings are still underway, however some negligible progress was made and we have no guarantee that

others will go down that path. How many organizations stand behind this initiative in Armenia? If at least 10% would come together, the City Hall would make more concessions. In other words, NGOs should seek their strength in the society.

Amalya Kostanyan. I agree with you in that NGOs based in Yerevan are in an advantageous position. They are in a better position than their regional counterparts, although this is also an issue. So this is a vicious cycle, just like the question of which came first: the chicken or the egg? Yes, on the one hand, there is a vast, centralized administrative structure, and we are fragmented, I have no objections, but let us examine who is to blame for this fragmentation. We are to blame. Perhaps we lack these individuals, but we have them nonetheless. Believe me, it is not easy to convince anyone, even your colleagues at the office, who come and sacrifice themselves together with me, as people have different conditions, are exposed to different sets of pressures and under all circumstances, I think that it is better that individuals take action even if they are on their own. So that step-by-step in fact, conflict of interest is the issue here. In the very same NGO sector, unless other NGOs see a benefit in joining others, this will never happen. Instead of being punished or exposing themselves to pressures, why should they come to support us?

Participant. Nevertheless, I cannot fully agree with that point, as market relations are different, NGOs are of a different nature. If you have launched a positive initiative, and in many cases, when I see that there is no financial gain, the number of supporters for the cause sharply dwindles. However, NGOs derive their motivation from the similarity of initiatives or objectives with their own. Hence, material gains are a given, but I do not approve of NGOs that withdraw their support because of this consideration.

Amalya Kostanyan. Conceiving and proposing ideas to create income is important, because there is unemployment in this country and there are very few NGOs that continue their work on a voluntary basis once the grant is over or there is no support. Of course, there are such NGOs, and I can spell out their names but let us refrain from idealizing ourselves. Operating as an NGO in Armenia is mostly about earning an income, unfortunately it is a business. Do you recall the conflict of interest problem, with many people having both a party and an NGO, plus a government post? This is where it comes from. We expect to get support for the cause and this is a very painful issue for us too. In general, I will say this over again, there are two or three NGOs that will stand by us should we take radical steps or launch accusations or file a lawsuit, which we plan to do. I do appreciate that, it is extremely difficult to work in such an environment, this is why it is perhaps inevitable that instead of expecting to engage in joint activities, but rather attempt to make some sacrifices, let's try to do this. I may be wrong and there may be more NGOs that will support us than we think.

Participant. I truly believe that if we learn to cooperate and if this culture takes root, this will be the key. First of all, the NGOs also lack awareness. It is true that many of them go where the money is, but even if they come together only once and achieve success, they will enjoy more trust in the society. For NGOs, public image or positive reputation, even on this list of priorities, are at the end of the list.

Amalya Kostanyan. I may be accused of giving you the floor too much, let us give an opportunity to others as well. And how can we do this? True, I agree that we need to unite, but do we have positive examples of joining efforts? We have but few.

Participant. We say that the NGO sector should cooperate. I lay most of the blame at the door of international organizations for having plunged not only the NGO sector into a state of dependency from their grants, but also the government. International organizations should put down cooperation with the NGO sector as one of the requirements. This should be a precondition so that the government is compelled to cooperate with the NGOs in order to receive the grant funds.

Amalya Kostanyan. Let us look at the risks here. As it is now, we are called grant-eaters and

we are accused of doing whatever the international donors are requiring us to do. I think it will be very easy to exploit this caveat if they put pressure on the government to work with us. I am not saying that this is a bad idea, but let us discuss it. Let us put an end to this, perhaps it is difficult and the Armenians are waiting for a kind king or Mr. Bush, or I do not know who, a statesmen capable of wielding international influence to come and solve the Armenian problems. I think that we need to solve our problems ourselves. It is unfortunate that, whereas in Georgia, and in any other country, the donors provide more assistance to NGOs and if we blame the donors, they are more pro-active than the Armenian NGO sector, they are struggling for their own cause and ideas and we are still not budging from our place and just waiting. I am sorry, but donors pursue their own geopolitical interests in the region.

It would be more constructive to make better use of what the representatives of donor organizations are providing us. Let us prove that we deserve to be trusted, so that if something happens to us, then they will support our cause rather than... You are right, we do form coalitions. I have a very negative experience with coalitions, but a very positive experience with short-term groups for advocacy or lobbying for laws on illegal construction or lobbying for laws related to the PRSP or some development in a community and a short-term arrangement where no one expects foul play or a grant. It is here that new heights can be achieved and this achievement can be used to prove that it is worth applying pressure. Believe me, we are studying these agreements on funding provided by the international community, and the clauses requiring engagement of the society are omnipresent. Often times, donor organizations, let us say international organizations, are not consistent and they do not monitor the assistance they are providing to see how the funds are being used. These groups establish gongos and present reports, and I know about this and I resent this, there are organizations that provide funds to fight corruption sponsored by the government. You are aware of this in all of your areas. Unless we prove to ourselves and the others that we are not like that, unfortunately, I am sorry for turning this into a rally, but all of us deserve what we have today, as citizens of Armenia we deserve quite a grave situation. We are sliding back from democracy, despite a hefty investment in it. Immorality is rampant; there is no rule of law. Let us confess that even if we are not contributing to this, we are not putting up resistance against it either. We are in fact contributing to it, this is why let we should put pre-conditions before the donors right from the start.

Participant. I simply wanted to add that perhaps it would be worth while to see the problem within us, i.e. we do not trust the law. We talked extensively about responsibility, and this is in the hands of the authorities. That is provided by the law, and unless we learn the law and try to address the problems within the frames of the law, we will have, we do have a problem. Instead of waiting to see how the officials are going to solve the problem, we need to look at the solution provided by the law and we need to file a lawsuit and put pressure to apply the law. This is the best way.

Participant. We are here talking about social partnership between the NGOs and the government, and this was the focus as the legal framework seems to not exist at all in this dimension. We do have the precedent of a participatory institution and social partnership becomes realistic through the usage of participatory institutions and their resources. Even without resorting so-called coalitions, we are free to fully use our deputies, but we do not have this culture today. I keep referring to the PRSP: even if we know it, we do not ascribe importance to the fact that the Poverty Reduction Strategy has been the socio-economic and political framework of the country since 2003. That all laws, the state budget and the mid-term expenditure framework emanate from it. Consequently, what we want to do is to see this vision at all levels, and moreover, let us not forget that in the social partnership context there are deputies from NGOs covering five sectors, whose leverage should be used in this review stage. To tell you the truth, with much delay, perhaps due to a passive approach, I now have the objectives and prospects for the vision of social partnership and participatory establishments in the

framework of the PRSP and I would like to draw parallels at the end of our conference, after recapping, to see what common denominator our authorized representatives have come to in this context- the participatory and social context. I am pleased to share with everyone that there are parallels, that we have convinced the government about many issues in its vision and geographic imbalance, and NGO sector and government resources, and also the fact that NGOs are valuable resources for donor organizations. The NGOs mustered courage for social partnership and the NGO sector is more prepared than the representatives of government structures, and it was proposed that donors channel their resources also to the government. This was due to our initiative, and I do not see anything negative in this. This broke the ice and the government now tries to see us as partners, and this is a significant achievement. Let us appreciate these achievements and use these achievements purposefully, as we have donors here, this is a message directed not only at the government or to them. It is time to tell donors that equal opportunities should be created for NGOs, as our colleague from Gyumri emphasized, so that we can become partners on par with the business sector with whom they will be willing to work.

Amalya Kostanyan. Thank you. Please distribute to those who are interested. I think that we will proceed to the specific proposals which we are going to make. Let us come up with specific, rather than theoretical proposals. Later, at the end, we will be able to go over those proposals and leave only the realistic proposals that we can make. Rather than wait for donors to come and do it, instead let us try to undertake very specific tasks. I want to suggest that, whoever is ready to pursue specific proposals, please volunteer your candidacy and be confident and act confidently.

Participant. To be able to exchange information with each other easily.

Amalya Kostanyan. How can we do this?

Participant. Because, here they talked on behalf of various organizations, some even gave an extensive account of their activities. We are simply delighted with this. It would have been much better if others were also engaged, perhaps they are not acting wisely. If there is scope for cooperation among the organizations, it will be possible to achieve results through this mutual assistance. Otherwise, this looks like the assembly of mice, as in Hovhannes Tumanian's tale, where no one wants to take responsibility for hanging the bell. This is very characteristic of our nation.

Amalya Kostanyan. Please make very specific proposals if you can. What can we do?

Participant. Yes, I will say.

Eduard Hovhannisyan. Through some means or mechanisms, the non-governmental organizations should exercise some oversight over all of these committees.

Participant. I have a proposal to make to all NGOs: Perhaps most of you receive the electronic newsletter of the Youth Initiative, which has been published for two and a half years already, thanks to the volunteers, non-professionals, and journalists of the organization. Here, there is also a page on NGOs, where any NGO may send materials or the direct sources of your information, you can send those to us. My staff will structure it and publish it in the newsletter. I will write down the email of our organization and I assure you that over 800 NGOs, businesses, government agencies, as well as over 1,600 individuals, receive our newsletter. If you want more people to be aware of your information free of charge and quickly, please write to yfpd@web.am.

Amalya Kostanyan. We will now discuss it. You are located adjacent to the Public Palace.

Representative of Vanadzor City Hall. I also want to propose measures aimed at the development of relations between the local government and donors. If the international organizations provide information to the local government authorities about grant projects implemented by NGOs, it will be easier to implement NGO projects in the given communities. This is based on my experience, as I have worked at all levels. Those donor

organizations that do not provide information to the local authorities, naturally face obstacles by the latter. Thus, catalyzed donor-local government relations should be established.

Amalya Kostanyan. Thus, information about all grant and non-grant projects, information about the projects underway should somehow be available. Let it be at the level of the local government, as the proposal was about this level. You know, often times, donors do not even coordinate their projects among themselves. They have issues with each others as well, not only with you, unfortunately.

Participant. I would like to repeat myself. We have quite solid coalitions and networks. For example, the environmentalist, RecCaucasus, which has both a newsletter and a website, through which at least the environmentalists can use the available resources. We should not only lay the emphasis on creating, we should by all means use the existing resources. In this case, the information problem is more crucial. Let us disseminate information to everyone using all the networks in place in any given sector. Let us use all the sources.

Amalya Kostanyan. How can we do this?

Participant. I think that NGOs representing all sectors are here today. They know of working networks and can forward this information to Counterpart, which will immediately disseminate this information to everyone else.

Amalya Kostanyan. The proposal was to gear our work to specific areas, rather than create something brand-new, to use resources supporting networks of which are already in place. Thus the first suggestion: to exchange information about the information networks in operation as well as electronic newsletters being circulated.

Participant. I would like to make a specific suggestion. As the city hall representative just mentioned, the state officials or the local government representatives can organize such trainings for the NGOs so that they can fully participate.

Artashes Torozyan. I have one addition. The Goris Teachers Union NGO already has experience in this. We have organized meetings at the City Hall with members and staff of the Council of Elders and the City Hall, in an effort to inform them about our work, and the project currently implemented by NGOs, so that they can gain a better understanding about us, as well as create opportunities for cooperation. It is true that these were just the first steps, but these must be consistent. These meetings have already resulted in an agreement that NGOs are to meet with the staff members of the City Hall and Council of Elders on an annual basis. This is an absolute must for the NGOs as well.

Eleanor Valentine. I am going to remind everybody that you have headphones in the seat pocket. So it will take a technical minute. Maybe I am sitting right here in front of the title of our conference, it needs "The role of NGOs in the public policy process". I just want to ask, if you can put a little bit of emphasis on that public policy process and the opportunity for NGOs. I think what I would like to comment that during last two days, there is more transparency in the policy process now, than there has ever been before. Opportunity for NGOs to follow those issues and to anticipate the needs of government, for the kind of information, the kind of support and partnership that can be offered by different NGOs, either by single NGOs or coalitions. I think this point is very important. Who is going to be in the coalition? Situational coalitions formed around those issues are very important. The fact that you can find information on about pending legislation, what it is about and how to participate in the hearings in parliament, or whether it is the kind of information or kind of support that will be needed to support the Millennium Challenges Goals, or PRSP. Program budgeting provides not only for monitoring, but also for anticipating how NGOs can be service providers for the government, whether at the local level or at the national level. I think when you are criticizing the donor community, and I am not a representative of the donor com-

munity right now, it is not going to be long before the donor community is going to be gone. The goals right now set the foundations for what happens in future. I think there is a huge opportunity right now for the resources within the NGO community to identify where they can be of assistance in the public policy process, in making policy and implementing the policy. I think that is where you will find the donor support right now. More than thinking about what the development of the NGO sector is, think about what we do now. How do we actually address the issues of public policy and become part of that process. So aside from the dissemination of information and developing your credibility as information providers or service providers, you will understand that a partnership between an NGO and a government entity is not a bad thing. In fact it is a much needed thing. Affiliating your NGO, identifying with the need or the goals of a political entity, is a natural thing. If a political party supports what you are going to do, of course there will be an alliance, and that doesn't mean you are sleeping with the devil, it doesn't have to, if there is transparency, and that is the issue. If there is transparency and accountability, you can have those alliances as long as both sides, the NGO side and the government side, are honest about it.

Amalya Kostanyan. Sorry, I cannot agree with everything said, but I will not voice my objections now. In any case, I think that in today's political environment it is not a positive thing to have direct cooperation with a political force, but this is another matter. I now want to break down Eleanor's suggestion into a specific proposal. Do we need information that we should ask Counterpart to send us? Although I think all of us are aware of this information, we need it to be summarized. For example, what the National Assembly is doing, what the local authorities are doing and what activities the NGOs are involved in. We need this information, even if we are not taking action although we are aware of it. Now we will take the time to think about how to use this information more effectively.

Theresa Khorozyan. I have two suggestions, one of which refers to the donor organizations. First, since, I think, we are not arguing about the fact that we can explore the classical methods of enhancing the input by NGOs in the policy-making processes at great length, but I think it would be much more useful to study the experience of NGOs in Armenia. Counterpart is trying to put together this experience, and, in my opinion, it would be much more efficient if we could study the success and failure stories with no guilt attached in an effort to find out which mechanisms work well and which ones don't. I think we will learn a lot that way.

Question-participant. Who is going to do this?

Theresa Khorozyan. I think that Counterpart can help with this but it can also be done without Counterpart. At any rate this may be helpful. The second suggestion is addressed to the donors. To a lesser extent today, but donors have directly and actively influenced the processes of the making of this or that policy. In my opinion, donors should play a more subdued role, they should act more in an advisory capacity not only in relation to the government, but also NGOs. I think this is what the essence of donors' involvement should be. Secondly, the issue of accountability. This is a key issue and I think that the NGOs should proactively demand accountability from international organizations, rather than limiting themselves to discussion. For example, we didn't receive a grant and another organization received it. Our NGO and third parties should actively engage the beneficiaries in these activities. For example, I shall be very happy if Alex could organize events and I could get involved and sign the letters myself. The important thing here is that through involving the beneficiaries, not only does the leverage of the NGO grow, but the political culture is also enhanced and consolidated. We are too focused on political institutions and laws, and we forget the fact that we do not have a good political culture. Since the Soviet times we are used to thinking that the government will provide us with everything, but everything has changed since then. We need to realize that we need to make demands of the government. These values are not ingrained in our society. NGOs teach beneficiaries this culture every time they engage

them and teach them to fight. These were the three suggestions.

Participant. I would like to talk about social cooperation. As all of you may be aware, this sector is quite active, both in terms of numbers and quality. Now we are implementing a project jointly with the local authorities by training ten staff members at the City Hall. Together with the NGO centers of our city, we submit proposals, expecting that these will be taken into consideration when planning the city budget and some activities will be outsourced by the City Hall to NGOs. We talked about this educational process, and we could do something along those lines. I can say that the representative of the Social Department of the City Hall has a lot of input in bringing NGOs together and creating a database on the NGO sector. There is such a database available at the City Hall and I propose that the adjacent committees on public relations be created nationwide. We did mention that such structures exist in several ministries, for example it was stated that the Ministry of Healthcare has such a database, but the information is fragmented and incomplete. I propose that such organizations as Counterpart or the NGO Center compile such a database, certainly with our help. We will provide our data, information about issues of concern, and the government will also have this database and cooperation will be easier to undertake.

Participant. I would like to join Mrs. Valentine's opinion, in that when I suggested that Counterpart disseminate information, I meant information about those sources where there are structures created jointly with the government. There are sources, and it is important to be aware of these sources to be able to approach them directly. These are available both at the National Assembly and the ministries, and there is a framework within the PRSP. If we are to create a new structure once again, there is no point in using the old ones.

Participant. I propose that Counterpart International implement another large-scale project so that special desks can be created in marzpetarans and city halls; desks for NGO coordination that will work with NGOs operating in the given marz and community. These will serve as a source for the exchange of information.

Alex Sardar. There are three points I'd like to make. First one, in one of the other sessions yesterday we talked about case work. Many organizations here in this session, and almost all organizations participating in the conference do case work, and case work from the perspective of legal representation, all the way to providing social services. Then whatever it is in between, for example Counterpart partner ISOs to NGOs, one thing that is not prevalent in Armenia and the Armenian NGO sector, is using case work as a basis for policy suggestion, as building policy positions. A lot of you, a lot of organizations that came together this weekend, do a lot of good work for individual citizens, for groups of citizens. But once the issues are solved or a resolution is found, that issue dies. That success, failure, or challenge does not get distributed around, does not get used for anything else. So my suggestion is that organizations that are engaged in service provision need to seriously think about, and we can have support here to use their case work in forming policy positions and platforms, and contributing public policy. That's one issue. Second, the NGO sector in Armenia; in my short experience over the last five years, is very reactive, it is not all proactive participation in terms of participating in public policy process. The only time I see NGOs actually getting involved is, when lobbying for laws, when it is to do with the PRSP, or anticorruption. There are big issues, and I am talking about local community level concerns, that should be the focus. We need to be very reactive. We need to think about mechanisms, really what I am doing, I am building what Elli suggested, in creating a mechanism not an organization, whether it is information sharing within the NGO sector, whether it is raising our own capacities as an organization for research and analysis, and providing information to an institute like the National Assembly or to government agencies, or to the local government. Proactively providing input, and I want to put emphasis on the word proactive. We do not wait until a piece of legislation is on the agenda to give input on that policy matter. We form the agenda, the NGO sector forms the agenda for public

policy issues. This is very important. And finally the third suggestion, and this is something that I am taking my cue from Theresa, which has been tried once in Armenia and I think this is something that will serve the NGO sector well. This is an American concept, but it can be localized in the Armenian context. It is the concept of a caucus in the National Assembly formed by NGOs. Instead of NGOs going through individual deputies, who they know by family relations or acquaintances, they will work on those individual MPs to be the champions for their issues inside the parliament, and that's one way of doing it. But I think in order to become systematized using that same concept, creating groups of MPs in parliament, not physical structures, but conceptual communities of interests, as we call it at Counterpart, to support our issues, our agendas. They may not all work, but at least we will have MPs who we can go to every time we have an issue or we want to make a specific policy suggestion and they will then, because we have already built that relationship with them, be able to take that to the next level and that will be another mechanism for us to provide information, as is the website of the National Assembly, or the library of National Assembly, and move beyond the legislative branch and go to the executive branch and local government as well. So those are my three suggestions. Thank you.

Participant. Thus, sector-based specialization by NGOs and clear definition of their strategies in an effort to create closer ties with the authorities covering a particular area, may be one of the ways to develop NGO-government relations. This will enable us to establish ties, enhance information in the course of their activities, and inform the relevant authorities. This will also empower NGO's to thrust their leverage into the bargain to attain an objective in specific cases. Theresa also mentioned the involvement by beneficiaries. It is also very important to be accountable to the supporters, which also proves access to the networks of the beneficiaries. This opens the doors for NGOs to establish ties with government officials and other authorities. More involvement by the beneficiaries should be encouraged, work should be undertaken to that effect, and this will also enhance the relations between the government and the NGO sector.

Amalya Kostanyan. I have one request to make, we started to generalize again. I heard very few specific suggestions. Everything you are saying is true, but I am asking you to be more specific. How can we work with individual MPs? How should we work with the authorities of a given sector? Please be specific.

Fatma Khachatryan - National Assembly Library Head. I will try to be more specific. I am representing the National Assembly Library and several years ago there was another big conference at the Sports and Concert Complex where I asked NGOs to provide copies of the findings of their monitoring reports and analyses to the National Assembly Library so that these materials could be forwarded to the relevant committees. I should say that there has been absolute inaction, and after the presentation of your last book I took the initiative to come and obtain a copy of it. But I would like to stress that you should not be under the misapprehension that the MPs or the Committees are not interested. Quite the opposite, they do take an interest in the opinion and positions of independent structures and NGOs, on specific issues. Try to send me copies of your materials and I guarantee that within a year I will inform you about the effectiveness of the findings of your materials.

Amalya Kostanyan. Please leave your name and phone number so that we can start writing to you from now on.

Fatma Khachatryan. I will come up now and will write my e-mail address

Participant. My first specific proposal entails, and, first of all, it refers to addressing the problem of deficient skills among NGOs. On behalf of my organization I can propose to hold an assembly, and we are ready to work with NGOs operating in our community, in our marz, to develop them and we are truly willing to do this. I would ask donors to take note of the fact that should some small assistance be provided, no financial resources will be needed. We are not saying that international trainers and such will be

involved. We will provide whatever we have or know how to develop them.

Amalya Kostanyan. How shall we phrase it? NGOs should work with each other, trainings by NGOs rather than donors.

Participant. We can look at the findings of the survey on advocacy conducted by our organization in the Lori marz. I myself cannot imagine.

Participant. I have two proposals. In order to have influence on processes, it is important to have the trust of the mass media and to work with them. Consequently, since we are still submitting our proposals to Counterpart, an NGO can organize a similar event, meetings with the representatives of the mass media and specifically with the representatives of the public TV stations. These events should not necessarily be of promotional nature or have direct benefits to the NGOs, these should be meetings with specified thematic coverage so that mechanisms allowing the fulfillment of objectives can be worked out.

This is basically an opportunity for us to further develop our relations with the government.

Participant. Convey our message to the government through the mass media.

Amalya Kostanyan. That is, they should disseminate information about us and wield pressure.

Participant. Whenever it comes to NGOs turning to the mass media for help, the accusations of being grant-eaters and other problems, as you mentioned, arise. The mass media needs to know more about us. The mass media should know who it is worth working with. But at any rate, cooperation among the NGOs should be enhanced.

Amalya Kostanyan. But, all the same, the final target audiences are the supporters and the government, as the mass media is the disseminator of information.

Participant. And the second proposal: all of us know that the state budget provides funding to NGOs and we also know that this is done through a presidential decree. A meeting could be organized to discuss this decree. How was the partner organization selected, and generally is it possible to introduce changes to this decree in order to promote NGO movements? For, if we expect accountability from the donors, the government, or the executive branch, the president should also be under the accountability requirement. In the future, funding from the state budget should grow and the more we benefit from this opportunity, the more benefit the overall NGO movement will derive from this.

Participant. I would like to continue this line of thinking to suggest that it would be desirable to have an open-source resource center today, so that all NGOs, (we also talked about research and surveys), could place these materials in an electronic format so that such activities could be carried out. Specifically, we have excellent video clips featuring social issues and I will provide these with great pleasure for lectures and similar events. Thus, people will know what to get from where. Open Source Resource Center. It would be desirable if the National Assembly could fund this so that a gamut of problems could be addressed. We have done an excellent survey, but the numbers involved are small.

Participant. And I would like NGOs to be informed about the public hearings at the National Assembly, so that the NGOs could be made aware and could decide whether to participate or not.

Amalya Kostanyan. We talked about that yesterday. Perhaps not all NGOs have access to the Internet to be able to be active and to visit the website at parliament.am to keep themselves informed.

Participant. Very often, newspapers publish announcements about upcoming public hearings one month in advance, specifying which committee is planning to hold public hearings on what subject. Let us be more pro-active. I worked for NGOs in the past and I do have an understanding of how NGOs operate.

Amalya Kostanyan. We still have another hour before the break and we have a chance to talk and discuss. But I would like for us to make several specific proposals by the closing of the session. I would ask everyone to limit it to one minute. I would ask those wishing to speak to raise their hands.

Participant. In order to improve government-NGO relations, it is essential to apply the dialogue method to launch a dialogue of simply new quality. For example, frequent meetings can be organized with government officials. There hasn't been much initiative so far.

Amalya Kostanyan. A proposal has been made to participate in committee sessions.

Participant. I am making a specific proposal. Before starting all of this, we should propose to the government to get rid of all gongos.

Amalya Kostanyan. That is a good proposal: we shall write a letter telling them to get rid of gongos.

Vardges Mkrtchyan. "Bari Yert" NGO, Goris

I would ask the organizers to invite the Minister of Territorial Administration and if not, then the Chief of Prime Minister's Staff or the NA Vice-Speaker to the next meeting.

Amalya Kostanyan. Sorry, but why should we wait for such an event, let us say, to be organized some three years down the road. I think that perhaps we should try this on our own initiative before then.

Participant. It is possible, but there are quite formidable difficulties involved here.

Amalya Kostanyan. In other words, there should be more government representatives at such events.

Participant. We listened to quite a lot of ideas here and I am now drawing conclusions. The demands placed by the mass media and government before us, when I analyze all of this I realize that the NGOs have consolidated. Yes, NGOs have consolidated, as the mass media today call NGOs grant-eaters and delegate the authority to influence and monitor the society: we have consolidated, this is why they are making such ambitious demands. The same is true about the government. I have seen how the government has made an effort to see equal partners in NGOs, to see them as consolidated structures. But as I listen to all of us, I realize that we lack the resources, knowledge and material resources, even though we have reached this stage. Today, my proposal is the following: let us work to enhance ourselves, for we have reached a new stage in our development, in view of our potential, expertise, experience, and skills.

Participant. I have a specific proposal to make. In view of our experience, there are centers in all countries, the premises and operation of which are provided for by the government. These are centers where parliamentarians and NGOs hold monthly meetings. Thus, there is a specific place where information can be obtained. The center's name should reflect both constituent parts: Government-NGO Club. The marzes also need such centers, and later such centers can also be created in the administrative center of the marzes. Another proposal, in addition to this one. We are all talking about the lack of potential; there are training opportunities for the state structures. Why can't the NGOs be sent to these training sessions? These were the two proposals.

Participant. The cooperation process is new and the NGOs lack the experience. I propose that a webpage be created, where information on the projects implemented by NGOs can be placed, for example, in the framework of Counterpart International's project. There will be success stories, obstacles, and projects to be implemented in the future due to some procedural processes or lack of funding.

Amalya Kostanyan. I checked and Counterpart's website is going to be ready shortly and I think your proposal is realistic and feasible.

Participant. Thus we will be able to know how to be of help to each other. At least help will be

forthcoming amongst us.

Participant. Yesterday, we discussed an interesting issue. The National Assembly expert said that there is a lack of participation and often, I hardly know who the expert is and who I should ask. I come across this challenge quite often in my day-to-day work. Let us create a useful database. I propose to compile a sector-based database, spelling out what expertise each NGO has. I will specify who is covering public utilities in our sector and what specialists we have. We often need economists to come and help us and we do not know who to write to.

Participant. I would like to add that it would be better to have a sector-based approach for the purpose of disseminating information. The NGOs do not study the entire given sphere or framework.

Eleanor Valentine. We had a colleague from the National Assembly who visited Ukraine several years ago. One of the things that was impressive, was the number of NGO centers that had affiliations with former members of parliament. Members of parliament who had been active, but were able to help the NGOs to be more effective during policy interventions. They knew their colleagues, they knew the system, whatever. After the elections, there will be several members, former members who might be engaged as experts, as affiliates for these coalitions for public policy campaigns.

Anush Dulgaryan. Thus, my proposal echoes everything Eleanor said: we are talking not only about cooperation among the NGOs, but also with the government. Here, I would also like to stress the role of elected bodies and talk about mechanisms that may further empower the NGOs. Thus, we should not wait once again for them to not be elected and then help, instead it should be delineated every time in all activities.

Recommendations (extract)

Obstacles

- Mutual mistrust
- Lack of knowledge, skills
- Approach of donor organizations
- Absence of unanimity and union in NGO sector
- Lack of NGO transparency, profits collision
- Lack of information about NGO activities
- Lack of mutually beneficial approach
- Inequality of collaboration terms
- Non-effective use of existing legal field opportunities
- Lack of right use culture
- Incomplete use of the law
- Deviation from NGOs' missions in pursuit of financial support

SUGGESTIONS

1. Form a non-governmental expert group to present interests of NGO sector
2. Website creation for information (according to the fields), realizing programs, best experience, donors' support
3. Use the existing opportunities of civil policy formation and realization control (PRSP, Anticorruption Program)
4. Improvement of National Program Coordination
5. Active transmission of information to the National Assembly library by NGO sector
6. Create public dialogue club for NGOs and the representatives of state and local self-governing bodies
7. Publish brief reference-book about deputies and NGOs cooperation
8. Discussion of the State Support Program by NGOs
9. Use the results of National Assembly deputies' ballots
10. Create Local self-governing body-NGO procedure for stimulation of more effective cooperation

Track **B**

Business - NGO Relations:

New Frontiers in Sustainability and Development

The National Conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process is a three-day gathering of Armenian NGOs, representatives of government, media, and businesses to explore together the most pressing challenges, review the best cases, and gain new insight into lessons learned from Armenian and international practitioners and experts. Conference participants will engage in substantive discussions and skill building in the following four thematic areas:

1. **Government - NGO Relations:** Systems approach to the public policy process
2. **Business - NGO Relations:** New frontiers in sustainability and development
3. **Citizens/Community - NGO Relations:** With the people, for the people
4. **Media - NGO Relations:** Redefining interaction for the public interest

Track B Discussion framework:

The United Nations Johannesburg Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002 is, by many accounts, the redefining moment of NGO-business relations internationally. Citing the Greenpeace-Shell case at the Summit, when the two organizations presented their common strategic and advocacy platforms, Roger Cowe¹ notes that this was a vivid example of this changing paradigm. Whereas before this particular example, the accepted norm in NGO-business relations was one of extreme confrontation, when large, membership-driven advocacy organizations focused solely on their role as watchdogs of transnational corporations, in the new paradigm, businesses and NGOs retain their traditional roles, while also exploring potential value-added functions to each others' missions and objectives.

An INTRAC² research of private sector and NGO relations defines the volatile relationship between NGOs and businesses in the following four phases:

- corporate philanthropy, which is ad hoc and non-systemic;
- strategic, targeted contributions to specific NGOs and causes;
- mainstream involvement engaging corporate staff in operational details;
- accountability and inclusion, which is a long term engagement with all stakeholders

1. Roger Cowe, *Business/NGO partnerships - what's the pay-back?*, 16 April 2004, <<http://www.ethicalcorp.com/content.asp?ContentID=1921>> (February 14, 2006).

2. Simon Heap, "NGOs and the Private Sector," *NGO Policy Briefing Paper, no. 1* (Oxford: International NGO Training and Research Centre: January 2000).

Armenia Context:

Research conducted on the Armenian NGO sector's funding trends in 2004 showed that 22% of Armenian NGOs report private business support for their activities, while only 11% of those interviewed said they received government financial support for projects. In the same year, according to the same research findings, the overall amount of funding from the business sector had decreased significantly from the preceding year. A more recent survey conducted by the Yerevan-based NGO Center (NGOC) of the business community in Armenia, identified that an overwhelming majority of businesses participating in the survey (72%) were engaged in charity work. Of this majority, however, a significant portion was engaged in direct charity work (through providing direct financial donations and assistance) and only 32% said they cooperate with other not for profit organizations.

The current trend in the Armenian business environment, as observed by civil society experts, leans toward charitable work through family foundations associated with mid-to big-business entrepreneurs, who tend to also be politically active. The pre-election campaign timeline is a good time to observe such charitable, non-profit work. It should be noted that business associations and foundations in support of small and medium-sized business development have been active, but again represent a very narrow set of business interests, and as such they do not necessarily qualify for the broader context of business-NGO collaboration.

If INTRAC defines corporate philanthropy as the starting point in the overall framework of NGO-business interaction, then Armenian NGOs and businesses are at the starting point of what could be a promising and mutually rewarding relationship.

The discussion on further development of the current state of NGO-business relations in Armenia should revolve around the following broadly formulated topics:

- ***Transforming businesses from ad-hoc charity to strategic partnership for social development:*** It is important to transform the understanding of business organizations and entrepreneurs from simple giving, to giving for a social cause or strategically becoming partners with NGOs. Armenian NGOs today have the capacity to administer funding on behalf of donors of various kinds, and they have built entire advocacy movements around specific issues, and instead of affecting change in one community, business entrepreneurs can use this ready-made infrastructure to affect change on a larger, possibly national scale.
- ***Broadening the reach of NGOs into the business community, through value-added and benefit-based approaches:*** To see a substantive engagement of businesses and NGOs, a dialogue on the benefits and possibilities of such an engagement is necessary. With the onset of a new framework of business and NGO collaboration, it is quite possible for the two sectors to begin considering each others' capacities and values for a specific process or objective.
- ***Building socially responsible business strategies with NGO input:*** The sustainability of businesses rely on economic factors as much as they do on the relevance they have within the communities in which they operate. A socially responsible business strategy is one way of ensuring relevance and attracting clientele, and NGOs are the natural partners for business organizations in developing such strategies.

Track **B**

Business-NGO Relations

New Frontiers in Sustainability and Development

Challenges and Opportunities in Business-NGO Relations

April 13, 2007

Ara Nazinyan - moderator, Country Director, Eurasia Foundation, Armenia

Today's challenge is to explore all the available opportunities for the development of these relations. This is yet another opportunity to sum up the path paved so far, and try to map out what is to be done in the future to improve the situation of NGOs in Armenia. The role of businesses or entrepreneurs becomes increasingly important for further progress along this path. In recent years, various organizations in Armenia have tried to address this issue, and the concept of corporate social responsibility has gained extensive use. This topic is of particularly vital importance to NGOs, as it is no secret that it is mainly viewed as an opportunity for finding a potential source of revenues as well as prospects for cooperation. This topic is also a pressing issue for businesses, since now that the first stage of capital accumulation is successfully over, these organizations are faced with new challenges related to their image and reputation, undermining the enterprises' future and ability to gain new markets.

In view of all these interests at stake, we will try to find out what opportunities are available for the concept of corporate social responsibility for the two parties involved: society and the business sector. Like all other countries, Armenia is also trying to realize all the stages of business development.

We will try to find out which stage of development the concepts of corporate social responsibility and cooperation between businesses and NGOs are at, and what our next step should be.

A vast majority of the participants here are representatives of the NGO sector. However, businesses should also take part in such events. We need to define the challenges facing NGOs from the qualitative point of view. We need to be asking what NGOs should do to be able to cooperate with the business sector on par, rather than what the business sector should do to cooperate with NGOs.

The focus of discussions should be on the situation, as perceived to exist, in the area of cooperation with the businesses from the NGOs' point of view.

As for how this process started and evolved in Armenia from the viewpoint of the business sector, this will be addressed by Karen Baghdasaryan, representing Broncoway, a private company.

Karen Baghdasaryan, Chief Marketing Officer, Broncoway

Topic: *The Business sector's view on corporate social responsibility in Armenia*

The conclusions that have been drawn are based on international experience.

I will explain why I am making this presentation and why I am representing Broncoway at this discussion.

First of all, Broncoway is one of the ten companies throughout the world that has initiated the concept of corporate social responsibility, or corporate citizenship. It was among the first ten companies that became a supporter of the UNO's Global Compact program.

Broncoway has a number of projects that are implemented, drawing on the company's capacity itself. These projects are related to the environment. Among the launched activities are the study of Armenian rock art and the use of IT as well as GIS technologies (a system of geospatial services). GIS technology has information systems which are used for archeological purposes. Knowledge gained is used to study Armenian forests and to understand how to preserve these forests.

The other reason why I am representing Broncoway is that our enterprise is an SME rather than a large company, and the problem being discussed is typical for SMEs. Large enterprises clearly have no difficulty addressing their image problem. Besides, large enterprises have very large financial resources, but small and medium enterprises face problems in this respect. However, it is the small and medium-sized enterprises throughout the world that are the largest contributors to GDP growth and sources of employment.

Those NGOs that are interested in working with businesses should focus on small and medium-sized enterprises.

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Knarik Arabyan. NGO Center

Topic: *Experience of charity by for-profit organizations in Armenia-presentation of research findings*

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Ara Nazinyan

Armen Shahbazyan will talk about notions and perceptions of social investment that are likely to develop, and what role business structures are to play in Armenia.

Armen Shahbazyan. Business Association Specialist, Competitive Armenian Private Sector Project (CAPS)

Topic: *Business association as a way to improve public policy*

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Anna Kurdova. lawyer, "NGO Center"

Topic: *Comparative perspectives on legislation enabling business-NGO Collaboration*

- (1) All three parties engaged in social cooperation in Armenia are largely unaware of the real value and need for this institution in solving social problems in society. Corporate responsibility should not be confused with social cooperation. Corporate responsibility and charity are different things. Social cooperation is viewed in the world as one of the mechanisms for carrying out charity work.

Definition of social cooperation:

- (2) For all layers of society, social cooperation is a mutually beneficial arrangement. Nevertheless, in our country, for whatever reason, this notion is not attributed the value it warrants. Let us look into the reasons accounting for this, and come up with proposals for finding a way out of this situation.
- (3) Based on my observations, many programs are being implemented in Armenia to mitigate the social tension, including the poverty reduction program and reduction of corruption risks program. But for whatever reasons, the social tension does not decrease. In my opinion, this tension fails to ease up because extensive layers of the society are not involved in these processes. The negative side of such phenomena, such as poverty and corruption, cannot be overcome without awareness on their part.

It is expedient to involve structures with greater flexibility in addressing individual problems of citizens.

- (4) The gist of social responsibility is contained in a single factor. We view social responsibility as an opportunity for NGOs to receive additional allocations from local and state budgets.

If we, i.e. the NGOs, are to play a role in public policy making, then we ourselves should be interested in social cooperation, rather than local and state structures, and, moreover, businesses.

- (5) Is the NGO sector in Armenia today able to say that it is delivering services more effectively and efficiently from the viewpoint of prices and quality? I do not think so, just the opposite. If we dismiss quality, then the services we deliver are quite expensive and we cannot compete with state agencies, moreover with commercial organizations.
- (6) The procedure in place has not even defined the objective of making investments, and there can be only a single objective, that of solving social problems.

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Question - Gevorg Manukyan, President, Armenian Constitutional Right-Protective Center

Quite often, NGOs turn into businesses and lose sight of their initial mission. What recourse do you see from the potential temptation of fusing businesses and NGOs?

Answer - Armen Shahbazyan

As for cooperation between NGOs and entrepreneurs, more of an impact can be made through cooperation between unions. If a given NGO has a good record and can teach how to engage in lobbying and develop lobbying programs, if the NGOs can help entrepreneurs in doing research both in economic and legal areas to prove to the government that the given change will be beneficial both to the government and the entrepreneurs, then the experts of NGO will be hired and paid for their work.

Answer - Anna Kurdova

The Law on NGOs stipulates that the NGOs may not directly engage in business activities. NGOs often establish commercial organizations in an effort to channel the profit made back to NGOs. In practice, the opposite takes place. Upon receiving grants, NGOs take advantage of these opportunities and direct these grant funds towards maintaining and developing their businesses. This trend does exist due to the prohibition for NGOs to directly engage in commercial activity. NGOs are created because they want to engage in such activities and the prohibition itself leads them to this phenomenon.

Answer - Ara Nazinyan

Business structures establish non-commercial organizations to engage in charity activities. Large structures, such as the Ford Foundation, were created based just on

this principle of separating business from charity. If this trend spreads and develops, the results will be quite commendable.

Question - **Ruzanna Baghdasaryan**, "Leadership Civic Society Development Center" NGO President

The survey was conducted only in Yerevan. Why wasn't the survey conducted in other regions?

Answer - **Knarik Arabyan**

The only reason why we started from Yerevan is that the grant funds, the volume of funding provided, did not allow us to expand the scope any further. The budget was 660,000 drams: it was not possible to cover a larger area in the framework of the research grant project.

Question - **Ruzanna Baghdasaryan**

Charitable activities are often undertaken as part of the cooperation framework between NGOs and businesses. In small towns, social cooperation is seen as charity and charity is provided to specific people rather than NGOs.

Answer - **Karen Baghdasaryan**

For a business, it makes no difference whether it is a small town or a large city. Businesses are interested in any place where there are consumers and where NGOs with access to these consumers are available.

Question - **Tatevik Ayvazyan**, "Armenian Habitat" Charity NGO

Has a proposal been made to deduct taxes for charity activities, and if no such initiative has been taken, can I venture to put forth such a proposal?

Answer - **Armen Shahbazyan**

There is a procedure for introducing legislative initiatives, whereby the authorized initiators are specified.

Answer - **Anna Kurdova**

Our legislation provides for tax deductions for commercial organizations. But it is another matter that these tax clauses are a cause of commercial organizations to avoid reporting the investments made, rather than serve as an incentive and promote the expanded scope of charitable activities and investments by commercial organizations.

Question - **Arsen Karapetyan**, Millennium Development Fund

The NGOs do not have sufficient funds on their own, which feeds the need to interact with the business community. Which are the most accessible and practical means that the NGOs should focus their attention on?

Answer - **Knarik Arabyan**

It depends on your objectives shared with a given commercial organization. Experience shows that both the option of setting a meeting and making a phone call do work.

Answer - **Anna Kurdova**

It is necessary to inform the business sector what the NGO sector is generally about, to inform them about the activities of the specific NGO involved, about the experience gained, and the results achieved by the NGO. Efforts should be made to scope out areas of cooperation.

One must study the target organization, its culture, and, at the same time, take steps to achieve the alternatives proposed by them and tap in to your communication resources.

Answer - **Mane Mamyan**, Yerevan Djur CJSC

I would give the following advice to NGOs for establishing contact with us: to find areas where we have common interests and try to attract the attention of the other party through these common interests.

Fundraising from the Business Community

April 14, 2007

Ara Nazinyan: Today is the second day of our conference. I would like to introduce today's first three speakers: Zaida Arguedas, Raffi Niziblian, Narine Mailyan. Please Zaida.

Zaida Arguedas. Deputy Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of the United States and Director of Global Democracy Programs

Topic: *Building infrastructure for fundraising from private sources*

Good morning. It's a pleasure to take part in this important conference here in Armenia and also it's a pleasure for me to be here in Armenia for the first time. My name is Zaida Arguedas, I am the Deputy Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of the United States. I have been invited here to share with you some of the challenges and successes of my organization, which has been in existence for 87 years, and I hope that we will be able to put in place some of the systems that I think will make some of your NGOs sustainable over the long term. Some of the things that I am going to say may have been immediately relevant for your NGOs, but the critical thinking that you need to be engaged in to assume a move into new frontiers of sustainability and development, are important. During 87 years of existence, my organization has been able to move through a great many challenges and we have been able to face those challenges because we put in place strategies over long-term sustainability.

These are the things I would like to discuss with you today. This is my agenda for my presentation.

Yesterday we heard very interesting information here. We heard that there is a tradition of giving in Armenia. We heard that maybe the business community does not know about your NGOs, and we heard also that some of you do not know how to approach the business community. So I hope that after my presentation you will be able to start thinking more critically about how you will move for the future so that in 87 years, your NGO will still be relevant to your community. Let me tell you a little bit about my NGO. It was created in 1920 after the 19th amendment of the Constitution of the United States, which gave 20 million women in America the right to vote. For all these years we have continued to work on the same issues, which are to make sure that the voters are aware, that they know their issues, that they know their rights, and that our election laws are fair. That is our mission and it has continued to be the same mission throughout these years.

Throughout the years we have had a lot of congruent challenges and it continues to be a challenge in the US and I understand that it is a challenge in Armenia and all over the world. However we have discovered throughout the years that putting in place a strategy, such as the one I will show you soon, will enable you to diversify the funding streams so that you will be able to be fair. These are my three strategies for sustainability.

My first suggestion is to work in coalitions. I don't know if in Armenia it is similar to the US, in that, if we are lobbying for an issue to pass legislation, to fight or to implement new legislation, we'll only be taken into consideration if we can show that we have the numbers behind the approach. We have 15,000 members in our coalition, and that is the card that we say we have many members in favor or against a particular piece of legislation. That gives us a lot of strength and power to implement our message and be successful. We are not successful all the time. By working in coalitions we'll aggregate the amount of all the members of all the constituencies.

I have to say that it's not easy to work in coalitions. To work in coalitions you need to have certain rules so that every one in your coalition knows the rules. You need to make sure that you select the proper people for that coalition, and you need to have some internal rules of how to discipline the members that may not be playing by those rules. You need to have certain meetings. Remember, working in coalitions will remove the spotlight from you or your NGO. Media is not going to focus on each NGO, and you are not going to get the credit individually. So you need to know how to deal with that.

So you are here in Armenia thinking about your long-term sustainability and you are ready to move ahead. Yesterday we heard that in order to approach businesses you need to do research. You need to know where the money is. You have to learn how to do research, because if you don't know who is giving, how much they have given in the past, and what the issues are that are resonated with that company, you will not be able to approach them. I have to say further, that 7 out of 10 times that you ask for money you will not get it. So, that is the reason you need to diversify the possibilities of local funding, because it doesn't happen that you knock on someone's door and they are going to come out with a check. So you need information, you need to know how to communicate and you need to start exploring who you know. Do you have a friend or family members who know someone in that organization or that foundation who can start opening doors for you, so that you can then approach them more securely? I would recommend that within your own NGO structure, you set aside a few dollars, a few drams to create the materials, to hire someone to do the research for you.

Research.

Once you have done the research, you build relations.

All of you, I know, are receiving grants from different foundations and I want to stress that you need to keep them happy. That is what we do. Just doing a good job and then communicating with the funder and maybe just writing a final report at the end of your grant is not enough. Get them engaged in the work, bring them some of the wonderful things that you are doing in the community. Getting to know exactly the value that you bring to his or her foundation and so you are focusing on building that important relationship for the next two years. But just one long-term relationship with your funder may not be enough.

Keep funders informed.



Question - **Knarik Abovyan**. In your presentation, you mentioned that 1/3 of your funding comes from independent sources. I would like to know whether commercial organizations make donations or not, and if yes, then how consistent are your relations with those organizations? Do you have stable partnership relations with a number of commercial organizations with a stable circulation of funds?

Answer - **Zaida Arguedas**. Modern organizations have a process. I can certainly say that during 87 years, we cultivated very jealously our independent, non-partisan nature. So it is very important for us whom we approach, from whom we take funds. We have had some cooperation in business, but it is usually in the simple way of finding a donor for a particular project but not funds for our operating expenses. I think that we don't have that kind of relationship.

Question - **Abgar Yeghoyan**, President of "Protection of Consumers' Rights" NGO

When receiving a donation from a donor, particularly a private person, do you take into consideration the level of corporate social responsibility the given person or organization is engaged in?

Answer - **Zaida Arguedas**. We research carefully every individual. There is a system in the United States which is called Data Mining, and the thing is that there are now computer programs that will allow you to identify the one who may have given \$ 10,000 dol-

lars over the past years. So you use the system and go down into the details of this individual and you will understand who can give and who cannot.

On the corporate or business level it is more complicated. Because we need to know that they are put over and when invited they start thinking that a certain donation program may harm their organization. And that is the complication. But we are to have some rules to maintain that.

Raffi Niziblian. Director, Deem Communications

Topic: *Marketing non-profit projects to the business community-social marketing*

I want to introduce myself. My name is Raffi Niziblian. I am a Diasporan Armenian. I was born in Jordan. I have completed my education in communication studies specializing in this field, so I studied cultural studies, how firms influence the society and how people influence the media. During my youth I did a lot of volunteer work in non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations are not necessarily NGOs. They are also community groups, students' associations. They have similar needs, as far as financial, as far as support. I have educated, I have done cultural promotion for Armenian communities. I have done a lot of activism for people with disabilities, especially mental disabilities.

NGO Meets Corporation

When we approach the market, we need to see who our market is. When we talk to them about our project, which is very important to us, it is really very important to the corporation, because the corporation is not necessarily the guy sitting behind the desk, it's an entity that has an objective to make money, to show their image. There are things we need to think about when we are approaching the corporation.

What is Social Marketing

The term was born in the 1970s. It came across through marketers who realized that the marketing strategies that work to sell products, also work to sell ideas, attitudes, and behaviors. If we want people to act in a certain some way, we need to strategize, we need to plan and actually implement that plan. So, it is the same thing as the marketing strategy. It is a little bit difficult in Armenia, because it's only 15 years that we can consider ourselves a free market economy, out of which 5 to 7 years were marked by economic crisis.

Obviously, this has good and bad sides. The good side is that now we realize what we need to do. The bad side is that we want time, we want things to happen and powers are not collaborating.

If we believe that this is possible and we can do it, either as a coalition or not as a collective, I think there is lobbying work that could be done, educational work that could be done. Each coalition within its community is already doing this, advocate their mission, invite people to their organizations. If you have done something good, yield it out, call and tell somebody, write an email, write an article. You should be brief. You should contact the right person, don't be afraid of sharing your ideas. It is very important for us to carry a message.

Price

The thing is whether the benefits to the person are higher than the actual costs. If you ask me to spend 3 hours, I need to see the benefits to me, to my children, to my family, my community, how my neighborhood is going to improve over the next 5 years. If you are going to put a price on this, this is how you need to count the benefit costs of my time, my entire contribution.

We talked about tax deduction.

Are you dissatisfied with the low level of tax deduction? If you are not satisfied with that policy what are you doing concerning it? If we want, we can work on it. May be it will take 10 years, but if we want, we can do it.

We should do something now to change things, we should take steps.

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Narine Mailyan. Foundation for Small and Medium Business

Topic: *From philanthropy to corporate social responsibility*

From Charity to Social Partnership:

The Conceptual Framework of Corporate Social Responsibility

I represent the Small and Medium Enterprise Foundation non-commercial organization. It is slightly different from an NGO. Our legal status enables us to provide paid services, and this constitutes one of the advantages we enjoy. I will briefly talk about our organization: The main mission of our organization is to protect the interests of SMEs and to create favorable conditions for their development. Naturally, we do see progress. I would not like to bore you by once again belaboring the point of how important and crucial the development of small and medium enterprises is: since we are faced with a plethora of social issues, we also have a challenge in providing people with employment opportunities.

Now let us focus on what corporate social responsibility entails.

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Question - **Ara Nazinyan.** Do you think the idea of endowment will be applicable to the Armenian setting in three years?

Answer - **Narine Mailyan.** We need to think about it now to make it operational in the future. I think it will work in three years.

Comment - Just a small comment. When talking about accountability, you mentioned that the NGOs do not have absolute accountability. In my opinion, there is no such thing as absolute accountability in any society, but there are many honed-out advocates that are in fact accountable for their activities.

Answer - **Narine Mailyan.** I would like to clarify that I did not mean that the NGOs demonstrate absolute unaccountability. I was making a reference to the perception lingering in the business community. In making donations or contributions, the entrepreneurs do not have confidence that the investments are going to be used for the stated purposes as originally planned. And they do not have any recourse to an accurate mechanism for monitoring this. And in this respect, the endowment capital differs from the other mechanisms available. Since a contract is signed, this enables the donors to define the purposes for which the capital may be used and to monitor the process of the disbursement of these funds.

Collaborating with Business for Development

Poghos Shahinyan. National Road Safety Council

Topic: *Beyond funding: business' benefits from partnership-presentation of MURANO and NRSC seatbelt campaign*

Today we will launch a joint discussion to see what lessons can be learned and what we can do to consolidate and develop our cooperation with the business community. A framework of cooperation does exist in the main public structures, but, unfortunately, cooperation is not as extensive today. We will try to delve into the reasons accounting for this.

Before I proceed, I would like to present myself. Many of you know me as an advocacy expert working for the Global Organization. I left this organization in 2004 for the United Kingdom where I obtained a Master's Degree in Human Rights. I am making a reference to this, as this gave me an opportunity to gain a better undertaking of the word 'advocacy'. I am not using the Armenian equivalent for this word on purpose. Today the notion is translated as protection or rights, which was put into use by the Global Organization, and back at the time it characterized what was called for by that period. Unfortunately, today the Armenian translation has become obsolete. There is a quite suitable Armenian word that has not been used before, "jatagovutiun" (promotion of interests or rights), which accurately conveys the double-edged meaning of the notion. And in this setting, my experience gained in the UK and USA gave me a broader spectrum of understanding. After this, at the Global Organization, we started an allotment scheme as an initiative in the protection of legal interests, public interests and civil interests. But this is a combined initiative as promotion of interests is process.

I should point out that I represent two organizations. The NRSC is the first organization, where I am the executive director, and the second organization is the International Association of Business and Parliament, about which I can talk more, if you are interested.

Who are we? Who is the National Road Safety Council (NRSC)? In fact, its chapters exist in almost all countries. From post-Soviet countries, Armenia was the first to establish this organization. It is an NGO by its legal structure. However, the problem is that our legal framework does not provide for an alternative status. The NRSC's objective is to bring together various structures, legal and natural entities. Naturally, as an NGO, we are non-partisan: we do not strive in any way to get involved in politics in the sense of involvement with parties. It is an umbrella organization and I will explain why. The process of setting up the organization took approximately six months. I mean only the stage of negotiations. The idea of establishing a company had been conceived for quite some time. The challenge was to bring together NGOs around a single idea, and it evolved into a legal entity. A number of NGO's, Armenian partners and international partners are part of our framework. We also cooperate with the World Bank and all state governance structures without exceptions, specifically with the Ministry of Transport and the Traffic Police.

Our mission and objectives:

The stakeholders:

We have always learned to build a civil society where the government, NGO sector, and the business community intersect. We see ourselves in the center. We strive to serve as an umbrella organization, so that various interests can be communicated in one voice and targeted activity can be launched. We have attained this. We are now

known and accepted by the government, the business community, and the NGO sector.

Who is guilty? This is a message addressed to the government and the society calling for action. The trend gradually takes on a faster pace, which undoubtedly signifies a change for the worse, leading to a tragic situation.

What is our formula for a safe road system?

The crucial components are the roads: there are standards for ensuring road safety. The vehicle: our campaign for wearing seatbelts conducted jointly with MEGNA Ltd. Why is it important to advocate wearing seatbelts together with automobile manufacturers? If an accident takes place and if the vehicle has no seatbelts, the image of that automobile brand plummets as an unsafe car, even though this may not be true. Non-fastened seatbelts are not the only problem. Behavior is another one: our goal is to raise awareness of drivers, pedestrians, and other stakeholders so that they are all aware of and follow the rules, changing the current mentality that we have. Each country has its characteristic mentality, but above and beyond, everyone should be aware why he or she needs to wear a seatbelt and why the driving rules are crucial.

The problem of the roads is a bit more complicated, as this involves the government. Unfortunately, we do not have the notion of private bridges. Instead, the government is responsible for bridges and it needs to be persuaded to follow international standards. It is quite a challenge to get approval for a five-star road: they can claim as their justification, that it is better to repair 200 roads in Armenia rather than upgrade a mere 50 roads to a five-star quality. It is better to opt for the average. It is the challenge of assessing this average that warrants our involvement in the process. In this case, we have a preliminary arrangement with the Millennium Challenge Account, according to which we are to be involved in the relevant processes when experts visit to assess projects and road costing. This will reflect not only Armenian standards, but an effort will also be made to put the average international standards for road safety on a secure footing. Certainly, the responsibility for these three components is commonly shared, and we are doomed to failure if any of these components are not secured.

We registered in 2005, but the official opening was held in May 2006. Why did we wait for so long? This was due to an interesting historic event: the President of FIA visited Armenia and this was his first visit to a post-Soviet country. It was in the framework of this visit that we made an effort to draw attention to ourselves. Why does our cooperation with the state agencies go so smoothly? Because people know us, we have used well-known people to directly represent the organization. We organized a large-scale conference, where we introduced ourselves and explained who we are and what we are. We conferred upon him the title of an honorary member of our organization.

Our cooperation with MEGNA Ltd is composed of 4 phases. So far, we have implemented two of these phases. Business and Society. Two opinions are presented here.

Now let us address the notion of advocacy as a process.

Advocacy as a protection of rights. Imagine now, that you have approached a business and are telling them that you are engaged in advocacy. You mean one thing but the company perceives your statement to mean protection of interests of a specific person. It is definitely undesirable for any business to get involved in such activities in view of the political setting today. This is why we need to interpret advocacy as promotion of certain issues.

What is important in NGO-business relations?

I do not deny the fact that businesses have interests. But the interests pursued may be different. Interests may be long-term and accrue benefits to us and the community, but interests may also be short-term and cause harm.

How does the NRSC see its structure and how does it feed itself? Entrepreneurial initiative: we established a limited liability company as a subsidiary organization, which is called "Safe Traffic." The latter combined several directions. The core purpose of its establishment was publishing a magazine, through which we aspired to

attain two goals. Firstly, we would convey our message free of charge. Secondly, we would be able to obtain funds as an alternative method.



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Representative MEGNA Inc., Mr Samvel Avetisyan, was presented and asked questions.

Question - **Mane Mamyan.** Do you work with other NGOs and do you allocate funds from your budget?

Answer - **Samvel Avetisyan.** I should point out that our budget is quite liberal with no need to make budget allocations. Secondly, this was the first swallow and it worked out brilliantly. I am in charge of sales and I am the first one to see the results. That is, our qualitative customer is changing. We have an increasing number of intellectual customers. I think this trend is bound to continue.

Question - **Ara Nazinyan.** You mentioned that the NGO was established through a business-NGO partnership. As a founder initiator have you tried to obtain funds from other businesses, or what can other NGOs that have been created by individuals with no involvement by businesses have recourse to and how could we transfer this experience into the activities of NGOs whose interests are not directly linked to business interests?

Answer - **Poghos Shahinyan**

First of all, I would like to point out that we were not created by a business. We started a partnership at a later stage when we established contacts with businesses. Nevertheless, the quintessential objective of the NRSC is to involve all structures that operate in this sector, irrespective of whether these are businesses, charity funds or state agencies. As for the question about how to attract businesses, it is naturally not possible to attract all businesses. Obviously, every business has its interest and range of stakeholders and you need to see their role in the setting of your mission.

Question-participant. Since your mission is the reduction of accidents, do you intend to advocate the use of bicycles in Armenia?

Answer - **Poghos Shahinyan.** A proposal to that effect has been raised and, in fact, it was an initiative launched by UNO in view of environmental concerns. We are trying to approach the problem from another angle. The World Bank, jointly with the Ministry of Transport and Traffic Police, has announced a bid: external consulting companies are bidding for this tender together with us as a local partner. What is the strategy behind this initiative? It is aimed at reducing traffic jams, improving road conditions, traffic lights and intersections, increasing the number of alternative routes. All of this is being discussed today and the strategy is going to be developed by the end of the year and the government is to adopt this as its strategy for the next 15 years and proceed to the implementation of all other activities.

Abgar Yeghoyan. President of "Protection of Consumers' Rights" NGO

Topic: *With business, but not for business-how to avoid conflict of interest and maintain independence*

I represent the "Protection of consumers' rights" NGO.

Our mission:

In contrast with other organizations, our NGO has a specific certificate and since our objective is to protect the consumer and consumer rights from infringements on quality of services, quantitative and other violations, we have adopted a strategy whereby we do not accept donations from businesses and the government.

A few words about our organization. Our NGO has membership in a number of international organizations. We have considerable experience in network cooperation.

Relations with businesses. Let me explain the distinctive feature of these activi-

ties. We work directly with organizations that provide food services. All of this is undertaken in cooperation with state structures. That is, we participate in the activities of state structures that are involved in the state regulation of these areas. We attend legal issues assessment meetings, where we present our proposals. However, our experience shows that the fastest and the best way is the cooperation framework with businesses aimed at addressing specific consumer issues. Of course, we should not forget the donors, because if we work with businesses, for example, in conducting campaigns and advocacy initiatives, the assistance and expertise provided by the donor organization is by all means important and the businesses see the value of the support provided.

I would like to add one comment regarding corporate social responsibility. In 2003, I participated in the last congress held by Consumer International in Lisbon. A special workshop was held on the role of NGOs in corporate social responsibility. The Netherlands Consumers Union, which had 2-3 years of experience in this, made a presentation. And how do the NGOs participate in the issues involving corporate social responsibility? Businesses operating in one sector came together and signed an agreement on social cooperation together with consumers organizations. And instead of behaving like our businesses, struck with fear of state inspections or any type of inspection, they all came to an agreement as to what activities should be implemented for the protection of consumer rights, in three months time, based on the agreed program. Instead of directing the bulk of the funds on hard advertising, the financial resources are used to develop mechanisms for the recall of harmful food products, labeling problems, and GMO labeling. Everyone agrees that consumer organizations play an arbitrator's role. The role of consumer organizations is not the destruction of businesses, but keeping everyone informed in an unbiased manner. This is a procedure. And if an infringement takes place, they inform everyone about what type of non-compliance was discovered and a period of a month is provided to solve the issue. All corruption risks are thus eliminated as there is no government involved in charging a penalty for non-compliance, and, most importantly, people are able to correct the situation and not lose their market. And no one drowns anyone. And concessions are made for a common interest.

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Question - **Narine Mailyan**. At the beginning of your presentation, you mentioned that you do not accept investments from either the government or businesses. Where do you get your funding from?

Answer - **Abgar Yeghoyan**. We work with donor organizations and we have also created an LTD, called "System Audit." We plan to develop into a certifying body. But as long as there is compulsory certification, we cannot enter this sector. If there is a compulsory certification, there are corruption risks. Entry into the Eastern Global Organization has made the standards voluntary starting from January of last year. And starting from January 1st, Armenia will start using the certification module system. Once it becomes a module system, the standards will become voluntary and we will start applying it by all means. We have another idea called a Discount System of Delivering Services, which will be a tool for bringing about a reduction of prices.

Mane Mamyan. "Yerevan Water" Company

Topic: *Interest of business in long-term development of non-profit organizations*

Answer - **Ara Nazinyan**. Before we proceed to the discussion of your presentation, please tell us: did "Yerevan Djur" CJSC ever imagine that it would one day provide funding to

the "Protection of consumers' rights" NGO? If yes, then why, and if no, please explain.

Answer - **Mane Mamyan**

1. I would like to focus your attention on lease agreements, as it is entirely different from the type of agreements with which you have been familiar till now. It is a type of agreement used for management and was applied by the Italians.

What does "Yerevan Water" Company do in the framework of its lease agreement? It has assumed the entire interest and all the risks involved. And in the framework of the lease agreement, we have had an opportunity to interact with each other this year.

What did "Yerevan Water" Company do when it came to Armenia? VE has quite interesting points, standards for interaction with the public. Being an active participant in civil society itself, it has adopted a number of key principles for itself: solidarity, innovation, development, honesty, and so on. In all its branches, VE is closely cooperating with NGOs and companies representing the interests of other consumers and any type of interests. This is a principle that is applied by VE, irrespective of where its operations are: these principles are mandatory for the company and these are also compulsory for "Yerevan Water". And since these are mandatory and the entire management has extensive experience in the framework of VE operations, this is the spirit they brought to Armenia and the first task I was given, was to research all NGO activities which were directly related to us and cooperation with which could be mutually beneficial. Of course, the first goal was the welfare of the consumer and the improvement of services delivered to the consumer. In being a monopoly, "Yerevan Water" is at the same time a private company within VE. The VE, which is very well-known, and "Veolia Water," which has been in operation since 1850, are quite familiar with, and know what it means when public services belong to the private sector. In fact, our first contract was the 1853 agreement on the water supply to Lions. We rely on 150 years experience of with growing expertise in providing public utilities. We conducted research, and for the first time water consumers in Yerevan have the status of consumers rather than subscribers. They are customers.

We found all the organizations with direct linkages with our activities, and we decided to invite all companies, at our own initiative, to become acquainted with us. Not only to get acquainted, but also to work with us to identify problems and find solutions which may be invisible to us, as many customers do not file complaints because they're tired from the long spell of silence. We did meet and continued working but we clearly established that the "Yerevan Water" Company was the "Yerevan Water" Company and that it had its set of rights and obligations, and that its partners also had their rights and responsibilities and interests. Under no circumstances should these interests clash. What was the goal? The "Yerevan Water" Company and all the NGOs cooperating with it have equal standing and the best way for us to work is the "win-win" option.

It so happened that, at our own initiative, we suggested that the three main NGOs meet and hold several meetings for the first two months. This was very important to us as we were able to learn about each other, and create a minimal level of trust to base our working relationship on. I think we succeeded.

2. Who are our main partners? NGOs and advocates of our customer-consumers. Our meetings were mostly attended by the "Consumers Rights Protection" NGO, Public Advocates Union, the Armenian Consumer's Association, and the Union of Home Utility Sector Employees.
3. VE has a foundation that is engaged in the protection of consumer rights and environmental issues as well as many other issues. It was established in 2004 and has an annual budget of 5 million. And in which areas of activities does the foundation participate? All activities that are in line

with our criteria. The foundation has financed over 450 projects since 2004. It is to be noted that this foundation is one of the private foundations in France, and its investments are not limited to France and go well beyond the French borders. The foundation has two directions: financial support (project proposals are submitted by NGOs) and assistance with practical knowledge (professionalism development projects in various developing countries). Veolia has another interesting structure operating under it: as I mentioned before, since it is truly an active participant in civil society, it has the Veolia Water Force, which provides rapid-response relief after disasters. Volunteerism is greatly encouraged among the employees. This foundation has a distinctive feature, each project proposal approved for funding should come under the responsibility of the members of this group. These members become the link with the foundation, and monitors the project and may conduct an assessment.

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Question - Public Advocates Union

How do you see NGO-business cooperation evolving if the NGO rigidly adheres to certain principles, i.e. it does not agree to the approaches applied to the problems at stake?

Answer - **Mane Mamyan.** We adhere to the following principle. We both stay in our respective positions and there is no need to swap roles. One remains a private company and the other remains an NGO. Even if there arises a disagreement, this does not mean that a single disagreement closes the discussion of the topic. The important thing is to try to find solutions in the area where the disagreement stems from, and continue the discussion.

Question - participant. To be honest with you, my experience in working in informal working groups has brought me to the conclusion that the main leverage for action is the negotiations. And no matter how quickly the results of negotiations may be forthcoming, there is no common ground right from the start. Nevertheless, the negotiations are perhaps also the only path to partnership. Do you share my opinion, and do you think it is a prospective approach to be applied to interactions with businesses and the government or not?

Answer - **Mane Mamyan.** The answer is going to be quite simple. Irrespective of the fact that an NGO is involved or a private company, it develops an orbit to attain its goal. It develops an orbit and most interestingly, it adheres to its proclaimed principles. And this is quite commendable, but how successful are they in combining principles with flexibility, and how successful are they in continuously developing plans? If the first fails during the negotiations, of course we need to find the reason. The problem is not in the people involved, but rather in the issues at hand. And if one is able to separate people from problems, then possible solutions to the problem can be found.

Question - participant. You have already mentioned that in making your first steps, you had invited NGOs but later you did not describe how the activities were undertaken. Were grants used or simply mutual assistance? And the second question: if you have or intend to launch grant projects, how are you going to overcome this mechanism? Will you directly announce a tender or will you do that through a foundation?

Answer - **Mane Mamyan.** First of all, it was noted that we are strategic partners, but this is not like strategic cooperation between states, where there is a financial assistance component. We help each other with our expertise, experience, information, exchange of

ideas, and finding common solutions. In my opinion this is the best way to maintain the balance. An opinion was expressed that when you receive a grant from the government, your independence diminishes. I am confident that if businesses give you grants, your independence will diminish even more.

Ara Nazinyan. One of the key topics of discussion is how resources can be created from the business sector for NGOs. That is to say, can we expect the business to be a source of support for NGOs, both from the financial and state governance point of view?

We first listened to a presentation where the experience of an organization with origins in public development abroad was presented. It was explained how an infrastructure can be created within a larger organization and in its operations that is constantly engaged in monitoring.

The other question which was discussed today was Raffi Niziblian's presentation. It was a viewpoint from the business sector explaining what expectations businesses have from NGOs, a number of models of cooperation were presented.

Unless NGOs adopt results-oriented approaches just like businesses, and unless they carry clear and attractive messages, it is very hard to anticipate an incipient cooperation.

The "Yerevan Water" Company working together with several other NGOs may be one of the examples drawing attention and strongly geared towards cooperation, but for the most part our businesses are not inclined towards cooperation. The findings of numerous studies attest to this. Desire to do so is present, but no mentality has been formed. They do not have objections against, but do not see how this can be done.

Narine Mailyan. In their turn, NGOs face the challenge of putting forth their programs as products. That is to say, projects should be presented to the business community as finished a product rather than an abstract tool.

Ara Nazinyan. As Raffi pointed out, we need to speak in the language of businesses rather than in the language of NGOs or donors.

We also listened to the financing of the research conducted by the Small and Medium Enterprise Foundation in Russia, as well as the findings from our audience.

Poghos Shahinyan shared with us their achievement where the interests of the NGO and the business involved were shared right from the beginning.

Nonetheless, the problem has been defined: what methods should be applied for NGOs to receive funding from the business community as well?

Question - **Ara Nazinyan.** When do you think an expectation for tangible financial assistance from the business sector in Armenia is justified?

Answer - participant. NGOs that focus on their beneficiaries and their problems, sooner or later will start cooperating with businesses as partners. Worthy of note is the fact that cooperation entails equal investments, whereas in most cases, NGOs perceive any assistance as cooperation. I perceive cooperation as a proposal rather than a request or an opportunity to get hold of something. I would like to stress that in the context of advocacy processes, when the business sector and the NGOs realize that by joining efforts they will wield more power and be able to work more effectively with the government in representing interests and carrying out advocacy by joining efforts, cooperation will ensue. First of all, the business community and the NGOs will be able to find common causes for interaction and cooperation more easily, and will then try to put more pressure on the government.

"Young Generation" NGO-business cooperation will consolidate perhaps at a slow pace, but it is bound to consolidate if changes are introduced into the government policy. That is to say, this problem is not limited to the two sectors. There must be a strategy in place that will enable and promote such cooperation between these two parties. The NGO sector should be viewed as a resource even if it is only for implementing a targeting policy geared towards the needs of the business community. And this resource does exist and it is effective. I have an optimistic outlook.

Ara Nazinyan. The topic of today's conference is NGOs. What should be done by and for NGOs for this cooperation to consolidate?

What is the role of NGOs? What do NGOs have to do for this cooperation to happen?

In parallel with their self-development, the NGOs are still trying to take part in the process of providing social services and rights advocacy. And very often, the results of NGO activities and processes develop much faster than the internal resources of these organizations for sustaining their activities. Given these circumstances, there arises a problem where the NGOs have a theoretical desire to act, but no material and human resources to apply its own theoretical knowledge and be recognized as a worthy partner by the business sector and the government.

"The Armenian Union for the Disabled" NGO. NGO-business cooperation will develop if NGOs enjoy the trust of the society and the NGOs enhance their role and build their policy to gain the trust of the business sector.

Ara Nazinyan. I think that this was an important comment in our discussion. It is true that in addition to improving the legal framework and raising the level of professional expertise among the NGOs and communicating a message, there is another formidable problem: improving the quality of NGO activities, specifically targeted operations and present the benefits brought by NGOs to the development of the society at large. And if we hope to engage in cooperation, all of this has to be taken into consideration in the viewpoint of the business sector.

Identifying New Opportunities in **NGO-Business Relations** **Recommendations**

April 15, 2007

Ara Nazinyan.

Problem.

What should be done to promote closer cooperation between the business sector and NGOs? What we have learned is that cooperation does take place, at an acceptable level in some instances and in a limited scope in others; we see shared interests now and then.

We need to prepare a message that will reach our businesses, explaining how our NGO sector differs from those of other countries or other similar organizations, and why they should be interested in cooperating. There is an issue that has been at the center of long negotiations with the organizers: what should be done to make this challenge more relevant to NGOs?

Please pay attention to the following obvious fact. Many discussions take place with business structures. We need to think about, for our own sake, what we should do to involve potential partners more actively in our projects. Let us try to come up with a small strategy template. Certainly, just as with any other strategy, we need to start with defining what problem we are striving to solve. One of the easiest solutions is to outline obstacles and ways to overcome these obstacles. We have talked extensively about obstacles in the past two days and it has been stressed that the NGOs are not familiar with our businesses in operation today. We also talked about building public structures, infrastructures, human resources, and a pool of knowledge. We talked about the need to explore new and promising methods of cooperation that have not been tried before. We established that social cooperation is not effectively delivered, but we maintain that we need to keep trying. We need to try to advocate the idea that social cooperation is one of the best techniques used in international practice. It does not work in Armenia, but perhaps in 5-10 years it will. If it does not work now, why should we spend so much time and resources on it?

Raffi's presentation mainly referred to how to phrase this message and idea, so that it is, first and foremost, accessible to the entrepreneurs. Otherwise, there is no point in approaching businesses with project proposals. Project proposals that don't make sense to donors are not likely to make headway with any businessman.

Let us try to come up with another solution.

Question - participant. What obstacles do we see in the way of effective cooperation between NGOs and businesses, and we should focus on NGOs. What obstacles do NGOs face, what obstacles are there in NGOs?

Answer - **Gayane Margaryan**, "Consumers Rights Protection" NGO

From the outset, we need to change our attitudes towards one another. We need to have mutual trust so that we can have a better understanding of who we are dealing with and what he or she is proposing, and perhaps in that case will be able to lay the initial foundation for effective cooperation. I also think that there is a considerable lack of knowledge and awareness, we need to adopt a more tolerant attitude towards each other to make cooperation possible.

Question - **Ruzanna Baghdasaryan**. I see an obstacle in NGOs' inability to present themselves. NGOs need to make their activities more transparent and presentable to the public.

Question - **Abgar Yeghoyan**. NGOs need to provide some sort of service and help businesses so that they can show that they can "wield weight."

Obstacle

There is also the issue of trust. Let us try to understand where the lack of trust stems from.

I think that the breeding ground for mistrust is the lack of awareness on the part of the business community about the existence and activities of NGOs. To address this issue, I am proposing that the NGOs launch PR campaigns and publish their annual reports.

Gevorg Manukyan, "President, Armenian Constitutional Right-Protective Center

All three sectors, rather than only the business community, need to gain a better understanding about each other's roles. The lack of Christian faith in our society is yet another obstacle.

Tatevik Ayyazyan, "Habitat for Humanity Armenia" Charity NGO Lori Branch

Changes need to be introduced in the legal framework to encourage more interest in NGOs by businesses.

Arsen Karapetyan. There is a lack of interaction between NGOs and businesses. That is, we need to think of ways to expand interaction in the form of meetings.

Narine Mailyan. I define the role of NGOs as an intermediary sector. The NGO sector has to build its capacity to prove its importance and worth to the business community and the authorities, in order to be able to fulfill its role as an intermediary. The NGOs need to be able to prove that they are playing an important role.

Abgar Yeghoyan. Fight against corruption. If the government loosens its grip over businesses, businesses will have available resources for NGOs.

Ara Nazinyan. I would like to draw your attention to the in-house capacities of NGOs. What problems do we see here?

Knarik Arabyan. Non-commercial organizations should pay more attention to public affairs and management of public relations, as well as fundraising and management of funds.

Problem 1. Inconsistent relations between commercial organizations and NGOs

Problem 2. Flexibility of fundraising messages

The two points raised are closely linked with the level of awareness of the organizations involved. Non-commercial organizations should develop clearly defined strategic plans.

Zaida Arguedas. I just heard two messages.

First, each NGO needs to define its message clearly.

Secondly, it is the combined role of the NGOs and their overall message to their communities.

The first challenge is to be tackled by each NGO internally. The second issue is a bigger challenge, and it is the purpose of this conference to show the society the value and importance of the activities of NGOs for the society.

I have a proposal. Having been here for three days, you have received a lot of information. I am wondering whether a small group could be formed from this larger group, that could engage itself in forging a broader message for the NGO sector.

I generally speak of working in coalitions or partnerships. I think that this will be a touchstone for the NGOs.

Question - **Tatevik Ayyazyan**. What do you think is the local or the mission approach to a better framework for establishing a coalition of NGOs?

Answer - **Zaida Arguedas**. You need to take into account the following key factors:

1. your message
2. creation of trust
3. preparation of materials and their publication

The issues are numerous, and for your work to succeed, you need to narrow the range of issues involved.

As for the question just raised, it is difficult for me to answer, as I am not sufficiently well informed about Armenia.

Answer - **Ara Nazinyan**. I think it is "both" rather than the "either/or" format.

Solutions

Problem: Attitude and lack of knowledge expertise

Solution. First and foremost, raising public awareness and building in-house capacities (staff, equipment).

Solution - **Knarik Arabyan**

Not only should commercial organizations be kept informed, but they should also be invited to attend the events organized by NGOs. The involvement of commercial organizations should be encouraged, but without prior requests.

Solution - **Zaida Arguedas**

You need to develop your relations with potential donors. If I understand it correctly, not much effort has gone into bringing these two sectors together. You have a long way to go to create an atmosphere of trust. If you invite businesses to attend your events, you have nothing to lose even if they do not come.

Problem. Attitude

Solution. Participating in activities organized by businesses.

Problem. Being transparent

Solution - **Narine Mailyan**

Developing a mechanism for accountability to beneficiaries.

Solution - **Ara Nazinyan**

One of the mechanisms is to have people on the board representing the society, the community, the businesses, and other stakeholders. Nothing precludes this from happening other than the willingness of the chairman.

Solution - **Knarik Arabyan**

The NGOs should have a strategy for working with the businesses. They need to spread the word about their good work.

Solution. Making statements about programs

Problem. Wielding influence and enjoying a good reputation

Solution - **Marat Dadunts, Information Center on Rights**

The NGO sector needs to be culled. The NGOs should be consolidated organizations with defined missions.

Solution - **Knarik Arabyan**

Consistency in words and action and professionalism.

Solution. Coming together and joining efforts.

Services to the business community

Problem. Lack of trust

Solution - **Knarik Arabyan**

Presenting, highlighting good examples, publicity.

Question - **Ara Nazinyan**. Do the NGOs know how to work with the media, or are they waiting for the media to take the initiative and talk about us?

Answer. Trainings have been organized with the media.

Abgar Yeghoyan. Information provided to NGOs is a product. Only in this case will businesses show interest.

Ara Nazinyan. Presenting information to the media is a robust skill and should be a target of joint activities.

Problem. Legal framework, laws

Solution. Encouraging approaches based on tax exemptions, promoting cooperation. There are a variety of approaches, for example, social contract for social services.

Solution - **Zaida Arguedas**

For NGOs, there is a need for introducing legal amendments to improve cooperation.

Problem. What does an intermediary's role involve? An intermediary is usually a neutral, unbiased person who can represent the interests of both sides.

Solution - **Abgar Yeghoyan**

The intermediary facilitates the consumer-supplier relationship.

Solution - **Narine Mailyan**

The society is the consumer of the involvement by the business community in social issues, and the business community is the supplier of the financial resources for the social services provided. Hence, the NGOs are seen as intermediaries responsible for:

Solution - **Knarik Arabyan**

Providing services and acting as a link in directing financial resources and good will of the business community to the beneficiaries.

1. Assessing needs;
2. Defining issues;
3. Communicating issues to businesses that have an interest in the relevant areas.

Solution - **Ruzanna Baghdasaryan**

The governing bodies NGOs also play an important role.

Priority issues and steps

Recommendations (extract)

Obstacles

- Treatment
- Knowledge insufficiency
- Non-tolerance
- Absence of transparency
- Not having 'weight'
- Service absence to businesses
- Uncertainty
- Information insufficiency
- Annual reports are not made available
- Absence of belief
- Legislative field incompleteness
- Insufficiency of meetings and contacts
- Weak fight against corruption
- Insufficient mutual understanding
- Inconsistent public relations with businesses
- Uncertainty in policies
- Unclear projects

SOLUTIONS

- Good PR
- Strengthen inner abilities
- Invite businesses to NGO events
- Participate in activities that organize businesses
- Elaborate statement mechanism
- Involve representatives from the business and public sector in NGO councils
- Develop policies to work with mass media
- Sequence and professionalism of speech and work
- Consolidate
- Communicate

POSSIBLE SERVICES TO BUSINESS

- Information
- Legal advice
- Research
- Seminars
- Monitoring
- Business rights advocacy
- Making information for Mass Media as goods

WHERE TO START?

- Decide the purpose
- Establish the magazine
- Recognize the enterprising and know whom to apply
- Encourage participation of businesses in NGO conferences
- Undertake a report
- Develop actions plan
- Create NGO coalitions
- Understand the business environment
- Establish a business collaboration circle
- Encourage businesses to cooperate
- Lobby
- Work through ethnic norms

Track C

NGO-Community/Citizen Relations: With the People, For the People

The National Conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process is a three-day gathering of Armenian NGOs, representatives of government, media, and business to explore together the most pressing challenges, review successful cases, and gain new insight into lessons learned from Armenian and international practitioners and experts. Conference participants will engage in substantive discussions and skill building in the following four thematic areas:

1. **Government - NGO Relations:** Systems approach to the public policy process
2. **Business - NGO Relations:** New frontiers in sustainability and development
3. **Citizens/Community - NGO Relations:** With the people, for the people
4. **Media - NGO Relations:** Redefining interaction for the public interest

Track C Discussion Framework:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are the most important actors in civil society. In fact, they comprise the core of what is commonly understood as civil society. Although there is no agreed upon definition of NGOs, their main characteristics rely on the voluntary nature of the organization, independence from state institutions, common vision shared by all members of the organization, and formal structure of the organization. Most importantly, NGOs do not pursue profit, but operate in support of the public good, or in a more defined context for the benefit of their specific constituency (a geographic community and/or a community of interest). Given their very nature, NGOs rely on the goodwill of the public and on their relations with other public groups, including other NGOs, to achieve their objectives. Because of their mission to serve the greater public good, NGOs' ability to engage the public and to coalesce and work with other NGOs is central to their ability to be most effective in reaching their objectives. The cornerstone of NGOs' relationship with the public is that individual citizens are both the final beneficiaries of NGOs' activities and the power base (the means through which) upon which NGOs are able to achieve their goals. *Consequently, NGOs' willingness and ability to work proactively and systemically with citizens to identify their most pressing needs, to mobilize them for change, and to engage them as change agents is crucial.*

Working with the community is not the only function of being membership-based, grassroots organizations, but NGOs that do not have specific members (foundations, think tanks, etc.) also need to possess the skills to maintain ongoing cooperation with communities, as well as other NGOs. This is important for developing their priorities and programs, assessing the impact of their activities and other community development perspectives, as well as providing real and grounded feedback in the policy formulation process. The term "community", therefore, is not only meant to imply a

grouping of individuals, but in this context it also implies communities of other organizations (academic, religious, professional associations, etc.) and the relations among NGOs in the form of coalitions, networks, forums and/or other groupings are just as significant in effective NGO operations. Such forms of cooperation help to multiply the effects of participant organizations, by bringing together their resources, knowledge, and expertise.

Armenia Context:

Knowledge and perceptions of the public about NGOs vary from country to country. Whereas, in more consolidated democracies NGOs are better known, accepted, and valued, in Armenia, not unlike many other post-Soviet countries, the role of NGOs has been redefined from marginalized and discredited state-sanctioned organizations to more relevant and needed entities. In 2006, the Armenian Ministry of Justice reported that more than 4,000 public organizations were registered in the country. According to various international NGO development organizations, the Armenian NGO sector has grown not only in size, but also in capacity to address the needs of their beneficiaries. The Armenian public perception of the work of NGOs and the NGO sector in general, however, is in contrast to that of development agencies and NGO practitioners.

Public awareness surveys conducted by IFES¹ in 2003, show that Armenian citizens have limited information about Armenian NGOs. Overall, a majority of respondents could not name an NGO. In other USAID assessments, experts believe² this situation is the fault of NGOs who do not conduct effective public outreach of their activities, even if they implement successful programs and projects. Certainly, using media more effectively would help to improve the situation. However, media is not the only mode of communication with the public. Mobilizing the public and involving individual citizens in NGO activities is a powerful way of educating people about the work of NGOs. It further helps to strengthen the organizational capacity of NGOs to better identify, analyze, and respond to the challenges faced by their beneficiaries. Ironically, in a recent national voter study³, less than one percent of those interviewed associated themselves with an NGO, either as a member or a supporter.

In the mid to late 1990's there was a tendency on the part of donor organizations to create, through targeted funding, coalition building and thematic networks among Armenian NGOs. This strategy has not been sustainable, in that once funding preconditions have been removed, very few coalitions have remained in tact and active. At the same time, less formal networks or forums of NGOs have registered moderate success in addressing issues of common interest. Thematic networks on disability issues, environmental, poverty reduction, and NGO related legislation and other issues effectively operate and provide ongoing support to those involved. The capacity of Armenian NGOs to organize their membership base or to mobilize a constituency around one issue is alarmingly low. NGOs do not utilize a community or their membership base as their primary power base. Moreover, they rarely report to their communities or members on their activities. In contrast, studies show that NGOs are very accountable to their donors. It is therefore difficult for Armenian NGOs to demand transparency and public accountability from policy makers without being transparent and accountable themselves to their constituents.

The discussion on the further development of the current state of NGO-community/citizen relations in Armenia should revolve around the following broadly formulated topics:

➤ **Strengthening of NGO-public interaction through substantive engagement:**

The form and substance of relations between NGOs and the public determines the strength of civil society. NGOs should not only facilitate and stimulate participation of citizens and communities, but also use the information they receive from such activity in developing their long term strategies to fulfill their mis-

1. "Citizens' Awareness and Participation In Armenia: Survey 2003." Prepared by the International Foundation for Election Systems. Funded DSR0/USAID/Armenia, E&E, U.S. Agency for International Development. Yerevan, 2004.
2. "Armenia NGO Sector Assessment: A Comparative Study." Prepared by World Learning for International Development. Founded by US Agency for International Development. Yerevan, 2004.
3. "Armenian National Voter Study." Prepared by National Republican Institute, Baltic Surveys Ltd./ The Gallup Organization and Armenian Sociological Association. Funded by U.S. Agency for International Development. 2006.

sions. In other words, NGOs need to strengthen their role as true channels and mediators between their communities and the state, business, and other civil society organizations.

- **Increasing public confidence in the role of NGOs in addressing community needs:** In order for NGOs to garner public trust and support they need to be accountable primarily to the public. Moreover, NGOs shall use their direct outreach capacity to inform citizens about the organizations' activities and most importantly their successes. Learning about the successes will help to empower communities to further support the good work that NGOs undertake.
- **Broadening will and ability for intra-NGO sector collaboration for results:** Effectiveness of NGO advocacy work is at the pinnacle of its potential only when there is coordinated effort among the various stakeholders. The imperative in improving the policy environment and achieving better results is NGO coalescing in light of limited resources and complimentary strengths.

Track **C**

**Community-NGO Relations
With the People, for the People
Challenges and Opportunities in
Community/Citizen-NGO Relations**

April 13, 2007

Anna Sahakyan. moderator, Senior Program Officer at Counterpart International's headquarters in Washington, DC

Welcome everyone, and thank you for your participation. Today we are kicking off our three-day conference. Today we are hosting three guest-speakers, each of whom will make a presentation for about thirty minutes, then we will have a 10-15 minute question and answer session, and at the very end we will have even longer periods of time to discuss general issues. I do have high expectations that at the end of this three-day conference we will be able to formulate practical proposals, together with you and with your active participation, about further development and improvement of relations between non-governmental organizations and the public. As you see, various topics are posted on the walls, and we will hold discussions about these topics. The topics are the following:

1. **Enhancing cooperation within the NGO sector;**
2. **Increasing public confidence in NGOs;**
3. **Strengthening cooperation between NGOs and society.**

Mrs. Hranush Hakobyan, Chair of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, and Youth, will be our first presenter today. I will give just brief background information. Mrs. Hakobyan graduated from the Mathematics Department of the Yerevan State University, as well as the Law Department and the Academy of Social Sciences. She worked as a Professor at the Gavar State University, served as a deputy in the Supreme Council, Deputy Chair of the Supreme Council Standing Committee on Health and Social Issues and now, as I mentioned, she is the Chair of the NA Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, and Youth. The floor is now yours, Mrs. Hakobyan.

Hranush Hakobyan. Committee Chair, Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture and Youth

Topic: *Work with constituents from the perspective of a member of parliament*

It is a pleasure to meet with heads of NGOs and their members, as they are the ones engaged in day-to-day interaction with the public, and they are well-informed about their problems, and they contribute to the democratization, development, and progress of our country.

As we all know, Article 1 of the Armenian Constitution provides for building a sovereign, democratic and social state with rule of law. The core objective of any state with a social thrust to it is to build a civil society. NGOs, mass media, intercommuni-

ty organizations, and trade unions play a key role in building a civil society; unfortunately, the last two institutions have not consolidated yet.

Since at least half of the 4,000 NGOs registered in Armenia are functioning NGOs, and 20% of the NGOs actively pursue their activities, then we may register progress in the development of public organizations. The state is a special entity in which all the rest of the entities operate. The National Assembly (NA) develops and adopts all laws, including laws on NGOs, trade unions, and freedom of the mass media; it has created the legal foundation based on which the NGOs can very actively and freely carry out their activities. The state defines and regulates the norms for individual freedoms and rights, and NGOs and civil society ought to exercise oversight over these rules in order to prevent the "rules of the game" from changing. There are many examples where NGOs influence laws through their lobbying activities, thus reducing the probability of adopting misinformed decisions. In society, the people play a key role in the formation and consolidation of the branches of the government, and it is not by chance that Article 2 of the Armenian Constitution stipulates that the authority belongs to the people. The people are the source where the NA stems from, and this is why elections must be free and fair. NGOs have a very important role in this process and are divided into three groups based on the type of role they play:

The 1-st group approves of the activities undertaken by the authorities and endorses their programs, participates in their campaigns, and tries to make its own contribution

The 2-nd group thinks that the parties forming the government are not doing what they ought to do, they favor change of government and support the opposition parties to ensure the country's progress.

The 3-rd group is comprised of NGOs of a neutral standing. These NGOs are of the opinion, that it is better to raise the awareness of the society, so that citizens can exercise their political rights and liberties and fulfill their duties.

The elections to be held this year have some distinctive features. First, the amended Constitution; one of the key amendments provides for the decentralization of the three branches of the government, (legislative, executive, and judicial) whereby one branch executes and the other branch exercises oversight. The other important amendment is the oversight by the judicial branch of the application of laws and elimination of flaws.

The second feature is the larger role allotted to the National Assembly. For example, the Armenian Government has a right to choose whom it should be accountable to. Today, it is accountable to the NA.

The third feature is that the government has committed itself to a number of obligations or international treaties: the EU's New Neighborhood Policy, the Millennium Challenge Program, which means that the NA must be formed based on democratic principles. The next peculiarity involves the amendments to the criminal code related to the electoral process. In the event of violating the stipulated tenets, the punitive measures are defined to range from a penalty of 300,000 AMD to 7 years imprisonment.

Thus, we may draw the conclusion that the government is doing its best to strengthen and increase the number of NGOs, and we should not be concerned about the large number of NGOs, but rather, the large number of parties. Today, 75 parties are registered in Armenia and we may conclude from this that the political system is "seriously ill", and the only way to overcome this "illness" is by the people and their unity. The system whereby NGOs cooperate with each other and parliamentary candidates, for example, by helping with pre-election campaigns or by presenting problems to the deputy or the National Assembly in an effort to find a solution, does not work in Armenia.

In order to encourage the involvement of NGOs in this process, I lobbied at the National Assembly for 100 million Armenian drams to be provided in grants to NGOs.

Anna Sahakyan. Thank you for the presentation, let us proceed to our next presenter. Our next pre-

sender is Dr. Preeti Shroff-Mehta, who is a doctor and a professor and has over 15 years of experience in managing projects in international development and academic teaching. She has also worked in many different organizations and managed projects sponsored by the US Department of State, the World Bank, and the Ford Foundation. She works as an adjunct faculty at John Hopkins University as well as teaches at the US School for Global Studies in International Courses (she has taught graduate courses in International Development and Education at the University of Maryland). Please, Dr. Shroff.

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Preeti Shroff-Mehta. World Learning, Trainer

Topic: *The role of the public in issue identification: a comparative perspective*

First I have a question to the audience, what is advocacy?

Answer of the audience

- Advocacy is a means of effecting a long term, positive change through involvement of people/citizens
- Advocacy is involvement of citizens in the adoption of political decisions
- Advocacy is a long process which is directed at changing, using, implementing or ceasing public policy

I have traveled all over the world and have not heard the right definition of advocacy, because across countries, across cultures, across governments the understanding of advocacy differs. And it is great, as advocacy is a process that transforms citizens, government, and society and creates a collective vision of what an issue should be all about. In the entire range of definitions of advocacy it goes from the simplest, that is access for a service when people say "I need advocacy to have HIV/AIDS medication", up to the perception that advocacy is revolution. So keep in mind, that advocacy has multiple meanings in different countries.

I want to begin my presentation by saying that we all exist in an increasingly global world and in my presentation, I want to focus on citizen advocacy for policy reform at the national, local, and global levels.

Citizen advocacy environment Emerging state-weak civil society

The first model

Angola

This state is supposed to be one of the richest states. In reality it can be so, because of its natural resources - its diamonds and oil. And when we look at the wealth index of countries, it is one of the poorest countries of the world. Why? The reason is that wealth is controlled by a few politicians and multinational corporations, whose wealth and profits are not shared with people. However, all natural resources belong to the people of the state. Together with the organization where I work and through collaboration with many governments of the world, we are working to create a transparency network, to ask the government to publish their profits, explain what they are doing with all profits, and what the multinational corporations are doing with oil and diamond profits. So the role of NGOs in a civil society is working on raising their educational level and awareness through cooperation with the government, since we know that the educational level in such countries is very low. Thus, this engagement can be called soft advocacy through joint education and awareness programs for parliamentarians, government, and civil society leaders, to think how the government can provide basic minimum services to all Angolans.

Strong state-weak civil society**The second model****Morocco**

Strong state means an authoritarian/dictatorial state with royal origin, e.g. Morocco, where I've just been recently. It is a powerful and strong state where the king of Morocco is very liberal, and he really believes in true democracy. But the parliament is more authoritarian, more traditional, and the parliamentarians are very strong community leaders, who also have religious power, and their vision of Moroccan democracy differs slightly from the king's vision. Just recently, the king managed to pass a Family Law that a man has the right to inheritance and the right to divorce. The king was clever enough that he collaborated with the civil society, interpreting the Khuran's texts in such a way as to give equal rights to everybody within the family.

Third model**India**

There, the most important aspect is that the civil society has done really great work. In India, they have more than one million NGOs and a democratically elected state, so we live in a very sophisticated advocacy area. The first phase of advocacy there is mobilizing citizens demanding services. The second phase of advocacy is strong economic literacy for NGOs so that they can sit at the table with any economist from, for example, the World Bank and have an equal level of dialogue awareness and negotiation.

Fourth model**Somalia****Weak state-strong civil society**

The civil society is very strong there, because of the role of many international NGOs. There is no government there, so hopefully this international NGO environment will transfer into a strong state.

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Anna Sahakyan. Our next presenter is also going to address the same thematic group that we were talking about. I would like to introduce Mark Granus, he has 10 years of international development management work experience, he holds two master's degrees in International Development Management and Business Administration from the American University in Washington DC. Mark Granus has served as a PeaceCorp volunteer in Bulgaria, a teacher and business consultant in Japan, an advocacy program officer in Belarus, deputy chief of party on the Community Action Investment program in Uzbekistan, and recently as the Central Asian region chief of party for Counterpart International's Civil Society Support Initiative. Please Mark.

Mark Granius. Counterpart International, Consultant

Notes

Topic: *Networks and coalitions-beyond the rhetoric (why coalitions and networks create confidence in the public)*

Thank you for a nice introduction. First, I want to say that it is great to be back to Armenia. I have lived here for the past three months and in that short time developed a real appreciation and like, almost love, for Armenia. I have a great amount of respect for the history of the country, the beauty of the country, and warmth of the people, but as Alex said in his speech this morning, even more importantly, the movement forward that seems to be occurring in Armenia. There seems to be energy, there seems to be enthusiasm, there seems to be activism and change which is a wonderful thing to see, and I hope you will continue on that path.

Before I begin, I would to congratulate the two female speakers. I have heard a lot about female empowerment, well I am the only male on the panel today, and I think we have done pretty well today. Usually I would not recommend taking advice on women's empowerment, especially political empowerment, from the US, but even the US is changing, and we have our first female speaker of the House in two hundred and thirty years. So ladies, I think it was a very powerful presentation, you got to the heart of what participatory democracy is, and Hranoush, I really want to applaud you for coming here today. I can say with certainty, that in other places I have worked-Turkmenistan, Belarus, Uzbekistan and even in Kazakhstan, it is very rare to have a parliamentarian at an NGO conference. I admire you for doing that, and even more importantly, I really enjoyed the content of your presentation. The points about the power coming from the people and the power of parliament arriving from the people, absolutely the movement of Armenia toward a more decentralized power structure, more authority to the parliament, and, of course, more female political activism.

My presentation today is on one component of what Preeti's presentation was on, more general advocacy So my presentation is about coalitions. Anybody who has been in the NGO sector as long as you have been is sick and tired of hearing the word coalition. Coalition is not a dirty word, it's a concept, a progress, and it's the logical progression of civil society and democratic participation. And it's not limited to civil society. Businesses enter into coalitions and partnerships to establish and invent new products, to capture new markets, and parliament, even political parties, form coalitions, maybe for some negative implications. When I used to work in Ukraine, three months before the elections, 100 political parties merged into 10 and they called it "splitting season". So as you mentioned, it will be a mark of Armenia's political maturity when political coalitions develop and become stronger, speak with one voice, and represent larger constituencies. Before I get to my presentation I want to get to some quick word association exercises. The first thing I want to ask is what positive and negative associations do you have with word coalition?

Coalition-word associations

Positive	Negative
Partnership	Limitation of responsibility
Joint resources and efforts	Loss of independence
Experience	Confusion of roles
Leadership	Suspicious
Courage	Greed/jealousy
Power	

What experience did the audience have with partnership?

- ➡ good 95%
- ➡ bad 5%

What experience did the audience have with coalitions?

- good 60%
- bad 40%

What do you think is better, to work alone or with a group of people?

- 100% agreed that to work with a group is better and much more effective.

Thank you, and now I want to move on to my presentation, which is called Partnership and Coalitions: Increasing Effectiveness and Public Confidence.

During a number of my meetings with NGOs in Armenia, no suggestion brought forth a greater negative reaction than: "Why don't we create a network or coalition to address that issue?"

This negative reaction is assuredly not unique to Armenia. I have received the same resistance to the coalition creation idea in the United States, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and almost every other country where I have worked. When writing proposals, I have removed the activity of creating a coalition on countless occasions (including in Armenia) after receiving feedback that creating a coalition was not an achievable promise, or that coalition building has fallen out of favor with donors. Because I believe in the premise of strength in numbers, I feel that it is important to analyze the resistance against coalitions by both NGOs and donors.

Ten years ago, when Counterpart introduced the concept of boards of directors for NGOs in Central Asia, we met similar resistance. Local NGOs felt that boards were an unnecessarily imposed western import. A running cartoon showed Uncle Sam telling local NGOs that they better have their boards if they wanted any more money. Donors, after early failed attempts, felt that NGO board development was a waste of time and money. Now, finally, the more advanced Central Asian NGOs have fully and voluntarily accepted boards of directors as a core component of a sustainable NGO. Some NGOs are even utilizing their board members for fundraising, technical expertise, oversight, advice, and their connections.

Reasons for Creating and Benefits of Partnerships and Coalitions

No one can whistle a symphony. - H.E. Luccock

Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable. - Kenyan Proverb

A **partnership** is a relationship between two or more entities which exists to add real value to all parties and mutual activities. Fundamental partnership principles include trust, respect, open communication, and accountability. Partnerships can be both institutional and situational, but all expectations must be apparent and agreed upon by all sides.

A **coalition** is an alliance or combination - often temporary - of individuals, organizations, factions, parties, or nations

Why do people form partnerships?

(1) Experience; (2) Funding and Other Resources; (3) New Programs; (4) New Methodologies or Intellectual Property; (5) Geographic Presence; (6) Contacts and Relationships; and (7) Influence and Increased Status

Why do people form coalitions? (1) To oppose a common foe, law, issue, or activ-

ity; (2) To achieve a common goal; and/or (3) To educate the general public or key decision makers.

Lasting partnerships and effective coalitions take work, and are not stagnant but evolve over time.

As stated above, the basic premise for engaging in a partnership is the truth that there is strength in numbers. More specifically, the benefits of partnerships and coalitions include:

- More and louder voices behind one message
- Better media coverage, public awareness, and public image
- Different tone of voices targeting different decision-making personalities behind one message
- More votes behind one issue or one party
- More hands working on a common activity
- Increased geographic coverage
- Increased technical knowledge
- Increased access to government law and policy makers
- Larger resource base; sharing of equipment, supplies and space
- Rapid and cost effective distribution and research capability
- Brings together broad spectrum of skills, ideas, and connections
- Reduce duplicative efforts
- Consistency of activities and message
- Often leads to synergies and economies of scale
- The feeling of being part of something bigger than your individual organization
- Can better identify gaps in legislation or government service provision

Pitfalls of Coalitions and Partnerships

It is important not to allow ever-wider coalition-building to become an end in itself. As we saw in the Gulf War of 1990, international pressures, particularly those exerted from within an alliance, can result in the failure to follow actions through and so leave future problems unresolved.

- Margaret Thatcher

- Loss of organizational sovereignty
- Division of resources
- Distracts time and resources away from NGO's regular work
- Difficult to make decisions and take action
- Action you may not agree with taken in your name
- Too many compromises
- Often imposed by a donor program or grant
- Less individual initiative and accountability - "groupthink"
- Uneven burden on some NGOs, some NGOs get free ride

- Real or perceived inequalities of participating NGOs
- Causes conflict and infighting among organizations that hadn't previously existed
- Credit for success must be shared

Levels of Coalitions and Partnerships

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

- Unknown

Style	Type of Issue or Campaign	Characteristics
Strong	Armenian Diaspora; Human Rights Campaigns; Free Trade or Business Improvement Associations; International Red Cross; Any Coalition or Campaign formed from new law or current event	Overall joint-strategy and regimented structure, low organization and task diversity, strong agreement on problems and necessary actions, low completion among members, short-term dedicated staff, higher member time and financial contribution required, regimented structure
Moderate	Parliamentary/Political Coalitions; Cancer Coalition; Anti-Tobacco Campaign	NGOs ensure that their activities consider other partners; moderate organization and task diversity; operates in spurts of action;
Loose	NGO Coordination and Favorable Legislation Coalitions, Amnesty International, Greenpeace	Existing information-sharing network, NGOs assist each other on an ad hoc basis, high organization and task diversity, non-controversial or divisive issue, low cost to members, large / international in scope

Style	Type of Issue or Campaign	Characteristics
Process	Association of Retired People, Anti-Corruption, Freedom of Speech, Eliminate Poverty, Rights for the Disabled, Environmental Conservation	Long-term, almost perpetual campaigns, targeting fundamental change in public opinion, success is incremental, coalition evolves away from individual NGOs into an institution, many volunteers
Action	2007 Free and Fair Election Coalition, NGO Tax Law, Better Shareholder Protection Law, Anti-Iraq War Campaign, Labor Law Reform, and Open Border with Turkey, Reaction to new law or event	Shorter-term campaign focuses on rapid result, specific objective and coalition disbands when achieved, involves hard lobbying or parliamentary targeting, rapid decision-making, issue is considered urgent and needing immediate attention, primarily paid staff, short but high funding needs

One of the primary reasons for such a negative reaction toward coalitions is that people have an erroneous perception of what a coalition is. Many people equate it with political parties, government organized NGOs (GONGOs), or limited experience participating in a donor-driven or heavy handed coalition or network. Like friendship or love - coalitions come in various degrees.

Lessons Learned in Coalitions and Partnerships

We should be careful to get out of an experience only the wisdom that is in it -- and stop there; lest we be like the cat that sits down on a hot stove-lid. She will never sit down on a hot stove-lid again - and that is well; but also she will never sit down on a cold one anymore.

- Mark Twain

- A coalition is not an end result or an impact in itself - it is an activity or a means to an ends
- Turf protection and mistrust must be overcome - otherwise, the coalition may actually lead to a negative outcome
- Not every decision needs consensus, and coalition partners don't need to agree on everything - have majority and super-majority voting procedures in place
- Decision makers must be at key meetings or delegate decision-making authority to representatives
- During a dispute, always work backwards until common ground can be found and then rebuild from the spot where everyone agrees
- Coalitions that exist for a specific and compelling reason and have members that are committed to the cause have the best likelihood of succeeding
- Every single member must enter the coalition knowing that they are surrendering control and must propose a compromise on every decision they don't agree with - think in terms of "can I accept this" instead of "do I fully agree with this"
- Certain key coalition roles must be in place such as Convener, Facilitator, Arbitrator, Note Taker, and Communicator
- There should be a designated key contact from each organization to maintain consistency
- Coalitions work best with a small number (5-7) of founding members who can comprise the board or management council complemented with a multitude of other organizations at different levels of coalition membership
- Founding members should complete and discuss a partnership / coalition readiness questionnaire
- Coalitions should be inclusive but there should also be layers of membership - both in terms of rights, and responsibilities
- Involve all coalition members through communication and delegation
- Coalitions should have an identity - at a minimum including name, logo, slogan and mission
- One organization cannot dominate a coalition - decision making procedures must be clear, documented, and followed

- A coalition - like any other sustainable organization - should have a mission, goals, objectives, indicators, roles and responsibilities, a code of ethics, communication protocol, dispute resolution mechanisms, as well as governance and member policies
- Goals and objectives must be realistic; limit number of issues coalition is addressing and set easy initial indicators in order to build confidence and momentum
- Don't neglect fun and creativity in coalition management and activities
- Meetings should be regular and minutes should be taken and disseminated - meetings can be complimented by smaller working groups who are in charge of completing certain initiatives
- Prepare for, map, and strategize against your campaign's opposition
- Change takes time - perseverance and follow-through are essential

Cases in Coalitions and Partnerships

Everyone wants to coordinate, but no one wants to be coordinated.

- Doug Kostel former Secretary of the
Environmental Protection Agency

Here are some successful coalitions where members both coordinated others and allowed themselves to be coordinated:

Kazakhstan NGO Legislation Coalition. In the summer of 2005, a coalition of nearly 200 Kazakhstani NGOs joined together to mobilize against repressive draft laws on national security and national and international NGOs. The draft laws, if adopted, would add burdensome requirements and restrictions to the activities of NGOs, including limit the issues about which they could speak. With this threat looming, it was imperative for NGOs to defend their public role. It was the pro-activeness from local civil society that garnered the attention of the media and contributed to the removal of the most detrimental articles from the draft laws. ARGO, the national association for the Civil Society Support Centers, alerted their partners to the negative consequences of such laws. This took place at meetings and workshops held in locations throughout Kazakhstan. The campaign began with a Round Table Meeting in Astana, to which members of the Presidential Administration and Ministry of Justice attended. In addition to a Petition signed by more than 200 NGOs and presented to Deputies from the Majelis and Senate, Minister of Information and Culture and the Prime-Minister, another highlight was the "fax attack" organized by ARGO and Zhalgas (Almaty-based Civil Society Support Center). Thirty-three members of the Senate were blitzed with faxes from over 100 national NGOs, urging them to reconsider the drafts. A high media profile helped keep the issue alive throughout the summer of 2005. At the president's request, the Constitutional Council was asked to review the law - having already been given a warning about the validity of any such laws by the National Confederation of NGOs. The success of NGO mobilization and opposition to the draft laws came in two forms: amendments to the drafts, throughout the April-July period, that deleted those articles that were most detrimental to the daily operation and freedoms of NGOs. The Constitutional Council agreed with NGOs that the laws violated the Constitution and should not be adopted. Although this issue saw many players involved at the national and international level, the ability of civil society to unite in opposition to such a threat, and gain significant media attention, was impressive. The strength of opposition, carried out in a mature and sophisticated way, through argumentation and meetings, has paid dividends, and will, hopefully, send strong sig-

nals to all citizens about the need for Kazakhstan to remain a pluralistic, inclusive society, in which all citizens have the right to participate.

Kazakhstan Coalition of Disability NGOs. In the summer of 2004, NGO Namys organized a coalition of 15 NGO partners and interested government officials and media outlets, to initiate an advocacy campaign with the goal to ratify the Integrated Disability Rehabilitation Policy at the local and national government levels and to ensure adequate funding for policy implementation. The coalition created a workplan, research strategy, media protocol, and scheduled hearings with parliamentarians. They also conducted policy-based research on the government's existing rehabilitation plan, which found that the previous government program only met 40% of its target indicators due to lack of an adequate amount of staff and a confusing management system. The coalition also determined that the program was under-funded and focused solely on health rehabilitation issues and did not consider psychological, professional, and other issues that would increase equal access for the disabled. After organizing the coalition, strategizing the campaign, and conducting research on the previous government program, campaign partners formulated a new, detailed rehabilitation policy which covered all aspects of providing equal access and integrating efforts to protect the identified needs of the coalition's constituency. On the national level, the coalition established strong contacts with heads of Ministries, Parliament members, and representatives of the Presidential Administration. They also worked directly with seven separate ministries including the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Ministry of Economy and Budgeting, Ministry of Culture, Information, and Sports, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Ministry of Public Health, and Ministry of Industry and Trade. In late 2005, the Almaty city administration ratified the newly designed integrated rehabilitation policy designed by the advocacy coalition led by Namys as well as an increased budget for implementing the new policy. This was an unqualified advocacy coalition campaign success resulting from sound policy research and constructive engagement by NGOs of government officials. The Almaty City Government Disability Rehabilitation Program for 2002-2005 had a budget of approximately \$2 million. The newly approved budget of the Integrated Disability Rehabilitation Policy for 2006-2008 for Almaty is \$27 million - an increase of 1,350% as a result of the advocacy campaign.

Kyrgyzstan Election Coalition. Following the Kyrgyzstan Rose Revolution in the spring of 2005, a coalition of seven leading Kyrgyzstani NGOs banded together to form an initiative entitled - "I am for Free Elections." The initiative culled together soon after the abrupt change of government in Kyrgyzstan on March 24, and it became clear that a presidential election would be held. In the new, post-regime change atmosphere, it was important that civil society made the most of opportunities open to it to play a meaningful role in the political development of Kyrgyzstan. The rapidly pulled together coalition had a number of successes in getting candidates to begin a dialogue with citizens, getting civic participation on local election councils, informing citizens of their voting rights, bringing media and public attention to pre and during election violations, and getting out the vote. The civil society election coalition's activities included design and receipt of candidate questionnaires from all 9 major candidates, distribution of 200,000 voter information brochures, organization of numerous concerts, and press conferences imploring people to vote and disbursing nearly \$500,000 in election grants to local civil society organizations.

Anti-Corruption Coalition 2000 in Bulgaria. Coalition 2000 is an initiative of a number of Bulgarian non-governmental organizations aimed at combating corruption through a process of cooperation among governmental institutions, NGOs and individuals drafting an Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Bulgaria, and implementing an awareness campaign, and a monitoring system. The Coalition 2000 process was started in March 1997 as a result of the initiative of the Center for the Study of Democracy

and a number of other Bulgarian NGOs with the support of the USAID. The mission of Coalition 2000 is to enhance the awareness, adoption, and practical implementation of democratic values such as transparency, trust, and integrity. Coalition 2000 now steers an annual process of assessment of the political, institutional, and legal developments in the country as regards corruption. The Coalition also produces assessment and policy reports in specific areas (e.g. trafficking, judiciary, gray economy, etc). The Coalition encourages the capacity building for key public institutions - Coalition 2000 has been the main proponent of the creation of the Ombudsman institution in Bulgaria. Having drafted the legislation that establishes the institution, the Coalition is now working on building the capacity of the national and local Ombudsman offices. The Corruption Monitoring System (CMS) of Coalition 2000 consists of a set of quantitative and qualitative monitoring instruments, and generates information about the structure and dynamics of corrupt behavior, the scope and dynamics of corruption related attitudes, assessments and expectations of the general public, of public sector officials, and of specific social and professional groups. The Coalition also supports the anti-corruption work of NGOs through a small grants program. Since this coalition formed in 1998, Bulgaria has reduced corruption (as measured by major corruption indices) every year except 2005. In 2007, corruption in Bulgaria was reported at half of what it was in 1998. Accession into the European Union in 2007 was recognition of this fact.¹

All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV. Established as a lobbying group in 1999 by people living with HIV/AIDS, the Network works closely with public institutions to draw attention to discrimination issues, secure medical treatment, and help to empower people living with HIV/AIDS. Through a range of diverse activities, the Network has supported some 14,240 people, including 1,677 children, in Ukraine who are affected by HIV/AIDs. The organization provides both support and opportunities for realization of the potential of people living with HIV. They work in day-care centers, self-support groups, and community centers helping those affected by the epidemic. The Network is now going regional, and partnerships have been signed with organizations in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Moldova. The Network has years of valuable experience fighting stigma and discrimination, asserting its interests at the highest level and other achievements to share with its CIS partners. In 2006, the All-Ukrainian Network was among five global winners of the newly created Red Ribbon Award for its outstanding contribution to the frontline response to HIV and AIDs at the Sixteenth Annual International AIDs Conference in Toronto, Canada.²

America Votes. America Votes is a coalition of 33 of the largest membership-based groups in the country, who have come together to increase voter registration, education, and participation in electoral politics. This historic partnership represents a combined membership of more than 20 million Americans in every state in the country. Groups that are a part of America Votes work on a broad range of issues including the environment, civil and human rights, choice, education, and labor. The America Votes mission is to marshal and unite the voices and efforts of the progressive community to ensure that our collective and significant resources-both human and financial-are aggregated, coordinated, and compounded, to maximize the electoral impact of our partners. We pioneer, lead, and share innovative strategies and technologies, in conjunction with our partners, so that progressive movements' electoral power is there when opportunities and challenges emerge. America Votes activities include fundraising for Democratic (progressive) causes, consolidating contact lists, identifying where resources can be best spent, maintaining communication among all members, and getting directly involved in strategizing and campaigning for progressive candidates. The primary indicator of their success is that the Democratic Party won back both the US Senate and House of Representatives in November 2006. Specific indicators of success include 70% of partner organizations were somewhat or greatly changed by par-

1. www.anticorruption.bg www.csd.bg

<http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/august-2006/ukraine-redribbon-20060817.en>

2. <http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/august-2006/ukraine-redribbon-20060817.en>

3. www.americavotes.org

ticipating in the coalition, 75% of partners said that they actually saved resources by participating in the coalition, and 80% said they were able to use new get-out-the-vote technologies that they would not have otherwise been able to afford.³

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Anna Sahakyan. Thank you very much Mark. Now we have time to ask questions. Please introduce yourself.

Question - **Arshaluys Zorabyan.** There is a degree of polarization in the socio-economic life in India, [on the one hand], and due to historical developments, custom, law, and religious diversity, on the other hand. From this aspect, are there challenges to the consolidation of the civil society in India or not, and is a developed civil society is found throughout India? Please describe the situation in individual regions of India.

Answer - **Preeti Shroff-Mehta.** India is a very complex state. Every region of India has different food, clothing and a different way of life. The only common language we can have in India is the colonial British language, which is English. This is India's biggest challenge, because the only way one Indian from one state can communicate with another Indian from another state is English. So this is one component of complexity and the strange thing is that because of it, India is emerging very powerfully as a global player. There are tremendous polarities in India, some of them are concerning and some of them are very promising. The promising polarity in India is that we have diversity of cultures, so there is no one imposed goal as to what India should be. There can not be, and the government at the national or local level should respect this diversity and find solutions for all of them.

The second polarity is that India is emerging as a modern nation, and at the same time people are very traditional, we are very proud of our traditions. In Armenia, I see that people are the same and this is very good, as I think that there are some polarities that are not bad.

Some regions in India are economically rich, and some are very poor, and the rich

ones don't want to contribute at the national level. And that's why there is real tension between local and national levels. India is growing very fast economically, but I hope that the Indian government will commit to growth with equity, because we have a huge educated population. India is a country of one billion people with very qualified medical, technology, and education sector people, but we need to worry about the 70% of the people who may not benefit from this economic growth. So when I was referring to India as a strong state and a strong civil society, I meant that India has a real functioning democracy, strong health, and educational system. And that's why it will easily solve the diversity problem because of its strong civil society, as there are one million NGOs and their goal is to promote equal benefits from economic growth to the whole population of India, irrespective of ethnic and language diversities. Having democratic systems does not mean that you are practicing a real democracy at a grass-roots level, and I think that leap has to be made by every government around the world.

Question - participant. You talked about violations of women's rights in Somalia. Have you asked those women whether they want their rights to be protected or not?

Answer - **Preeti Shroff-Mehta.** I did not travel to Somalia, but I want to mention that the world has some kinds of stereotypes concerning African countries and according to these stereotypes, people assume what Africa has, what it does not have, and what it needs. The main problem in Africa is the justice system, which is traditional. Though many treaties have been signed and many donation projects are based on the developing human rights environment in Africa, it still stays traditional. And that's why many modern mechanisms of negotiation over the conflicts have failed. So for Africa, the main problem is the justice system.

So the traditions and uniqueness of countries should be taken into account. We assume that we have the right to enter every country and tell them what they should do, but we forget that we should learn about the culture and traditions of that country first, we have lost the value of learning.

True partnership is based on learning-first of all you must realize and decide for yourself how you can help the people of that country.

Question - **Arsen Stepanyan, Counterpart International.** You mentioned that the NGOs should help politicians. In that case, shouldn't there be a boundary precluding NGOs from politicizing?

Answer - **Hranush Hakobyan.** All citizens have political obligations. In almost all countries, NGOs participate in the political struggle and in the elections. It is one thing for NGOs to have a political stance, and another thing for them to support a political figure. NGOs may be observers at elections.

Question - **Arsen Stepanyan.** How can an NGO know which deputy to support? Are their political agendas the same or different?

Answer - **Hranush Hakobyan.** Every party should have a political program. Unfortunately, in Armenia, people make their decisions based on party leaders and individuals rather than political programs. Parties that do not work as a team and with the public are doomed to failure.

Remark - **Mark Granus.** All political parties have one mission-to assume power. The mission of NGOs is to serve people. It is dangerous when an NGO is intensively involved in politics and promotes a particular deputy.

Working with and for the Public

April 14, 2007p.

Anna Sahakyan. Today, the second and third sessions of the conference will take place and you can see the three main topics of the conference, which I mentioned yesterday. And I would like to ask you to write down your suggestions and comments concerning those topics on a small piece of paper and attach it to the wall according to each topic.

The second session will start with Ms. Preeti's presentation. Please

Preeti Shroff-Mehta

Topic: *Tools and tips for participatory issue identification*

Thank you Anna, first I want to ask all of you to sit in a circle, in front of each other. And when we have already formed a circle, I want to ask you-Do you feel more comfortable when I was standing and lecturing, or now, when we are sitting in a circle and have direct contact?

The answer of audience was yes; the circle is more comfortable and more preferable, as there is:

1. equality
2. direct contact
3. friendly atmosphere

I want to say that in India, all kinds of meetings, in any field are conducted in a circle. Now I want to discuss with you the issue of participation and its types. What are the types of participation?

Answers of the audience:

1. Superficial (e.g. during communist meetings)
2. Passive (e.g. 1. during the meetings or discussions making only proposals, 2. the role of media in Armenia)
3. Contribution (e.g. when you receives an invitation letter for some activity where it is mentioned that you should bring a donation/contribution if you want to participate)
4. Interactive (e.g. when you do some part of the work)

What is more important in interactive participation?

- Beneficiary involvement
- Openness to different ideas
- Reduced risk
- Ability to listen

5. Self-mobilization

And what is the role of compromise during participation -the following ideas were expressed.

Answers of the audience:

- Compromise is not always a solution to the problem

- ☞ Compromise should be achieved in any way, during any discussion
- ☞ There are no wrong ideas, there is something true in any idea
- ☞ The right and strong leader should be chosen for efficient labor division
- ☞ Compromise is a planning of policy
- ☞ One should compromise without violating one's principles
- ☞ Advocacy has its mechanism and we should follow these mechanisms to achieve the goals

And when and how should the advocacy be implemented? Because it is difficult to come to consensus every time, as everyone thinks that he is right.

Answers of the audience

- ✓ All participants should be fairly valued by their leader
- ✓ Advocacy is not a conflict between two individuals, it is a state or community level conflict. Different techniques must be used to find out the opinion of the majority and make a law or a norm from it
- ✓ Motivation of participants is important
- ✓ Create healthy psychological atmosphere for all participants
- ✓ Find the interested parts/sides for the solution of the problem
- ✓ Personal ambitions of participants must be put aside
- ✓ Multi-opinion of participants (with positive meaning)
- ✓ Listening and understanding are the most important ways for achieving the goal
- ✓ The group must function as a whole body

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Anna Sahakyan. Thank you Preeti, now we will pass to our second speaker today, to Mr. Mark Granius. Please Mark.

Mark Granius. Counterpart International, Consultant

Topic: *Tools for ensuring accountability to the public (annual reports, membership meetings, transparent governance, etc.)*

Thank you Anna. First, before I pass to my presentation, I want to ask you several questions:

Question 1. Who are NGOs accountable to?

Answers of the audience

- ☞ Donors
- ☞ Government
- ☞ Society-public
- ☞ NGO members
- ☞ Media
- ☞ Partners/coalition members
- ☞ Beneficiaries
- ☞ To its mission

Question 2. What will you include in your annual report?

Answers of the audience

- activities initiated without funding should be mentioned
- present a success story
- use simple language, pictures, and snapshots
- the coverage of the given issues by mass media
- quotations, references
- graphs
- how to become a member of the governing organization or how to become a donor

Question 3. How should the donors be represented in the reports?

Answers of the audience

- All donors should be mentioned

Question 4. How much does the annual report cost?

Answers of the audience

- nothing
- 1000 drams per page
- one box of printing paper

Question 5. What will you put on the first page?

Answers of the audience

- a symbolic picture
- a picture of the beneficiaries and a message
- a work of art
- the name and logo of the NGO
- a picture of a man and a woman in a rural setting
- project title and contact information
- thank you note by the manager
- the content

Question 6. Who must write the introduction?

Answers of the audience

- the manager or the specialist in the given area
- the manager should not write the introduction
- words from a well-known international organization

Question 7. What topics must be included?

Answers of the audience

- the project dates and results
- expectations from a future project
- report on financial costs

Question 8. When must the report be written?

Answers of the audience

- at the beginning of the year

Question 9. Are your members participating in the process of making reports?

Answers of the audience

- yes
- also board members

Thank you and now I would like to begin my presentation, "Ensuring Public Accountability".

Freedom is not the absence of accountability

Anwar Ibrahim, former PM of Malaysia and current President of AccountAbility

Action ⇔ Consequence

Accountability, like any sophisticated concept, has been defined in numerous ways, such as:

- Accountability is the acknowledgement and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies including the administration, governance, and implementation within the scope of the role or employment position, and encompassing the obligation to report, explain and be answerable for resulting consequences.
- Accountability requires individual and organizational management, performance and financial account, or justification of its activities to another stake holding group or individual.
- Accountability is being responsible to someone else for your activity.
- Accountability is being obliged to answer for one's actions, to an authority that may impose a penalty for failure, or a reward for good performance.

Common themes in all of these definitions include action, consequence, responsibility, justification, answerable, and stakeholder. These definitions presuppose that a societal or organizational policy framework exists, activities are measured and reported on and an external individual has an interest in the action taken. Closely related

Term	Associated Technique
Accountability	Performance Measurement and Cost Benefit Analysis
Legitimacy	Sustainability (Operational and Financial) and Constituency
Integrity	Transparency
Democracy	Responsibility

terms also include:

Every organization should define and enforce an Accountability Loop focusing on four components, including:

- (Corrective) Action
- Measurement
- Reporting
- Communicating



Accountability as it Relates to Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs):

Historical discussion of accountability began with a focus on governance, namely in emerging democratic societies, evolved to the private sector, and more recently landed squarely on the non-governmental sector.

The explosive emergence of NGOs in Armenia and throughout the world is not debatable. As NGOs increase in number, size, and access to resources, they are also assuming greater power. The truism of "with greater power comes greater responsibility (authority)" is beginning to run true for NGOs. While NGOs have always scolded governments and businesses to be more accountable, governments and businesses are now imploring NGOs to be more accountable as well.

The existence of NGOs is a fundamental element of freedom of expression in a democracy, and must be vehemently protected. Regulation of NGO creation and activity should be limited to (1) preventing tangible harm to others, and (2) receiving public financial benefit.

Because, in most democracies, anyone has the right to start an NGO, the number of NGOs has increased dramatically. Armenia alone has 4,000 registered non-governmental organizations. This increase in numbers, without a proportional increase in financial resources, has increased competition in the sector. Increased competition has led to an increased emphasis on NGO performance and credibility - a good direction for the sector to be moving. While certain "briefcase" NGOs may still be able to trick contributors into giving them resources, over the long-run, these organizations will cease to have a place in the third sector market. Even with NGOs, a reputation takes years to build, but can dissolve in minutes upon proof of financial or ethical wrongdoing.

Even without financial or ethical wrongdoing - NGOs do not DESERVE to exist no matter how humanitarian their aims are. NGOs must justify their existence in the marketplace like any other organization that requires resources for operations and activities. Successful NGOs in Armenia and elsewhere have learned this lesson well, and have improved their financial management, program performance, communications, marketing, and reporting - particularly in relation to donor requirements. NGOs in Armenia and throughout the Former Soviet Union, however, have had more problems justifying their existence to their own constituents, stakeholders, and governments.

Accountability is increasingly becoming an important issue for the non-profit world. Several NGOs signed the "accountability charter" in 2005. In the Humanitarian field, initiatives such as the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAPI) appeared. Individual NGOs have set their own accountability systems (for example, the ALPS, Accountability, Learning and Planning System of ActionAid).

Public and Constituent Accountability

In Kazakhstan, I recently overheard two NGO leaders talking about a third NGO and saying that the NGO would not do anything unless they are being paid. International donors - both in their proscriptive manner of grant-making and in their unyielding push for financial sustainability - may be partially to blame for this "pay to play" attitude among NGOs.

The reduction in international donor funding, which has happened throughout Eastern Europe and many Former Soviet Union countries, has quickly demonstrated which NGOs have local constituencies and legitimacy, and which do not. A case in point is the Civil Society Development Foundations (CSDF) of Bulgaria and Slovakia. Both were started as grant-makers for USAID and PHARE. CSDF Bulgaria had a strong leader and was a favorite local NGO of USAID and PHARE, but remained isolated from the rest of the Bulgarian NGO sector. They also didn't spend any time developing a constituency or cultivating members. The organization

In Turkmenistan, an environmental NGO that managed 10s of 1,000s of donor dollars, conducted 100s of trainings and disbursed numerous grants to local NGOs in their region, was called into court on a politically-motivated charge and were ordered to close down. Nobody was in court for the trial and not one person protested the court decision. There is no doubt that they did great work - the tragic conclusion was that they absolutely lacked a constituency. Don't let this happen to your organization!

ceased to exist exactly one month after USAID and PHARE grants finished. CSDF in Slovakia, on the other hand, worked to get members, advocated for constituents, cultivated local funding sources, and democratized the organization. CSDF Slovakia is now one of the strongest and most respected NGOs in Slovakia, and has even expanded its work internationally.

Constituent accountability is a complex matter for nascent NGO's. While governments are primarily accountable to their citizens, and businesses are primarily accountable to their shareholders - NGOs must respond to their boards of directors, their donors, their members, their governments, media and other shareholders. With weak boards, few members and disinterested governments - NGOs often become solely accountable to their donors. Most NGOs do not solicit strategic or operational advice from their members and many do not even report on their activities to their members.

Tools for Increased Local Accountability

NGOs in Armenia must find ways to ensure that they are truly communicating with, and acting in the best interests of those for whom they claim to speak. They must stop paying lip service to international donors and internalize the fact that unless they develop constituencies, and act on their behalf, their impact and their existence will be finite. The first step in this process is creating a Constituency Cultivation and Utilization Plan with concrete action items and dates of completion. Some recommended tools and techniques of both general public and constituent accountability follow.

General Public Accountability Tools	Constituency Accountability Tools
<p>Events and Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open House University Guest Lectures Organizing Job Fairs Competitions and Awards Staging Public Cultural or Educational Events Fundraising Events Signing Public Code of Ethics Commission and Publicly Post Annual Audit Regular Meetings with Government Officials Participate in Government and Other NGO Events Volunteer Public Work Days and Clean-Ups <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large Package of Communication Products Mass Mailings Advocacy Action Alerts Press Releases Flier or Poster Campaign 	<p>Hard Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report Website Newsletter Listserve Soft Communications Media and Commercial Communications Telephone Tree Issue or Quarterly Meetings Information Gathering Telephone Hotline Walk-In Hours and Consultations Web or Actual Suggestion Box Case Recording and Management Regular Surveying and Canvassing <p>Constituent Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and Making Policy Recommendations Advocacy and Information Campaigns Free Trainings and Consultations Listserve with Opportunity Announcements Information and Factsheet Dissemination

Public Service Announcements Distribute Success Stories Issue Research and Policy Recommendations	
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Partnering for Results

Preeti Shroff- Mehta. I want to give you a template of an exercise, according to which I want you to divide into three groups -Government, Business and International organizations. Each group will be given 15 minutes to discuss and present their strategy.

Here is the template:

Issue:	Income generating and profit making activities for NGOs		
Goal:	Plan and advocacy strategy		
Power and strategy mapping			
Power players	Institution	Power players	Strategy
Government -national -local Business International Community		Government -national -local Business International Community	

I see that groups are ready; please, you can start with presenting your strategies.

Group 1-Government

Power and strategy mapping		
Institution National Assembly Committee on State and Legal Issues Ministry of Justice Ministry of Finance	Institution	Institution Study of the legal framework Presenting and examining issues Submitting an appeal with NGO signatures Meetings, round-table discussions

Notes

Group 2-Internatioanl Organizations

Power and strategy mapping		
Institution	Key individuals	Strategy
CASP	Alex Sardar, Yulia, Arsen	Proposal
USAID	Deputy Director	Personal meetings
Counterpart International	Coutry derectors	Fund raising campaigns
Save the Children	Sargis	Mailing campaigns
AED	Nick	Concerts, charity events
European Commission		
Embassies		
CoE		
OSCE		

Group 3-Business

Power and strategy mapping		
Institution	Key individuals	Strategy
Sil Concern	Businessmen who are in the National Assembly and who have experience of doing charities	Persuasion
Max Group		Media involvment
Ararat Great Valley		

Anna Sahakyan. Thank you all for participating and being very active, the presentations were indeed very interesting.

Let us continue our work. Our next presenter is Yelena Sabirova from Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Yelena's presentation will be in Russian and the initerpretation will be in English. Let us start.

Yelena Sabirova. Counterpart International, Trainer-Consultant

Topic: Constituencies: how to mobilize and utilize

Hello, everybody. I'm happy to greet you here. I come from Uzbekistan. I do not have Uzbek roots, but I was born and brought up in Uzbekistan.

I have come to this conference on the invitation of Counterpart Armenia, and I am glad I have. Today in Uzbekistan a program such as Counterpart International is not represented, but 2 years ago a Civil Advocacy Support program was implemented there. I was a consultant with the program.

The program employed a team of trainers who developed training modules, conducted trainings for the public, for NGOs, and for government structures on such topics as what advocacy is, community mobilization, consulting skills, etc. Today, my presentation is on relations between NGOs and society, with the people, for the people.

For a start, I would like to do a small exercise with you. I would like to ask you to repeat all the movements that I will show you, after me. But, each of you will start repeating the movements only after I have made eye contact with you. For example, I am showing Mark this movement. Mark starts repeating. Naira is not repeating it yet. I look at Naira, and Naira starts repeating. Mark is continuing. We will continue this way, moving around the circle. Let's begin.

The exercise is called "Rain in the Jungles." It starts to rain. The quiet rain develops into hail, storm, thunder and lightning, and then everything calms down.

And now I will tell you a short parable. Some of you have probably heard it many times. OK, you will have an opportunity to hear it again, in a different context. A woman is walking along the river bank and sees some children drowning. The woman starts rescuing these children, but the children keep growing in number in the river. A man is walking along the river bank, and the woman calls to him for help. The man goes into the river and starts teaching the children how to swim, but the children continue growing in number. The woman keeps rescuing the children, and the man keeps teaching them how to swim. A third man is walking along the river bank. They ask him to come and help them. But the man does not pay any attention to them and looks up. They ask him "Why aren't you helping us?" He says "I want to go up and see who is throwing these children after all?"

Question - How do you think what you heard is related to advocacy?

Answer from the group: We need to address the causes.

Thank you very much. To sum up what you said, some organizations provide social aid to their users, humanitarian assistance, while other organizations give them certain skills, and still other organizations involve their users in the decision making process in order to root out a problem which exists in the society, and specifically in these people's lives.

My next slide shows people and civil society organizations. Not all organizations can carry out advocacy activities, I mean non-government, non-commercial organizations. As a rule, such organizations are overloaded.

Some NGOs are engaged in rescuing children, others provide "a fishing-rod for fishing on their own," if we can use this term, and only some involve people in advocacy. NGOs are like signalmen devoted to the interests of citizens and society, i.e. NGOs deal with identifying the prime cause of the problem.

NGOs assist others in identifying what specific problem exists, i.e. an analysis is carried out and involvement in planning the resolution to this problem is ensured. NGOs get people together to influence the government, other organizations, and the public. You probably know that there are two approaches to this issue. The first approach is to speak in the name of the powerless and the voiceless, and the second approach is to involve the powerless and the voiceless in the process so that they speak for themselves. When the advocacy program was being implemented in Uzbekistan, we fostered the second approach, particularly because the organization implementing advocacy was to assist those deprived of the right to speak in speaking for themselves. How can these people be assisted in getting organized so that they speak for themselves? Through the development of their self-conscience, enhancement of awareness, change in attitude regarding this or that issue.

The next slide is on building relations top-down. The statement "building relations top-down" assumes that often, when implementing advocacy campaigns, the old and one-sided "top-down" approach is used. An NGO must be aware of the situation in the region, and it must listen to and respect people's interests. As a rule, in the top-down approach, the involvement of people is zero.

Bottom-up approach means that people are involved in the identification of the problem, its exploration and analysis, and in searching for a resolution to the problem from the initial stages.

The next slide: An extension of the advocacy basis of organizations and commu-

nities for the analysis and resolution of a problem. Advocacy basis presumes that people are once again involved in the process of problem resolution analysis, planning and decision making.

Development of organizations and enhancement of the necessary relations in a community envisages that citizens must be given a voice so loud and powerful that it is heard by people. Who are these people who must be involved by us in the process of decision making? We use the term constituency. You understand this term very well. These are people who are affected by the problem, it's a target group at which we aim our advocacy campaign. They are our allies.

The next slide shows pictures. They are somewhat funny. Here you can see people from different categories that are touched by a problem. For example, we can assume that these are pensioners who are deprived of the opportunity of getting education at their age - adult education. However, they have potential, they have motivation, they have needs, and if they are given a chance, it is possible that the circle of our supporters will grow.

The next picture is specific. It portrays an Uzbek businessman, who produces big jugs. It can be assumed that he knows nothing about his rights - the rights of a businessman. How can this person be involved in analyzing and resolving the problem, in the analysis of his problem? Sometimes people live with a problem, but they don't know that it is their problem. That is, there is a wide field for advocacy here.

And here's the third picture. It was shown in the very beginning. These are people from the community. In Uzbekistan, the community of citizens is called "mahalla". In Uzbek communities - mahallas are determined by territory. A specific number of people live in a mahalla and there is a local authority - mahalla. It is not everywhere that such local government bodies exist. In your country, for example there are no mahallas. In Uzbekistan, a law on local government bodies has been adopted, and there is an "aksakal", the chair of the mahalla committee, who facilitates the resolution of all the issues that arise in a mahalla. And if we are discussing the ways of involving these people in problem solution, then how must it be done and how should this community be organized? In this respect it is easy to work with people, but on the other hand, these local government bodies are supervised by municipalities - the city authorities, and often a top-down approach is fostered in resolving issues.

Because we are now talking about people, their attitude and behavior, it is very important in advocacy to understand to what extent people are aware, are conscious of themselves, and what their perception is of themselves. If you remember, there are three main components in advocacy: the contents of the problem/issue, the structure of the problem/issue and the culture and traditions of people with regard to the problem/issue. "The contents of the problem" refers to the constitution (it's only capitalized if you are referring to a specific constitution), laws, the budget, which constitute the basis of the problem. "The structure of a problem" refers to executive bodies at different levels, which are responsible for resolving the issue. "The culture and traditions" as the third part of this triangle refer to the people themselves, with their knowledge of the problem, their attitude forward the problem, and hence their behavior.

Assume that you are people from the community, and I am asking you a question. What associations does the word "power" have for you? Strength, voice, government, publicity, decision, money, a lot of money, corruption, control, tension. If we walk through this list, let's see which associations are negative for you, and which associations are positive.

Voice - positive.

And if an authoritative voice commands you something from above? This is control.

Government - negative, double-fold
Publicity - positive

Decision - positive
 Money - positive
 Corruption - negative
 Control - negative, however, control can also be over discipline
 Tension - negative
 Power - negative

Thank you.

When I did this exercise with other groups, more often there were negative perceptions of the concept of power. And if we look at our flipchart, there are quite a big number of both minuses and pluses here. Unfortunately, there are many people today whose perception of power is negative because they associate power with somebody's power over someone else. That is, power is a position above, which presses me down, humiliates me. There is also an understanding of power as "power over." What is your perception of such terminology? Negative? In reality there are very few people who have "power over." This is how we perceive it. I can say that I have power over my son because I am his mother. However, if we look deeper, my son has power over me. But again, it's a philosophical issue.

Question – Isn't there a different interpretation of power of someone over someone else? For example, power over resource distribution. This is perceived to be straightforward. My personal opinion is that it is positive because whoever has power over resource distribution has more experience, more skills to do a better distribution of resources. That is why it is beyond doubt, positive.

Yelena Sabirova. Thank you very much. Thus, we can draw a conclusion: "we have power" has both positive and negative implications regarding process as developing in the society. Once again, I am going back to the statement that everything depends on what our attitude to it is. If we track what is going on in the society and have control over something, for example, control over resources, or control over budget distribution, or control over law enforcement, in this case "power over" is beyond doubt perceived as positive. The method of control of "power over," i.e. who will internally have power to this or that extent, is the development of new mentality with regard to the term "power over."

There are alternatives to "power over" - it is power to do something, which means that each person has potential to influence one's own life. Doing something or not doing it also depends on one's knowledge about the issue, one's attitude, one's behavior.

Besides, an alternative source of power is "power for." It is the ability of each person to support an idea, i. e. I am doing this for a purpose. Each person decides on his own whether to get involved or not to get involved in a process.

The next source of power is "power with." Power is the strength of a group of people, power to do something for somebody by getting together with someone. It is a complex source of power which we can utilize in life.

The next picture demonstrates the power of numbers, power of a large number of people. What did you see? Even though the majority of people do not have power of control, power of welfare, they still have different sources of power. For example, I am very persistent; I will do what I am determined to do. They say information is power, and I have such information, such strength. Even if I am not seeking power, I will still get what I am striving for. Or let us take the sense of fairness. You are in a position to understand this word better than anyone. It is a very strong feeling. If someone has personally offended me and I understand that this is not fair, I will strive for the issue to be settled fairly.

Thus, participation is the main principle of development program operation. Participation means involvement of people in the process of decision making, in the implementation of programs and sharing of the results of program activities, in pro-

gram assessment. On the other hand, we state that it is very difficult to assess participation. There are various shades to participation. What is participation and what is non-participation? Let us try to answer this question. Could you give examples of real participation or participation that, in fact, was not non-participation? Who of you is prepared to share with us an example of an advocacy campaign when you mobilized citizens for participation in decision making, but maybe it was not participation? "Participation" has two meanings in Russian. The first is direct participation, physical, and the second is "assistance." There is a difference there.

We are talking about different shades of participation. Nevertheless, there exist criteria for determining participation. It is participation strategy. In terms of an answer to this question, if the purpose is to justify and legitimize a solution which has already been chosen by external experts without any involvement by people who face the problem, it is not participation. I can give you an example from the activities of the advocacy program in Uzbekistan, and then you will explain to me if participation was or wasn't achieved in that campaign. There is a Republican Association of Businesswomen in Uzbekistan. The Association supports businesswomen. In Uzbekistan, a decree on certification of different products produced by private businesses has been issued. Let's assume I am a seamstress, and to operate as such, I must get a general certificate to sew clothes and a specific certificate for each type of output, etc. Thus, there are a huge number of steps that a private businessperson must take. The Association of Businesswomen initiated a campaign to simplify the procedure for getting certification and was successful in having the list reduced by 80%. But when we started analyzing the situation, we discovered that the concept of simplifying the certification process had been planned by the Government, even though for a later time period. The actions of the Association facilitated the realization of the idea. If we go back to the concept of involvement, what do you think, to what extent were the Association members involved in the campaign? Would it have been possible to involve different members of the association, who live in various cities in the country? In order to inform them, an information campaign was carried out. A video clip was shown on TV. In the city of Tashkent, there were posters and placards which illustrated the problem, and when we claimed the campaign was a success, we started wondering to what extent businessmen themselves were directly involved in that campaign. What do you think?

Question from the audience. Were not the legislative amendments initiated by those same businesswomen? The businesswoman herself had submitted the proposal.

Answer from the audience – If they are the initiators of the program, they naturally participate in it.

Yelena Sabirova. However, my friends, the question was somewhat different. I would like you to approach this from the point of view of assessment. To what extent could we, as a development organizations which funded the campaign, assess if participation of people in the process of decision making was or was not achieved?

Answer – I think to assess if participation was achieved, you use some criteria previously agreed upon. And if under this project, only participation of association members was stipulated, then it is you who should decide whether it was or wasn't achieved. However, if this is about the participation of wider public or business structures, to all appearances, there must have been other criteria. I would like to know how you did it.

Thank you very much. My intention is to show that participation is difficult to assess. Participation is a process which produces an effect after some time. That is, how could we know if an ordinary businessman had participated in the process? He could have seen the ad on TV, or he could have missed it because he had been in his office.

Question – Do you deem it participation?

Yelena Sabirova. I don't deem it participation. Some advocacy campaigns only superficially

involve people who are touched by the problem. That is, it is sham participation, when someone watches an ad on TV and starts reflecting on the problem, starts thinking that this touches him too. However, he has not been involved in the process of decision making, i.e. he has not done anything for the campaign to achieve success. Are there any other examples? If there aren't, let's move on.

Who makes the final decision about a problem? Real participation should involve people in the development of the solution which influences their life to this or that extent. If they were only asked to provide information, but were not involved in whom and how the information is used, this is not participation in the full sense of the word. Say, development experts often provide consultations for the community. Usually the consultations presume predetermined answers. The person asks the question and receives feedback from the consultant. Can this be called participation? No. The person was involved at the first stage, but there was no follow-up interaction. Non-existence of interaction does not lead to participation either.

What is the result of participation, and who benefits from it? If participation does not yield any benefits, it is not participation in the full sense of the word. However, there have also been cases when decisions were made, but they did not work because the people touched by the problem had not been fully involved.

I would also like to talk about the obstacles to extending participation. One of the obstacles is hierarchy and control. They are a big norm in people's lives, which prevents their participation. From the day when we're born, there exist stereotypes. I am going back to the attitude toward power, what I can and what I can't. The picture here demonstrates subordination of one person by another: teacher - student, boss - employer, husband - wife.

Did anyone from the group participate in Preeti Shroff-Mehta's seminar? She talked about different levels of participation. She said that there are different shades of people's participation. We also talked about symbolic participation. People get involved in the process without having been elected and without having real power. Say a government committee has been established, and a man from the community has been involved in it. He is on the committee, but does not have the power to make decisions. The next type of participation is passive participation. People take passive participation, they are provided with information or, say, consultations. People participate in the process, but there is no feedback. They participate in the process passively, but it is indirect participation. Participation may also be in the form of surveys. People are asked to fill in questionnaires, are interviewed, but do not receive feedback.

Participation for tangible incentives, there is this type of participation too. Especially if you're in need. When to say, "Please, come to the meeting, a very important question will be discussed, the election campaign." The community gets together, people are served food, are provided monetary support, and they participate for tangible incentives. Is this participation? NO.

Functional participation - They involve specialists, but they themselves determine the issue, i.e., they themselves dictate the program. Is the population involved? No. Again, the approach is top-down.

Question - participant. Now, we've gathered here. Are we participating or aren't we?

Yelena Sabirova. Who can answer this question? I would like someone to answer this question.

Answer - participant. Some ask more questions, others ask fewer questions, but there are not any clear-cut participation criteria.

Answer - participant. I think participation can be both active and passive.

Yelena Sabirova. We also talked about interactive participation, which presumes full involvement in the process. There is also another instrument such as process facilitation or achievement of a consensus, when everybody airs their opinion, and all the opinions

are taken into consideration. A general decision is the one with which I may disagree, but I can live with it. Interactive participation is when the person's participation in the process is fully ensured. And there is one more type of participation - individual mobilization, when citizens take practical steps on their own, independent of external organizations. Apart from establishing contacts with some organizations to be provided funds and technical consultation, they themselves control the utilization of resources. The Government and NGOs sometimes support individual mobilization.

Thus, I would like to continue the discussion of various obstacles to participation. Look at the pictures. The obstacles to participation are:

- Hierarchy and control are a big norm in people's lives, and this obstructs participation.
- The term "participation" is improperly used, in order to give weight and justification to inadequate and insufficiently elaborated development programs.

The problem of development programs (including NGOs) is that they involve people in the development process only when it suits them, i.e., to do unskilled labor. The personnel of the organization determines priorities, plans, and assesses projects without involving people in the process.

- The majority of programs, even of those that started in the field, maintain the top-down approach
- Bureaucratic obstacles to participation

The problem is that people have the power to make decisions, but they don't have the power to implement, with which non-elected managers are charged. While they work, others do bureaucracy, and they hinder the implementation of plans and of new ideas.

- Professional obstacles. Development consultants charge big sums of money for providing consultations to the population.
- Political obstacles. Lack of trust by executive authorities: "You cannot continue doing this. This does not fit in our normal course of operation. We have a huge experience in program implementation. We cannot allow everyone to do work in their own way. That will lead to disorder and confusion."
- Expectations not met: participation brings about expectations, which cannot always be realized.
- Weak institutions: institutions are too weak, too inflexible to support actual participation.
- Negative positions and fear of freedom hinder participation:
 - ✓ Conscious superiority (the idea that one person is better than the others);
 - ✓ Humiliation (the idea that one person is worse than the others);
 - ✓ The process of participation is time consuming.

And last, advice for ensuring participation:

- participation cannot be simply announced, its implementation in practice must be achieved
- time, resources, understanding, and perseverance are needed to ensure participation
- participation ensures sustainability, makes the development activities more effective, helps to build potential at the local level
- involvement of people in participation stipulates for a different working

style, different approaches and methods, and different expectations, and development organizations of all levels should be aware of this

- a strategy for a purposeful implementation of the principle of participation must be developed

Another important factor in achieving participation is the awareness of responsibility.

In order to bear responsibility, it is necessary to control the decision making process. Outsiders should not expect to force their options of solutions on the community, even if such solutions have been successfully utilized in other communities. In order to achieve real lasting success, a community should always reserve the casting vote to itself. External consultants, sponsors, or assistants can be extremely helpful. However, it should be clearly understood that they are there to support, not to manage. It is important to clearly define the roles of the partners involved from the outside before they get engaged in the joint process of planning. Both the local partners and the external partners must be clear on what they expect from each other, they should agree on what tasks are assumed by who and for what period. If partners go beyond their clearly defined roles, the balance of relations may get disturbed, and as a result, the effectiveness of the planning process may reduce. Sometimes, local partners rely on the expertise of their external partners too much. In extreme cases, the community becomes dependent and eventually gives up its authority. On the other hand, if local partners terminate their relations with their external partners too soon, before the objectives are achieved and before the local partners get enough knowledge and skills, the community may fall short of achieving their goals because they don't have the necessary skills. When the balance in the relations of partners gets disturbed, it is important to openly and frankly discuss the situation and find a mutual solution regarding future cooperation.

Responsibility also stipulates accountability, reporting both the positive and negative moments. As it regards accountability, you have heard Mark's interesting presentation on it.

This is the end of my presentation. Thank you for your attention. If there are questions, I'll be glad to answer them.



Anna Sahakyan. Let us thank Yelena Sabirova. And, as a follow-up to the topic of participation, I would like to hear your suggestions on how to mobilize the public and to encourage their greater participation in public life.

Participant proposals:

- The NGOs should have more frequent meetings with the public
- NGOs engaged in advocacy should cooperate with each other to raise public awareness and by jointly developing various programs

Anna Sahakyan. Thank you, and now let us listen to our last three presenters, whose presentations will be very concise and will be delivered one after the other. Olga Safaryan will be the first one to deliver her presentation, followed by Anush Sukiasyan, Meri Khachatryan, and Sona Ayvazyan. Please.

Olga Safaryan. Internews NGO, lawyer

Topic: *Individual case work as a way to gather policy implementation data and build a constituency*

Thank you. I would like to give a brief overview of our NGO and its objective.

The objective of our NGO is to provide assistance to all types of mass media. Many proposals on the improvement of the legal framework governing this area have been made, and we have now filed a proposal with the NA on making amendments to the criminal code. One of the proposals refers to the article that stipulates that journalists must act as witnesses during the investigation of a criminal case.

Another proposal refers to the Law on Policemen: to add protection of journalists to the obligations of the policemen. Another proposal has to do with extending the punishment for violating the rights of journalists by policemen from 1 to 6 years. Internews NGO is currently representing 6 cases in civil courts.

Anush Sukiasyan. "Protection of consumers' rights" NGO

Topic: *Individual case work as a way to gather policy implementation data and build a constituency*



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Thank you very much. Good afternoon. I would like to start my presentation.

Question-participant. All people are consumers, but we see that your NGO has little constituency, what is your funding constituency? Who are your donors?

Mark Granius. We have donors, though now we have CJSC, and the money gained from its activities will be used for our NGO.

Question-participant. And what about member fees?

Mark Granius. We don't have this system now, but we plan to establish one in future.

Sona Ayvazyan. Transparency International, Executive director

Topic: *Individual case work as a way to gather policy implementation data and build a constituency*

The mission of our NGO is to fight against corruption. At first, our NGO did not take up individual cases, and, instead, provided assistance to other NGOs with similar activities. However, this arrangement undermined our contact with the public, and there was a lack of trust on their part in our activities. We were the first to open a legal advice center. We had no resources but we continued our activities. Unfortunately, the success stories are few and far between, but they go as far as village mayors and ministers. It is very difficult to pursue cases like this in Armenia, as the level of democratization is low. Our priority is to raise public awareness.

Meri Khachatryan. Sakharov NGO, attorney

I would like to talk about the fact that in Armenia, NGOs are not authorized to represent citizens' rights in court. And I would like to cite as an example, the pensioners advocacy case pursued by our NGO when the court declined our request that our NGO represent the rights of the Armenian pensioners. According to Armenian legislation, NGOs may represent citizens' rights and, in this case, pensioners' rights only if the NGO is issued a power of attorney by the pensioners themselves. In this case, it was impossible to get a power of attorney from all the pensions in Armenia. In an effort to address this gap in the Armenian legal framework, Sakharov NGO filed a proposal with the NA, authorizing NGOs as legal entities to represent citizen's rights in courts without a power of attorney.

Anna Sahakyan. Thank you everyone. Before we finish I would like you to remind you one more time to put up your proposals for the following topics organized by topics so that we can sum those up together tomorrow. We now adjourn until tomorrow.

The topics are as follows:

- Enhancing cooperation within the NGO sector
- Increasing public confidence in NGOs
- Strengthening cooperation between NGOs and society

Improving Civic Participation-Recommendations

April 15, 2007

Anna Sahakyan. Hello everyone! Today is the last day of our conference, and today we will sum up the proposals made in the course of the past two days, which have already been organized into slides to be shared with you shortly. You may have objections, amendments, or changes to make, so that we can prepare a report in the second half of the day.

The first topic, the proposals of which we will discuss, is enhancing cooperation within the NGO sector.

Arsen Stepanyan. One of the first proposals that I would like to discuss is the following:

"Create an NGO that will enroll and represent all NGOs." Do we need a new organization that will represent all NGOs? Can't NGOs represent themselves on their own?

Opinion - I think there is no need to set up a new NGO as there are many NGOs and there is no point in establishing yet another one.

Opinion - I think that there is a need for such an organization, as an NGO based in one city has no other means of obtaining information about NGOs in other cities, and this is why we need to have such an organization.

Opinion - I think there is no need to set up a new NGO. One of the existing NGOs may take up this responsibility.

Opinion - This role may be performed by the government by providing information about the existing NGOs.

Opinion - This organization may operate in the on-line format, via a website, which will provide different types of data on NGOs, as well as materials, news, etc.

Anna Sahakyan. Thus, from the discussions we may conclude that there is no need to set up a new organization to bring all NGOs together. Instead, a multifunctional NGO resource center(s), electronic resource website, directories covering NGOs operating in various areas can be created.

And the second important conclusion to be drawn is that in order to enhance cooperation within the NGO sector, NGOs must be unified, cohesive, and reach out a helping hand to each other.

Next are your proposals on increasing public confidence in NGOs. And let us discuss the proposal about "whether NGOs should have the right to represent citizens' rights in courts."

Anush Sukiasyan. Our NGO has already taken an action on this issue by submitting a proposal to the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development to amend the law and allow NGOs to represent consumer rights.

Yelena Sabirova. NGOs should highlight success stories, in order for the society to know about them, so it will increase the trust towards NGO sector.

Opinion - NGO PR is something we need to focus on. There should be trainings for teaching NGO PR. This will enable NGOs to present themselves in the appropriate manner, thus gaining the trust of the public.

Opinion - The NGOs should have bi-laws, and organizations that provide grants should study the NGOs thoroughly.

Anna Sahakyan. In effect, we came to the conclusion that the NGOs should not change their strategy: NGOs focusing on cultural and youth issues should not change their orientation and pursue, for example, pensioners' issues. Accordingly, the public will have more trust in the given NGO.

Arsen Stepanyan. Most importantly, the public should first and foremost know what an NGO is and the NGOs should take the lead on this.

Opinion - The NGO must have a positive impact on a given issue for the public trust in that given NGOs to grow.

Anna Sahakyan. The last issue that we shall discuss is strengthening cooperation between NGOs and society. Please share your experience and opinions on how we can promote cooperation between NGOs and society.

Opinion - Staff working for NGOs should like their job, and the driving force for doing their work should be their genuine interest in the area rather than the profit or advantages involved.

Yelena Sabirova. NGOs should always get feedback from their beneficiaries, this is very important.

Opinion - NGOs should ensure the transparency of their activities.

Anna Sahakyan. Thus, we have now concluded our discussions, thank you everyone for your participation.



Recommendations. (extract)

Questions / Problems

1. Increase cooperation within NGO sector
2. Increase trust between NGOs and society
3. Strengthen cooperation between NGOs and the community

Suggestions

Increase cooperation within NGO sector

- Encourage partnerships and institutional development among NGOs
- General analysis of NGO sector by marzes and cities
- Periodically provide more informative (geographic or thematic) NGO conferences and advertise them in the mass media
- Develop multifunctional NGO resource center(s), website, and reference books to highlight the activities of NGOs in different fields
- Utilize lower case state financed youth centers

Suggestions

Increase trust between NGOs and society

- Improve transparency within NGOs' activities and accountability to their beneficiaries
- Develop informal educational opportunities for NGOs in the field of public relations
- Organize advising events and meetings
- Frequently promote NGO activities
- Use the right to defend other people in the court (legislative changes) as a judicial mechanism for advocacy
- Encourage donor organizations to review grant criteria and acquaint themselves with NGOs and their strategies prior to financing them
- Develop an interest in NGOs by promoting a positive image
- Develop vital capacity strategy with communities and co-thinkers
- Utilize membership fee mechanisms
- Organize community events
- Develop educational opportunities in every stratum of society -work skills with beneficiaries for attitude change

- Work jointly with society to ensure trust
- Develop capacity of NGOs
- Encourage organizational professionalism among NGO employees
- Promote interest towards NGOs in society
- Promote a culture of participation and volunteerism
- Promote successes of NGOs and draw in beneficiaries
- Encourage self-regulation among NGOs (black-list corrupt NGOs based on concrete facts)
- Be frank with beneficiaries and present organization's steps
- Promote transparency of NGOs' activities
- Periodically inform beneficiaries via mass media or information meetings about both realized and not yet realized goals to keep society abreast of problems and difficulties for helping
- NGOs should have financial resources to continue their mission

Suggestions

Strengthen cooperation between NGOs and the community

- Comprehensive research of societal problems and organization of public events
- Involve beneficiaries in programs
- Guarantee accountability to achieve confidence in NGOs among society
- Awareness of faces of society who need advocacy
- Permanent and backward connection with beneficiaries
- Direct contact with society

Track **D**

NGO-Media Relations:

Redefining Interaction for the Public Interest

The National Conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process is a three-day gathering of Armenian NGOs, representatives of government, media, and business to explore together the most pressing challenges, review best cases, and gain new insight into lessons learned from Armenian and international practitioners and experts. Conference participants will engage in substantive discussions and skill building in the following four thematic areas:

1. **Government - NGO Relations:** Systems approach to the public policy process
2. **Business - NGO Relations:** New frontiers in sustainability and development
3. **Citizens/Community - NGO Relations:** With the people, for the people
4. **Media - NGO Relations:** Redefining interaction for the public interest

Track D Discussion Framework:

The nature of NGO relations with mass media is very specific. On one hand, NGOs represent the public interest, while media outlets serve that public as content consumers. On the other hand, in order for media outlets to provide quality content (e.g., comprehensive and objective non-entertainment programming), they need to have a reach into a larger community of news-makers, content providers, analysts, and content consumers to ensure a reflection of relevant issues in their programming.

The vital role of all media in a pluralistic democracy is inherent, in that it bridges physical and conceptual distance. It influences and shapes public opinion by filtering in or out content for consumption in a format of its choice. Most importantly, however, media outlets ensure the multiplier effect by exponentially increasing the potential audience of a single message. To some degree, media outlets also facilitate interactive communication between content provider and audience.

NGOs, customarily, deal with societal issues that either complement what the state already does, or address matters that are not prioritized by state agencies and ministries, or other sectors of society. NGOs, in addressing the interests of constituents who may not have access to a broad audience or the ability to broadcast their message, rely on and utilize their relationship with media outlets to give voice to and reach those most affected by specific issues. At the same time, by being the intermediary between the media and communities they may not readily have access to, NGOs provide expertise and context to otherwise abstract stories/themes.

Armenian Context:

The perception on either side of this equation, however, is quite different in today's Armenia: Armenian NGOs will accuse the media of only being interested in scandals and yellow journalism, while journalists and media outlets share a perception of all NGOs as "grant-eaters" who simply provide services for donors, and are not engaged in addressing the real needs of the communities they purport to serve.

An NGO sector survey¹ in 2004 reported that more than 80% of Armenian NGOs contact media on various occasions. Furthermore, a majority of those who contact the media believe they have positive relations with the media or they receive positive coverage of their event/activity. However, the nature of these relationships is mostly based on personal contact. The absence of an institutional understanding and existence of a relationship between NGOs and media is obvious.

In a publication² by the Media Diversity Institute, Armenian media experts note that relations between the media and NGOs are not always friendly. Very frequently these relations are based on financial interests and often both sides accuse each other of not doing their job properly. Counterpart and other development experts have also observed, on numerous occasions, negative or poor coverage of events organized by NGOs. Additionally, many NGOs in their project proposals allocate funding to pay media organizations or individual journalists for reports or articles, thus ensuring positive coverage of their activities (such articles are not paid advertisements, nor are they labeled as such in print or broadcast). Such financial arrangements, in turn, call into question the ethical standards of both NGOs and media outlets, and compromise the integrity of each side's role in a civil society. From their side, many journalists, not without ground, justify their actions by claiming that NGOs are non-transparent organizations, which sometimes do not provide enough information and some of them simply spend funds that have been awarded by international donors or have been generated through individual donations without a proper results framework. An editor of a newspaper points out that many NGOs cannot talk about the impact of their work and how their activities make the lives of average citizens better. They believe that in any interaction, the NGOs should not only think about their own particular interests, but also see the bigger picture in which journalists and media entities operate.

The discussion on the further development of the current state of NGO-media relations in Armenia should revolve around the following broadly formulated topics:

- **Strengthening an understanding of the strategic benefits of institutional partnerships:** Both NGOs and media outlets will serve their own interests more effectively by further developing and institutionalizing strategic relationships. The cornerstone of that relationship is that they both serve the same end user - the public. Once this understanding is heightened and there are sufficient mechanisms set up for partnership, the quality of the final product will start to improve.
- **Improving media relations skills of Armenian NGOs as a means of achieving greater outreach and transparency:** To be able to properly use the capacity of media to benefit the NGO's objectives and activists' needs to sharpen their skills. Ultimately, NGOs cannot be the watchdogs of a transparent system if they are not transparent themselves, and effective interaction with the media is contingent on the right skills and systems institutionalized within the NGO.
- **Partnering with the media to improve public policies that address specific needs of vulnerable communities:** In addition to being effective messengers, media outlets are opinion shapers, particularly when it comes to public policy. NGOs, aware of this significant role, must tap into this unique tool to shape the opinions and ideas of decision makers, as well as constituents, who ultimately have an affect on those decision makers. Such an approach gives voice to those most marginalized in the development of a democracy.

1. Blue, R.N. and Ghazaryan, Y. G. (2004) *Armenian NGO Sector Assessment: A Comparative study.*, World Learning For International Development/NSP

2. *Media relations: Tips from leading Armenian Experts* by Media Diversity Institute

Track **D****Media-NGO Relations****Redefining Interaction
for the Public interest****Challenges and Opportunities
in Media-NGO Relations**

April 13, 2007

Nouneh Sarkissian. moderator, Internews, Executive Director

I would like to thank you for your interest in the press and NGOs. I would like to encourage everybody to avoid monologues, only the speakers making presentations in the course of these two-three days, or even today, and to focus on an active discussion and raise all of the issues which may help you. But before we start, and before I give the floor to our guests, I would like to make two announcements. Firstly, since we are going to speak about the media today, I am going to share with you some very sad news which I learned five minutes ago from my colleague Mr. Avetikyan. In the morning, Herbert Baghdasaryan, a renowned journalist, the founder and long-serving director of the agency Photolour passed away. He was a very famous photo journalist and worked for popular newspapers and magazines. His memory will always remain with us. Secondly, I would also like to let you know that alongside this conference, a film festival is organized. The films are on different advocacy topics made mainly by different NGOs. The festival will start tomorrow, Saturday, April 14th in the small auditorium of the 5th floor. I hope you will find the place as there are many signs. It will start at 9:30am and last until 6:30pm, which means that from time to time you will be able to watch films. You have the program in your folders and I think you will be able to familiarize yourselves with it. Shall we pass on to our discussion? As you well know, it has to do with the role of the media in policy making in general, and public policy making in particular. I would like to introduce the panelists of our discussion very briefly, since you have already seen the information about them in this booklet that contains the details about all of them. I would like to introduce to you Mr. Hakob Avetikyan, the editor of the newspaper AZG, Mr. Boris Navasardyan, President of Yerevan Press Club, and Ms Lucig Danielian, the prorector of the American University in Armenia. I will leave the other titles for Lucig to add, as appropriate, but probably it will be better if she starts sharing her thoughts with you.

Lucig Danielian. Provost and Vice President Dean, School of Political Science and International Affairs Director**Topic:** *The role of the media in the public policy process-the Armenian model*

I guess I should start by saying that there is a problem with the title of my talk because I do not believe that there is an Armenian model for Mass Media (henceforth abbreviated as MM). On policy processes, I do not think that the media has an affect, either directly or indirectly, on policy making processes in this country. I would argue

that it is a real problem for Armenia and it's a problem for several reasons. One of the reasons is because without MM participation in policy making processes, it's very difficult to establish long term political stability. An example is that it is very difficult to establish smooth political, social, and economic change. Actually such change can be achieved only in political systems where citizens have the opportunity to participate in policy formation. And in fact, that brings in the other major topic for our session, and that is the role of NGOs in these policy processes as well. I think that we read, I read, today in the newspapers a call for revolution right after the elections. I can not call that the call for smooth political change.

I want to talk to you about something that is not very obvious, or something that you probably would not expect me to talk about given the title of my talk. However, it is something that I believe. It's a fact that I believe that effects almost everything that we are talking about during this conference this weekend. I want to talk about representation for a moment. We have a real problem still in the Armenian Constitution as it relates to representative functions of government. To be more specific, the Constitution does not have a role, does not see a role, for the National Assembly, for Parliament, regarding representation. We have an article in the Constitution that says that the National Assembly exercises legislative authority and has responsibility for legislative authority. We even have another article that talks about how delegates are not required to make any decision that is not in their own mandate; a strange article to have in a constitution that they work only by their own mandate, and by their own conscience. We also have some data, I have the good fortune of organizing myself, two surveys of members of Parliament in the last few years, and we were surprised to find out that there are many current members of Parliament who do not believe that being a representative is part of their function. They actually believe that representation is not part of their function as a member of Parliament. About half of the deputies of the current Parliament told us that the public hearings should not be open, public hearings should be closed. It's a kind of a contradiction, isn't it? A public hearing that is not public is kind of strange. Another half of the MPs told us, for example, that the agendas should not be on the website and it is not necessary to have the agendas on the website. Other deputies told us that it is not necessary to have draft legislation on the website, just the final laws that passed. That's all that is necessary for the public, for public information. As you can see, we have some problems just in the system itself.

Political participation through elections is just one type of political participation for the public. In fact, most political scientists, political theorists, will argue that elections are the weakest and simplest form of political participation. What really matters, if you want full citizen participation is what is going on in between the elections, what kind of political participation you have in between the elections, what kind of access citizens have to decision making processes besides just the votes. My question for you, and all of us, is what kind of access can there be for the public when the main representative branch of government, the one which is supposed to be the most open to the public, that's the National Assembly, the Parliament, does not see in itself a representative function? I think that we can agree that there is a prevailing public perception that it is not represented in the decision making processes. There is also a perception that government officials represent interests, certainly not the interests of the public. They represent other interests and that is another real barrier to political participation. The fact is that increased participation is essential to create better policies and better decisions. Political scientists talk about a risk factor that there is less chance of making bad policy, bad decisions, bad laws, when you have more people involved in the process. Not only it is important to have citizen participation, this is not just something theoretical, this is not just because it is nicer when citizens participate. Rather, we are talking about the security of the nation, the security of the political system, developing rational and the best possible policies. It's not just to make things nice, it is because it is necessary.

Another way is political participation of citizens. This is necessary for creating good laws and good policies, and it is also important to get them implemented. They

would not expect citizens to agree with laws and to agree with their implementation if they had no voice in the development of those laws. Political participation is not possible without the Mass Media. It is also not possible in modern nation states without interest groups, NGOs, pressure groups, or any other name you want to give to those groups that are involved in advocacy. I want to argue that the essential, fundamental problem, really does not belong to the Mass Media. Though you may know I am a great critic of Mass Media in Armenia, I do not believe that the fundamental problem belongs to Mass Media. I am also a great critic of NGOs in Armenia but I still do not believe that the fundamental problem belongs to NGOs either. In fact, I believe it is just the reverse. We keep telling NGOs and the Mass Media to create democracy. Why haven't you created democracy yet? What's the problem? But how do you have NGOs and Mass Media participate in a democracy if your government does not yet consider itself responsible, responsive, and accountable to the public? But I believe it is just the reverse. I believe that civil society is a by product of representative government and that's why I started talking about representation as being so important and the key. If you read the U.S. Constitution you will not find words like "NGO," "political party," and "advocacy," they simply do not exist. NGO structures, advocacy structures, Mass Media systems, the civil society as we know it in democracies are created as a byproduct of representation. The fact is, and I want to mention this as well, because we have an election around the corner, you can not have responsible, responsive, and accountable governments unless you have free, fair, and frequent elections. It just does not work any other way. Think about it for a moment. You are an NGO that may be defined as an interest group or an advocacy group; you are one of the few NGOs. By the way, we have research that shows that there are very few NGOs that are really involved in advocacy. But let's say that you are one of those few advocacy NGOs, and let's say that you know what the agenda of parliament is in the next three months, and let's say you have all the draft legislation, let's say you decide there should be changes in the legislation and you go knocking on the doors of Members of Parliament. In the end, what power do citizens have when it comes to putting pressure on Members of Parliament? In the end, there can be only one pressure, no other pressure if you really think about it practically. The only pressure there really can be is if you (MP) do not do what we want you to do, we will not vote for you next time. It's really that simple, nothing mystical about it. It is really quite practical. But how many of us could go to Armenian Parliament and say, "we will not vote for you next time," "you did not vote for us last time and we are here, so we are not worried about voting for us next time." Do you see the connection that I am trying to make? That you cannot have rational advocacy policies without representation and you cannot have real representation without free and fair elections.

Democratic decision making has several assumptions that we must agree with in order for them to function. First of all, democratic decision making assumes that mass media are polycentric and that they are competitive. We say polycentric because no one person can own mass media. There will be centers of ownership. Some people will own a media outlet, some will not. It's important to be competitive because, unless you have mass media that competes against each other, then you can not have correction or self correction. In other words, when there is competition in mass media, it checks each other, which makes perfect sense, does it not? If I am going to buy a newspaper, I am not going to buy a newspaper that does not give me good information, I am going to buy one which gives me good information.

Which brings me to another assumption. That is, accurate information needs to be provided by mass media. In fact, I have just submitted an article to the first international communication encyclopedia and I was asked to write my interviews on accuracy. I started my article quoting one of our great democratic theorists, Geovani Sartori (he is not from Italy, he is from Colombia University even though he is Italian). Sartori tells us the whole edifice, the whole structure of democracy depends on the impartiality, the fairness, the accuracy of the information delivered to the citizens. That is a strong statement. You can not have democracy without information that is accurate,

impartial, fair, and trusted. It just does not work. That means we need balance in our news coverage. That means we need diversity in our news coverage. That means there has to be access to diverse voices. That means, that the NGOs have to be smart enough to figure out how to get into the news and not just wait to be invited into the news to complain that they are not in the news. What it means is that we assume in democracy, that public opinion is formed freely. You can have free and fair elections, but if the opinion of the public is not also formed freely, then you can not have democratic political participation. There has to be an informed public and there has to be information and opinions that are created freely, autonomously. Just look at the current election campaign as an example. Are you watching the discussions on TV? Do you see the advertisements? Can you tell the difference between one politician or one political party advertisement and the other? They all want the same thing, a rich, safe future for Armenia. But who does not want that? You know we do not have any political party who will say we want to have a terrible future for Armenia. They all want the same thing. Where are the policy discussions? Actually, this time I have been interested to see what the policies are, but what I am hearing are just the problems. I am not hearing solutions. Everybody knows that there are problems, but can we distinguish among the parties based on what solutions they are providing? That's the kind of information that you need in an election, that's what you need for an informed electorate. NGOs have a really important place, a really big role here. For example, I have no idea, and I know you do not really either or most of the public does not, about how the people who have been sitting in parliament, some of them since 1990, how they vote on any of the major issues. Does anybody have an idea what the voting patterns look like? And it is only recently that we have voting records online on the parliament website, but they are only recent. How do you decide to vote for a party, what are you basing your decision on, how can you pretend to have an informed electorate? You cannot. NGOs and interest groups have a very important role to play here. You know, when I have to vote in the United States, but I do not have time, which is most of the time, to look into every congressman's background, I do something that is a very good shortcut for me. I go on the website of the Armenian National Committee of America and I see a report card of that congressman. And if they have good grades on Armenian issues, I vote for them, and if they do not I do not, because that is the important issue for me. You should know that everyone talks about the power of the Armenian Lobby in Washington which comes exactly from that. From the ability to get votes. And it's not because of the beautiful dark eyes of the Armenians. It is because they are a political power and that power is the ability to get votes. It's really quite simple and quite practical. Democratic theory assumes that we have interest-group structures. Why are interest groups important? They are important because clearly, when you aggregate demand it is much more powerful than when only one person speaks, that should be clear. Not only do interest groups, however, aggregate their demand, they also amplify them. One of the ways that you amplify demand is through mass media.

Mass media becomes crucial for interest groups. It is very difficult to function without them. When I talked about diversity and pluralism for the mass media, I wanted to talk about it in this sense -that decent opposition, protests for example, are all positive values in democracies. It sounds kind of strange to say that decent opposition can be positive. Well, decent is positive because unless you have given voice to people who disagree, how do you ever change anything? If all we ever do is agree, how do we change policies, how do we move forward? After all, majorities have to turn to minorities sometimes. I am talking about political majorities, and political minorities have to turn to political majorities sometimes. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. It is just natural, and it can be a smooth change. Of course, the difference is that in democracy, if you lose, you do not lose everything.

Mass media has power. Members of mass media will not agree. If you go to the U.S. and you talk to the editor of the Los Angeles Times or to the editor of the Chicago Tribune, they will never admit that they have power. However, a social scientist who studies mass media insists that it has power. The mass media definitely has power.

They have power as political institutions themselves and they have power because they are channels of communication. So you should think about two kinds of power. They are the gatekeepers, they decide what goes on the front page and what does not. That is a power. They decide what the public is going to hear in the news that night and what it will not. It is a power in itself as an institution. But they are also a power because they provide important channels for communication. If you are an NGO and you want to be heard by the public, there is no other way to do it except through mass media. You can not reach the public in any other way except through the mass media. Also, think about the mass media's watchdog power, the power of the fourth branch, the fourth branch of government. Actually the power of mass media is much stronger than that. It is mass media that tells the public what to think about. In other words, it is the mass media that sets the agenda for the public. In fact, we have hundreds and hundreds of research studies, from all over the world, that over and over again demonstrate the effect of the mass media agenda creates public agendas, not visa versa. In fact, I can tell you that some researchers ask, "Is an issue an issue; is a policy issue really a policy issue if mass media has not covered it?" Not only does mass media tell us what to think about, they also tell us how to think about those issues. Well, how news is covered affects public knowledge and opinion. There is very interesting research that shows if you present a policy problem with options for solutions, and if you present the problem as a societal level problem, then citizens look for those solutions. If you present problems in the news as belonging to individuals, then the individual is blamed. And I will give you a very simple example, homelessness in the U.S. If you present the news about the homeless as an economic problem for society then the public agrees that government should find a solution. However, mostly, the homeless are not presented in the news in that way. It is presented as one individual who lost his job and is now living in the street. We attribute that problem to that individual, not to a government. Therefore, you find the public blame the individual. They do it because that is interesting, because it is interesting to portray in the news events and not problems because that is what sells newspapers

How you cover news is really important. Think about if a cameraman were at a demonstration and you present the news that evening. Just think how you can affect the public to understand that demonstration, by viewing it through a camera. A camera can not, however, show all the reality, it can only show part of the reality. Media decides which quotes will be used from a politician's interview, or which politician will be interviewed. All of that can have an affect and that is power in itself. I want to be sure that you understand that the power comes from the the way the news is created and published. You have deadlines, space is limited. You can not cover all news you have to decide what goes on the front page and what goes on the last and what doesn't on any page. It is also important to know that mass media coverage of news affects more than just knowledge and opinion, it affects behaviors like how to decide who to vote for. This is very much connected to how mass media covers news and the power of mass media can attract and direct attention to problems. They can focus on some policy issues and not another policy issues. It can mobilize public and persuade public. Successful NGOs are those that understand this power of the mass media and will know how to use it for their advocacy work. They can initiate discussions about public policy, they can influence how decision makers perceive policy, they define policy problems and solutions, they can even use mass media to influence decision makers to adopt policies that they want.

Let's go back to the comment "an issue is not an issue if it is not covered by mass media." NGOs play a very important role here. In every country of the world, especially in Washington D.C., special interest groups like to do all the work behind closed doors. If I am an oil company and I need a decision on my taxes, I do not want any NGOs there and mass media around. It is the role of NGOs to alert mass media, as nobody else is going to do it. If you are a rich NGO, in other words, you are an NGO or interest group that represents business for example, then you can pay for mass media access and you can shape directly how to be covered by the mass media; you

have control over it. And if you are not a rich NGO, and that includes all groups who do not represent business, then it is very hard to get the attention of mass media you can not pay for the space. What would you do? Send a press release? Can you imagine how many press releases the editor could receive. They are not even interested and they probably do not even open most of them. And then you are going to complain that you sent a press release and they did not put it in the news. Why would it get put in the news? It is not interesting.

NGOs can afford to use what we call "weapons of the weak," and those "weapons of the weak" include things like demonstrations and protests. If you want to get the attention of news media you better be making a lot of noise. I have lots of research that shows who is doing the demonstrations, which interest groups are doing demonstrations; the ones which do not have money to get the attention of mass media in any other way. I actually organized demonstrations. It is very difficult to get mass media attention, if you are in a market like LA you would have to notify mass media. Let's say it is a TV station, you have to notify ahead of time, because they only have a few cameras and they have a wall chart where they schedule where their camera is going to be one month ahead of time. So your goal is to get on that wall and to get scheduled. And I actually had some phone calls like this, when I was organizing demonstrations, "Hello Ms. Danelian, I know you are organizing a demonstration. How many people do you think will be there?" And if I say 10, do you think they are going to bring a camera? If I say five hundred are they going to bring camera? No, I have to say "we are expecting five thousand." And then what? Now I have to bring five thousand people because if five thousand people do not show up, the next time I call a mass media they are not even going to listen. Do you know what the next question is? "Will there be violence or will it be peaceful?" I have an MA in journalism so I know that if I say, "peaceful of course," I'm off of their schedule. So I developed a very clever answer, I think it is clever at least. Do you know what I used to say? I used to say, "we are making every effort to make sure that there is no violence at all. We are going to try to keep it as peaceful as we possible can."

You can also use mass media for purposes other than to try to affect public opinion. When I did this demonstration, I was not trying to affect public opinion. Now that probably does not make sense, does it? But I have news for you, one demonstration that gets on the cover page of the LA Times takes months of work for an NGO. I am not getting on the front page of the LA Times in order to affect public opinion. To change public opinion is very difficult, even to change knowledge is really very difficult. It takes consistent messages over time. Do you know what I did with that coverage the next morning? I was so proud of myself. I made about eight hundred copies and I sent the article to every congressman in Washington and Sacramento. My goal was to show these political leaders that I am an NGO that you have to listen to. I took many people into the street. That means for every one of those people, I have the ear of another hundred behind them. Those are votes that are money, that's influence. I am building my status, building my influence among decision makers using the mass media to get to them. You have to be really clever in how you use mass media.

NGOs are sometimes successful in both reaching mass media in Armenia and in affecting policy change. We have seen successes, and even when we have not seen successes and changes in policy, we have seen successful efforts of advocacy. Even if the results are not successful, the advocacy effort itself was very successful, which is really important. But my question is this, "We do not need a situation where all we have done is that no NGOs to the process." Why no we have government policy making processes and all of civil society is over here right? Nothing is going on in between them. The solution is not how well let us pick up an NGO and let us move it to this process and now we are happy. The public is still outside of the process, so what you have to remember over time is that you are developing your contacts, your network, how to use mass media. Otherwise, you just become part of the problem instead of part of the solution.

We can not continue to leave the public out of the decision making processes.

We need a political culture in Armenia. I am always afraid when people ask, which they just started asking recently actually, "What is the most important issue facing Armenia today?" I will say, there is no consensus on it. Once you take out economic issues, we do not need mass media to tell us that economic problems exist in Armenia, that is called an obtrusive issue. It already obtrudes on our life, we do not need mass media for that information. I do not need mass media to tell me that I would like peace not war; I do not need mass media to tell me that it would be nice of Turkey to finally open the border, those I know. Once we take out those issues, do we have any consensus in this country on what are the three most important policy issues that face the nation? What is the government working on this week? Anybody have an idea, besides the election? What is the number one policy issue? It is a real problem when you do not have consensus on policy problems, then how can you get consensus about what the solutions are. In other words, how do you develop a political culture? CNN, Euronews, and Russian television should not be the ones setting policy agendas for us, we should be having our own policy agendas.

I want to close by saying that we are not in the situation that we are in by accident. The situation that we find ourselves in was created purposefully because it serves the interests of some people to have the things the way they are. In other words, I am saying that it is a systemic problem, it is structural problem. I get very upset when people tell me it is an Armenian cultural problem. How can it be an Armenian cultural problem? Alex Sardar spoke well this morning; are we the same culture that we were in 1988, 1989, 1990? We had a two political party parliament in the Soviet Union. In 1990 we had a non-communist elected to lead the government. I want to remind you, because, we do not give ourselves enough credit, in 1990 nobody was dreaming that the Soviet Union would not exist in 1991. It was not even seen as a possibility, but we still did it. Are we the same people? So how can it be an Armenian cultural problem? No this is a systemic problem, this is structural problem, it is not generational problem.

The last thing that I will say is that if neither the mass media nor NGOs take responsibility for the situation that exists, and get to work, then nothing will change in the current status quo. We are just going to have one bad election after another and even more difficulty in trying to change things in the long term.

Nouneh Sarkissian. Thank you very much Lucig. I think we have started a very large, profound, and long topic which will never end, especially in view of the fact that we are speaking about elections on the threshold of elections. We all have questions, and the last question in the list is probably who to vote for since before that we have too many unanswered questions. Before we pass on to Borya's presentation, I would like to remind you that almost a month ago in a similar meeting we were trying to find out whether, different from what you were telling us about the model of the United States, it is the elections that impact the media in Armenia or vice versa. As a continuation of our former discussion on the Armenian model, the answer, unfortunately, was that it is the elections that impact and the mass media have not yet tried to form a public opinion or try to change it. Of course, I agree that this is difficult, but are there at least attempts? Maybe there are attempts. Maybe that they do not try is one of the myths. Borya will speak about this right away, but before I give the floor to Boris Navasardyan, I would like, with Borya's permission, to ask everybody sitting here ... By the way, what I meant when I said the word "kartsratip," which is "stereotype" in English, was "myths." I think they are different things. We will speak about whether they are stereotypes or myths or both, but before that I would like to ask just one question to everybody here: What kind of myths about the Armenian mass media do you know and believe in? Yesterday when I read about this topic, I was really interested in it. Can you speak about a couple of myths? By saying "myth." I mean the images you have of the mass media in Armenia.

Boris Navasardyan. Yerevan Press Club, President

Topic: *The difference between myth and stereotype*

We can have myths and legends about history, other countries, or society, but we do not have myths about today's society and this everyday life of ours. Neither do we have myths about different institutes of our society, including mass media. We had the myth, for example during the transition from the Soviet Union to an independent Republic, at that time, there was a myth about the mass media in the USSR - whatever the newspapers wrote and the television communicated was true. There was no criticism about what journalists announced. It was taken for granted, and the main argument in support for all statements and notions was, "this is what they said on TV." This was more than enough for you to have your argument or your opinion so strongly justified, that nobody would even argue. I am speaking, of course, in generalities. But this myth disappeared, which is both good and bad news for us. It is good news because with the existence of such a myth, the society is deprived of any critical news or information. It is also bad news because we have been driven to nihilism, apathy, and cynicism, and we do not believe that public institutions, such as public mass media, can play a positive role in our life and society. We do not have myths also because Armenia is unique in that it is a small country where we do not have such vast age and social difference that would prevent us from getting information from others. We have a rather integrated society, and everybody seems to know everything about one another. This is not the knowledge or information Lucig Danielian was speaking about by saying that information was the foundation of everything, civil society and democracy. The state of being informed, referred to by L. Danielian, was about public information, i.e. that which is publicized through open public media. That, which is spread at the level of rumours, exchanges of private information, can never become the foundation of a democratic society, even if the information in such rumours or private exchanges is the truth. This probably needs very serious research, so let us not speak about it today. At present, a number of societal groups seem to have emerged while the remaining groups having no information about their life, customs, and relations. These are new groups and no myths have yet been established around them. For instance, we have golden youth and not many people seem to know much about their life, neither are they are interested in knowing much. Hence, there are no myths. As another example, we have a rather secluded group of youngsters that have received their education abroad and are cut or isolated from this life, while the rest of our society knows very little about them to make legends about them. This is probably a matter for the future.

Stereotypes do exist. And the NGOs also have stereotypes about the mass media and maybe what I am going to say will sound vulgar to many of you, but it is very close to the truth. For example, there is a stereotype among NGOs about the mass media being too politicized, i.e. they present the information and interests that exist in the ruling political arena and the opposing political arena taken separately. This leads us to the next stereotype - they do not concern themselves with the problems of society, they do not disseminate sufficient information but rather, are focused on the information stemming from the interests of political forces only. And in fact, all of the mass media and journalistic activity is dictated by the funders, and the funders are prominent businessmen, influential politicians, and high-ranking government officials. The mass media are not interested in anything outside this framework. You should now start thinking of whether this is the truth and whether it reflects the image that you have.

There are also marked stereotypes about journalists, the journalists are not competent in professional matters, they can, at best, know a little bit about everything. The NGOs consider it impossible or less probable, that there are journalists who have in-depth knowledge in particular fields. Journalists are people who hunt for sensational and compromising materials, which act as a foundation for their professional activity,

while they never care to verify these facts from different sources, which is the duty of any journalist. It is widely thought that Armenian journalists do not have and do not accept such duties. Consequently, such concepts as professional ethics or responsibility are alien to journalists. In view of the fact that there are also stereotypes among the mass media about NGOs that, for example, NGOs are "grant eaters," instead of being useful to the society they waste their time in trips abroad and useless seminars. This proves that the relations between NGOs and mass media are at best not warm. This leads to a situation where the problems of NGOs are not reflected in the mass media, and the latter does not share the concerns and problems of NGOs. On the other hand, the advocacy-related potential which can be found in society, and which is used to ensure media freedom, can help establish the foundation of this freedom! This means that at best, only the NGOs that have direct communication with mass media are active. The rest are totally indifferent. I would as well say that if NGOs were surveyed on whether there was a need to prescribe strict punishment for journalists and mass media for legal infringements, defamation, etc. I think the majority would say "yes." This means that where mass media are concerned, the society is not for liberal legislation, liberal legal norms. This is a serious problem and those stereotypes certainly contain a grain of truth. However, the whole problem is those grains of truth, that private knowledge seems to be generalized from the very beginning with regard to both Armenian mass media and NGOs.

But the worst thing, in light of the current serious societal developments, is that this knowledge is generalized with regard to the institute, mass media are totally unable to articulate public interests, the whole thing is a big lie, and freedom of speech and responsibility are myths in other countries. We do not believe in these myths since we are a better informed society. The attitude toward the civil society institutes - the NGOs is the same. The journalists are making this kind of generalization about the entire mass media. Now, let us try to understand why that happens. There are probably both objective and subjective reasons for this. The main objective reason is that neither the first institute nor the second directly depend on our society in the broad sense. Mass media are largely dependent on the narrow groups of people that have the resources to sponsor them, while NGOs are dependent on the international structures that provide grants. We can say that they exist and they function in different dimensions and in doing so they do not want to dig deeper and overcome the existing stereotypes.

One of the subjective reasons is that negative publications and television programs are being commissioned against the most active, bold, and critical NGOs. And this adds to the enmity. The opposite may also take place. The opposition wants to see a number of NGOs on their side, while the latter are not politicized and do not take sides. Consequently, they are labeled and the opposition mass media and journalists use black PR for these NGOs, and by doing so add to the existing problem. That it is important to depend on the same subject, the society in our case, is proved by those examples when separate mass media and NGOs all of a sudden become dependent on the same subject. If we analyze (what we mostly do) the publications or the television and radio programs (I am speaking of pro-government mass media), if they speak also about a pro-government NGO clearly having links with governmental circles, we can speak of no stereotypes (mentioned above) about them. Although in many cases, they make use of the same sources as spies, they are better and they do not receive criticism. The opposite may also be true, if there is an NGO on the opposition side, mass media fed by the opposition will only write positive things about it.

And finally, I would like to offer a prescription: the only way out, in case you do not depend on the same subject, is to organize bilateral forums where you can say bitter things to each other but also try to understand each other, also taking into account that the commissions and separate campaigns will remain, and all of a sudden a number of NGOs will be blamed for being British or American spies. This will remain, but if there is private communication and if the controversies of the existing problems are discussed, this will bring some solution to ensure that we do not see in each other of

hostile camps.

Today's discussion cannot be regarded as a forum since the majority is NGOs, although neither I nor Mr. Avetikyan is in the habit of hiding behind stereotypes. It is through forums that we will be able to overcome the negative stereotypes, because if the stereotype is negative and leads to generalizations, then it can never play a positive role.

Thank you.

Nouneh Sarkissian. Thank you, Boris.

Hakob Avetikyan. "AZG" daily, Chief Editor

Topic: *Maintaining a balance between reporting, cooperation and conflict of Interests. Are mass media partners or simply a means for disseminating press releases?*

A number of thoughts were articulated here which are waiting for answers and maybe for further elaboration. There are things which I fully share. We have some successful examples that make us hopeful that we can cooperate in at least some fields. At least a thousand NGOs (there was a time when they said the number was over 2000, closer to 4000) are not supposed to survive the cruelty of our reality. And if only those NGOs remain who are doing important work that will probably be better for them and us, those who work for the public opinion. Where the aspect of dissemination of press releases is concerned, I would unequivocally maintain that the NGOs have yet to learn how to work and to treat the press. They don't even know the elementary rules of PR. By saying PR I only mean PR, because there is no black PR. The latter is anti-PR. This means that this notion is irrelevant, as any black or colored PR is a different concept.

As a person responsible for the press, as an editor and a manager, I, first of all, consider what the number of readers of a particular newspaper is. This is what the NGOs should be aware of. If you have been implementing a program which, however useful, nice, and wonderful, lacks public sonority, do not anticipate that the press will support you. I myself am interested in attracting a larger audience. What I try to figure out first, is how many people will read the material. Thank God, we now have an excellent monitoring tool - the website that provides us with that wonderful information. We look at which materials are most successful in terms of attracting readers on a weekly basis, and it is interesting that in the course of the last 2-3 months the number of the readers of political articles has surprisingly gone down.

It is necessary to know how to deal with both the editor and journalists. This is a science, but I will not go into detail about it. I have been exploring the subject by myself as I am preparing a book on PR. There is a need for a psychological approach. The editor is usually very busy, which means that you should refrain from sending lengthy press releases, sometimes consisting of 3-4 pages in small fonts which no editor will read to the end.

NGOs should have people who know how to deal with both editors and journalists. Most of our NGOs think that they can submit the reports they prepare for their donor organizations to the editor as well. The editors simply hate these kinds of materials and you should bare this in mind. And finally, there is a need to learn, to study how materials are submitted to the press, how journalists write, and then, submit your press releases, which should not be more than a page. Some people think that they have found the most eye catching headline. I would like to share the secret with you. Editors hate when people are trying to look smart by inventing the headline (the editor thinks that the headline is a matter of dignity). You should leave it to the editor. If you have a need for additional information that should be presented, then the editor is deeply touched when at the bottom of the first page or on the second page he/she reads "Information for the editor." If we do not learn all these things, we will not be able to work for the society the way we want to. One of the misfortunes of this country, for mass media and NGOs as well, is that the outcome of elections is not determined by

public opinion in Armenia. A person that casts his/her vote does so not because he/she has formed an opinion on this or that political party or politician. First of all, a person is not sure whether his/her vote will reach the point it should reach, and secondly, he/she does not do that on the basis of an opinion. Therefore, the NGOs that form the public opinion and those that work on it are in the same hole today. An NGO may work and lead a group to find a solution to a problem. But if it needs the support of mass media, it cannot do without mass media, since the latter also have their problems they know that what they write today will have no impact on the public opinion since the public opinion in its own turn has no impact whatsoever on political processes.

If a few years ago, I, in my capacity as a newspaper editor, had been asked the question of whether the mass media were partners with NGOs or just a means for disseminating the latter's press releases, my straightforward answer would have been neither. However, today, 2-3 years later my opinion is slightly changed for the better as now we have some examples of cooperation-partnership. These force us to adopt a differentiated approach to at least a few of the thousands of NGOs that exist in Armenia at present. Where the 2nd part of the question - the means for disseminating press releases - is concerned, my simple answer would be no again, since our NGOs haven't yet been trained in how they should treat mass media. In other words, in the elementary rules of PR. Thus, the only way for them to publicize press releases is by paying.

This said, we will need to look at things in retrospect and reflect briefly on what the NGOs had to present, both to the press and to the public, a few years ago. It is a generally accepted fact that both the print and other mass media were largely inaccessible to the majority of NGOs. This resulted in a situation where, on the one hand, broad layers of the public were unaware of their work, and on the other hand, the NGOs themselves were unable to check the extent to which their activities were useful or reasonable. To put it otherwise, there used to be and there still is a large degree of reservation between the mass media and NGOs, the reasons for which, including through today's discussions, should be identified as a priority on the agenda.

In the first place, both the numbers of NGOs as well as their activities are numerous and at the same time monotonous. Thus, forcing the people responsible for the press to arrive at the conclusion - by no means unfounded - that the vast majority of NGOs are redundant. Some even think that the NGOs have been established to disrupt and divide the nation and destroy the national-spiritual values in the process of whirlpool globalization. There is another prevailing viewpoint/belief: the vast majority of NGOs have been established to attract grants, and were it not for these financial resources, their lives would be short. There is still another stereotype of a national character: since the initiators of the majority of NGOs are women, people think that these women would otherwise have joined the club of housewives. Even one of our talented writers, the late Hrant Matevosyan, used to say that two prominent women engaged in NGO activities do everything not to cook or wash at home...

The NGOs themselves do a lot to help spread such attitudes and opinions. We all still remember the failed attempts of one of our NGOs, in the area of family planning. As a result, a project which was very significant and useful to women's health simply failed, despite the costly campaign launched on television. This was a clear manifestation of the local conditions, the public atmosphere, and improper PR whose consequences are still being felt.

I should also mention the recent case of an NGO submitting untimely data to our newspaper on the issue of tuberculosis in penal institutions, which created very serious problems for us with the Ministry of Justice. This particular NGO has lost the trust of this newspaper editor.

I have already mentioned that the attitude has been changing in the course of the last 2-3 years, since we do have a few examples of mutual assistance. Last year Gevorg Koshkakarayan, the head of the NGO Behind Bars and a former convict, visited the newspaper and informed us that neither himself nor the 70 members of his organization, all previous convicts, have been successful in finding employment; nobody wishes to recruit former convicts and the only way for them to subsist is by reverting to

their former profession - theft. Our newspaper responded immediately by publishing both an article about them as well as an issue of the organization's newspaper. There was a positive reaction. The Prime Minister allocated space and a sum of money for them to engage in furniture manufacturing.

However, the most vivid example of good partnership is that between the environmental NGOs - the Union of Greens in Armenia, For Human Development and Social-Environmental Association, Forests of Armenia, etc - and the press, manifested in the successful action which saved Shikahogh.

I don't know whether successful cooperation between NGOs and mass media will be repeated in the case of Teghout, where our help is also much needed.

An example of excellent cooperation is the joint activities of mass media and the NGOs in the field of protection of consumer rights, to raise public awareness on dangerous food products and prohibit their consumption. However, the strange thing is that the relevant organizations haven't yet taken any steps to raise public awareness on the composition of our mineral water, to either confirm the existing doubts or refute them despite the fact that print media are ready to support them due to the salience of the issue for society.

Another positive example is the cooperation of a number of newspapers, including ours, with the organization of the Investigative Journalists in the area of judicial reform, and especially in exploring the real situation in rural communities. The example of our newspaper alone helped some of these villages be included in the government's development plans.

The aforementioned proves that both mass media and NGOs can strengthen their cooperation in the interest of our society, and that NGOs need to develop feasible, tangible, and practical programs and submit them to the press and involve journalists in their activities. And through the press, the information will be disseminated to the public. For example, I was delighted in the action organized by a youth NGO in the conservatory park a few weeks ago aimed at restoring public opinion of print media. This was the first time when an NGO attempted to help the press for the benefit of the public, mutually beneficial. And it is not accidental that our major newspapers provided these young people with hundreds of free copies of their daily issues.

As far as the issue of the profession or art of writing proper press releases and submitting them for the judgment of readers, this is a topic for a separate and well deserving session.

Nouneh Sarkissian. Mr Avetikyan, in fact what you just said raised some concerns with me and I would like to share them with everybody sitting here, and in so doing start the discussion. I think that NGOs should consider the press not only as a link for dissemination of information, but also that for advocacy, a true partner. This is a very serious topic to reflect upon and perhaps an opportunity to reflect upon a form or a kind of future cooperation and building a better relationship. If an NGO has a clear idea, a clear intention for advocacy, a clear topic in which the society is interested, the mass media will have to respond.

Lucig Danielian. I want to make one comment if I may. I hate to disagree with you because I agree with some matters that you touched upon, but regarding the family planning campaign I have been personally and very closely involved with it, and I can assure you that a lot of research was conducted beforehand, in fact I conducted research myself. I went to dozens of focus groups and talked to all kinds of people all over the country about family planning, so before the campaign was designed, a lot of research went into it. And I have to also say that we have pre-post data and the effect of the campaign was very strong and positive. A lot of women went to family planning as a result of that campaign. By the way, it was the first nationwide communication campaign in Armenia and the purpose was not to decrease birth, the purpose was to increase the health of Armenian women by decreasing abortion and finding alternative family planning methods.

Question-participant. Family planning was useful and the regional health care was aware of its

need, but maybe it was a bit premature when people were not ready for it and now is the time.

Answer - **Hakob Avetikyan.** I am not at all against the objectives and the essence of the program. In my presentation I even used the words "useful, nice, and wonderful." There was a need for an initial estimate of its reaction, for what would be the resistance shown by different layers of the society. It is very important for health, but there is a need for better estimates.

Question - **Narine Mkrtchyan. Center for Community Dialogues Initiatives (CCDI)**

Judging from your experience in the field, do you think that it is possible to create mutual monitoring mechanisms between mass media and NGOs? You have mentioned that the number of NGOs is huge for Armenia; I absolutely agree with you that some of them are "grant eaters." As two institutes of civil society, as those building the civil society, can we have a means to monitor each other?

Answer - **Hakob Avetikyan.** I think it is possible and we have been doing this within limited space. I mean the monitoring and evaluation of different mass media by the Yerevan Press Club, Internews, and other similar organizations. I cannot maintain that other newspapers or mass media care for that, but our newspaper does. We publish them irrespective of how unpleasant the opinions and criticisms are. It enables us to acknowledge in front of our readers that we have also made mistakes, as pointed out by one of the NGOs. This, of course, is manifested in a very narrow field, which demonstrates that you will find mass media representatives which will clearly enter into cooperation with you in terms of mutual monitoring. Only a small part of NGOs, God knows why, try to hide their activities. They do not want to answer questions about the amount of financial resources they receive. You have barely opened your mouth and they think you are trying to poke your nose into their business, and this creates an atmosphere of mutual distrust.

Question - **Sousanna Shahnazaryan. President of Goris Press Club**

There is an impression that, especially during elections, the mass media are concerned with making huge amounts of money. Let us assume that paid political publicity is prohibited. Do you think this will benefit the society or not?

Answer - **Boris Navasardyan.** In my opinion, this would in fact be to the detriment of the society, since we completely lack any awareness of elections or the political arena, and if that channel were also closed we would face a more serious problem. Let us look at what is happening: if the possibility of paid air time or newspaper coverage is officially, legislatively prohibited, it means you will provide advantages to those politicians that do not have such problems, i.e. that have mass media and all the tools to make an impact, and so they no longer have a problem to make themselves known to the public. The political parties that represent primarily the opposition will lose this minimum opportunity to make themselves known to the public. Where Armenia is concerned, the consequences will be absolutely negative.

Answer - **Lucig Danielian.** The only way you eliminate the paid advertisement is to make television sessions "do it for free," and to do it for free you have to give equal time to everyone. But even the most unserious political parties will have equal time. I mean, to be able to get enough money from your membership or have enough resources, enough popularity to get on, to be able to pay for time is also a measure of your popularity and the support you have from the public.

Answer - **Boris Navasardyan.** In fact, under the pressure from the authorities, several mass media outlets refused to declare their pricelists, which according to the law hinders them from political publicity. If you do not provide a pricelist then you are not allowed political publicity. There are a number of television companies, mainly in the regions, and also in Yerevan, that aim to get payment from elections, which means they will go for covert publicity; there will be money exchanged, within the the grey area of the

law, and this will nest political corruption or corruption in general.

Answer - **Hakob Avetikyan.** I agree with my colleagues. I would only like to add that we are not the ones that present those to be elected, but the press ignores the voters. During a meeting in our office, we decided that we will go to very few politicians and there was no need to advertise them for free. In contrast to this, we need to go to families, workers' staffs and collect their opinions and inform those who will be elected. I think this is more interesting, although this will not change anything either. I myself am pessimistic and uncompromising on this matter.

Question - **Gayaneh Martirosyan, NGOC- North Branch**

Perhaps NGOs do not have a very strong capacity to work with mass media and to present their activities in a transparent manner. Perhaps there is a need for a training course that will focus on capacity building to teach NGOs how to work efficiently with mass media and smooth away the problem.

Answer - **Lucig Danielian.** I can tell you that, before I did my PHD and before I became a social scientist, I worked in advocacy, as it is obvious it was a public relations system. I went to do my masters degree in journalism so I could know how the journalists think, so I could do the best public relations. It's a very difficult world, there is no doubt about it, and criticism and complaining about it isn't the solution. The solution is to find people who can do the work, because you do have to produce some usable information for the mass media.

Answer - **Hakob Avetikyan.** Let us assume you represent an NGO and that you have prepared the so-called "press-release." My advice to you would be to read what you have written, put yourself in the editor's shoes and answer whether you would publish it the way it was handed over to you, whether you like it and whether it will raise any kind of response among readers.

Question - **Lena Hovsepyan, Goris Women's Centre**

We speak a lot about democracy and civil society. Is it worth elaborating mechanisms to curtail these rumors? I am speaking about the rumors circulated among mass media.

Answer - **Boris Navasardyan.** I do not know of any other mechanisms than that of legal punishment. I must say that there is such a concept as black PR, but it is used in narrow professional circles, in other words, among the people dealing with PR. In order to differentiate between various methodologies, they have given them colors and use them in their occupation. The only way to curtail, regulate, or prohibit them is the legal way (there are also self-regulatory mechanisms which are very close to the legal ones). If rumors or black PR are related to defamation or insult, which are proper legal categories, then there are mechanisms to curtail them. If these terms are not used with regard to the rumors you mean, then you will never be able to curtail them.

Question - **Nelli Ghoushounts, Goris Teachers' Union**

We all know that the most difficult thing is changing attitudes. At present, it is not the case that our NGOs cannot deal with mass media. They simply do not want to deal with them and do not think these relations are important. We have organized several training courses on how to deal with local mass media where the latter sent someone who hardly had any responsibility. What can we do to change the attitudes among NGOs?

Answer - **Nouneh Sarkissian.** I think that an NGO should be an NGO in the true sense of the word, i.e., it should have an understanding of what it wants to achieve in this society, what its objectives are. Once there is this understanding, it will start to build the internal institutes, and in this process it will undoubtedly bear in mind that unless there is a PR specialist or at least a part time staff member, there will not be any solution to this kind of problem. This probably has to do with the strengthening of this sector. When we look at all this from a more problematic viewpoint we should state that the problem of censorship is significant. It has more to do with ordinary people, citizens,

and TV audiences, than NGOs. They need to understand the importance of press and of how it works. As representatives of society, NGOs are within this framework.

Answer - **Lucig Danielian.** It's probably a problem for NGOs, you know we have political parties in Armenia that do not have public relations offices, can you imagine this? They have no strategies for public relations and they are not serious political parties.

Answer - **Hakob Avetikyan.** Don't get disappointed. I have been teaching journalism at the University and I have managed a newspaper for 16 years now, and what I know is that even those who are often very well educated in journalism fail to be accepted by any serious mass media. This means that there should also be the skill, if we are speaking of writing a newspaper, and this, to some extent, is a gift from above and also curiosity. Who is the journalist? It is first of all a curious person who is not interested because the editor wants him/her to be, but the one that is curious about everything, like a detective. However, different from the journalist that publicizes his/her findings, the detective conceals them.

Question - **Ashot Hakobyan. Armenian Constitutional Centre for the Protection of Rights**

It is a textbook verity that any PR has to be truthful, otherwise it will become anti-publicity in the future. Organizing forums is a very good option to get rid of stereotypes and I am well convinced that 90% of NGOs will take part in them. Many of them will enroll, by all means, even without grants. But what percent of mass media will turn up and who is going to take care of the mass media participation?

Answer - **Boris Navasardyan.** When I used the word "forum" I didn't mean a concrete event, but forums in general that will serve as a means for the society to know the nature of mass media and NGOs. They can take the form of television programs or discussions. There is a need to organize them. If an event is well-thought out, well-organized, and useful to participants then the turn-out will be high. We have elaborated a format: 3-4 times a year we organize joint seminars where experts from different fields are invited. They are mainly NGO representatives and the rest are journalists. We do not impose reporting on any party, we do not even hint, it is up to them. I should say that any such meeting serves the needs of both parties. Any format is acceptable if it is useful.

Question - **Ashot Hakobyan.** I know a lot of examples where the meetings were one-sided with NGOs as the only participants and 1-2 mass media representatives, at best. I would like to extend my gratitude to Mr. Avetikyan. Maybe we haven't known each other as partners, but our organization deals with a very serious problem related to social cards, and when I was sending a multitude of press releases to different mass media, the newspaper Azg was among the few on the list. Your contribution has been great.

Answer - **Hakob Avetikyan.** You have just given us a very good example. Do you know why? When there is compliance between the policy or approach of a particular mass media and the activities of an NGO, we can speak of acquisition result - they multiply instead of simply adding. In all definitions, one can find "sustain the relations." If it is sustainable then it means relationship, i.e., if you lie once then don't assume that you will be able to ensure sustainability. PR is a very interesting occupation. Sometimes people organize press conferences on Friday. A PR specialist should know that on Friday all mass media, and especially daily newspapers, try to finish the working day earlier, so Friday is not an appropriate day. The same is true of Monday since there may be materials accumulated during the weekend and there may be no room for publishing your press release. Hours also matter and it is not difficult to study these issues.

Question - **Narine Mkrtychyan.** In defence of our NGOs, in the RA, ministers' and other high-ranking officials' women's NGOs do not have a problem with regard to communicating, they don't need you the way other NGOs that do something need you. Mass media are very important to NGOs, and those NGOs which do not support any sides often host representatives from National Security Service. Only those NGOs that have something to say approach you.

Answer - **Lucig Danielian.** You have to let me answer this question. This is something that I have studied so much in the U.S.. If you look at any policy issue, interest groups and advocacy NGOs will make up about 7-8% of news coverage across all news forces. Interest groups have a problem with mass media everywhere, even in established mass media systems that are based on principles of democracy as well as making money. Presidents, members of government, they all get covered in the news first. This is a natural part of news making processes, they are news makers. That's why we are saying that in order for NGOs, interest groups, to reach the media you have to be very clever, you have to use every technique you possibly can. And that's because the audience, the people who buy the news, watch the news, are much more interested in what the president is doing than what an NGO is doing, that is just the way it is. So you have to make your news more interesting. You can not expect newspapers to come to you and open their pages for you. It just does not work that way in any place, nowhere.

Tools for Effective Communication with Media

April 14, 2007

Nouneh Sarkissian. I will briefly introduce our guests: Mr. Bob Evans, Chief of Party of Armenia IREX and Ms. Kyla Springer who works for Counterpart. Later, Mr. Aram Mkrtchyan, who works for a number of organizations, will join us. In this event he will probably represent Radio Hay. And so, Bob Evans.

Bob Evans. IREX, Chief of Party

Topic: *Message development, delivery planning and impact evaluation*

One of the things we are going to talk about in this session is not just public relations, but dealing with your message and how you understand your message, and making sure you deal with this aspect in an appropriate way. All of us know what public relations is. No. Most people do not understand what public relations is. Most people in public relations do not really understand what public relations is.

We are going to discuss what public relations is and what it is not, what it can and can not do, and then my colleague will give you a public relations tools' overview. And I am going to talk about how it can help your group in message development, and then we will talk about how to analyze the impact of PR.

That idea can be one mission statement, one key statement that you use, or just one concept of something you want to do in the future in terms of advanced planning or some sort of press release.

Let's talk about what public relations is not. Lots of people think PR is very complex. It is not. It is not rocket science. The other thing that it is not, is advertising. If you look at the chart, you will notice the difference between them.

One thing PR cannot do is that it can not eliminate the competition. When you are dealing with public relations, many journalists feel an obligation, and it is an ethical obligation, to call and ask other people about what you are doing, what you are talking about, to get a balanced opinion. In advertisement, it is one message. In public relations, you really have to be careful how you handle it because they will be talking with the people that you may be in bad with. Because of that, you can not eliminate others' opinions, either you can not compensate for bad decisions, reverse the corrupt practices, or improve your weak marketing positions.



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Kyla Springer. Counterpart International, Communicate Associate

Topic: *Media toolkit for NGOs*

I am going to talk about the media toolkit for non-profits. So, Bob has just talked about how to create your message and how to evaluate it, this is about a media toolkit for non profits.

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Aram Mkrtchyan. Radio Hay, Executive Director

Topic: *From pop to politics-how to work with radio*

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Question - participant. Do you take photos yourself?

Answer - **Kyla Springer.** Yes, we don't have enough money for a professional photographer, so just like you visit programs, I take photos, it's much cheaper.

Question-participant. Since everything is calculated, it is written in your CV that you have played the clarinet. A question arises: if everything is calculated what was the purpose of making that part stand out?

Answer - **Kyla Springer.** No, I am not just "on purpose" at all, I am kind of embarrassed. I think, as I was the youngest representative and don't have as much experience as the others, I didn't have anything else to put in.

Question-participant. At the beginning of your presentation you said that mass media should not be taught those instruments. There is a paradox here. We are being taught how to make use of the good instruments, but we don't want to teach mass media. Why? This is not good PR for us. Let's make use of this opportunity to make them speak about us.

Answer - **Kyla Springer.** I'm sorry, maybe there was a misunderstanding. I think the media is very aware of this, and I got all these materials from media organizations, they have them on their websites as well. So I have put them together from different places and some of those places are media organizations. So I think they are aware.

Opinion - **Gayaneh Martirosyan.** Participant's view NGOC

I think that we are not speaking about mass media, but NGOs, to enable them to better present themselves.

Question - NGOs have the technical capacity to take photos to present their conferences and meetings, but when we work with either the television or the radio we have difficulties. What would be your advice? You want something, the cameraman shoots something else, and the journalist still reports another thing. What is to be done?

Answer - **Bob Evans.** Actually, this is the entire point of most of this conference. You have to develop your message, make sure you control interviews, you control press releases, and presentations. The rule is to use the same tools. You should use the same tools for your box on the same page, to compare what's coming back, what you are talking about.

Question - participant. If before you arrived in Armenia, your friends had asked you to bring back a symbolical picture, what kind of typical photo would you have taken to describe Armenians and Armenia?

Answer - **Kyla Springer.** So far unfortunately, I have only seen the conference and so I would take a picture of you. But I have a week and hope to see much more of Armenia, and I will be seeing Counterpart programs and grantees, which I am really excited about.

Question-participant. I have a question with regard to Mr. Evans's presentation. There was a comparison between PR and publicity. Why are these two identified? Probably because, as we all know, the most important tool of PR is publicity.

Answer - **Bob Evans**. Actually, advertising is not a vehical for public relations. The reason we made a distinction was because they are two completely separate approaches. One deals with your trying to influence media, and one deals with paying media for hearing your message.

Answer - **Kyla Springer**. Advertising helps you deliver your message in a much more concrete way, make it a little bit clearer.

Question - **Ani Yeghoyan**. Youth for Peace and Development Gyumri

Of course, not every non-profit organization can afford to have a separate agency that can do their PR without some kind of educational background in PR. What would you suggest for someone who is not a professional in PR, what kind of qualities should be excepted?

Answer - **Kyla Springer**. I should say that I don't have formal education in media or advertising, but you can learn and go. You should be a little bit creative in what you do.

Nouneh Sarkissian. I would like to note that in Armenia there are mass media, and Radio Hay is indeed one of them, that take pleasure in cooperating with the NGO sector. Unfortunately, this is still a great problem. Both synergy and partnership are well desired by NGOs and in very few cases by mass media. For example, Radio Van, Radio Hay, and Yerkir Media are those radio and television companies that have an ideological foundation and want and are able to cooperate. In all other cases, it is difficult to establish cooperation because there is no interest or passion for the topic. How can this be changed? Perhaps this has to do with an insufficient level of development of all the public institutes.

Answer - **Aram Mkrtchyan**. I agree. It can simply be compared with the help of the intensity ranking. For instance, 3-4 years ago Radio Hay was not ready for this kind of cooperation either. At the time, we were also trying to look for interest in everything. Gradually things changed and now we are at a point where Radio Hay and many other radio stations can implement projects with no pecuniary interest in them. A vivid example of this is the project Luma, jointly with UNICEF, in the field of protection of children's rights. We were collecting warm clothes, toys, and other supplies for kindergartens through our audience, i.e. this was a project with no pecuniary interest, but on the other hand we saw that we had a huge number of listeners that visited us. These visits are an important factor to us, people are getting in touch with us, and they become more loyal. Moreover, they take part in a concrete activity - helping children - thereby ensuring PR for the radio station. This is one of the ways, and your task is to convince those radio stations and stay close.

Question - **Anoush Hovsepyan**. USAID

I wanted to say that your presentation was very useful and frank. Rarely do managers of radio stations provide frank, to the point, and adequate information. What is the way to make you motivated when we try to work with you?

Answer - **Aram Mkrtchyan**. Never try to encourage one radio station by the example of another. On the contrary, if a famous singer has visited my competitor, I will not engage in this, although this may be to my detriment. This has to do with show business. Don't create unnecessary competition among NGOs, try to maintain the balance, choose the right time and the radio station that will be the target for your audience. It is better to work with one of them, but implement different projects with different radio stations. Working with just one is not right either.

Question-participant. Do you conduct monitoring on what age or topic group is the target for you?

Answer - **Aram Mkrtchyan.** As far as I know, there was an attempt at verifying the incomplete rating and demography of radio stations, which, however, was not made public, and I think that even now attempts are being made to make it official which will help revive the field. I don't know to what extent other radio stations are serious about their monitoring, but every Sunday (when people are at home) Radio Hay conducts telephone polls by choosing ten phone numbers from each automatic telephone exchange and making calls. We do not tell the name of the radio station at the beginning, but ask a number of questions such as how old are you, what are your preferences, what is the radio station you listen to and when. We have the clear picture, but this has nothing to do with other radio stations. And since we have the picture, it helps us better develop our projects. Our radio station does not attempt implementing projects that have nothing to do with our demography.

Question-participant. Don't try to create unnecessary competition between your reporting businesses and us. I agree with what Aram says, and I would say that in foreign countries the main challenge is to come to exclusive agreement with the largest mass media to convey messages or advertisements. While it is difficult to do that for NGOs, and in fact there is no need for exclusive agreement with mass media, because you are profit free and your message sometimes is entirely different from business objectives. I would like to give an example. Look at the announcement on the whiteboard, it contains 7 brands and all 7 are marked as equal, which means that perhaps in the long-term perspective, the format of partnership with mass media is going to be effective. For this reason, when mass media in Armenia understands that there are tangible interests, that the profit can also be intangible and that the joint effort also has a value, only then it will be easier to work with them.

Answer - **Aram Mkrtchyan.** In fact, I fully agree with you. I only meant the case when an NGO tries to speculate upon the fact that "see Radio Van cooperates with us and you should also do that." It is not right to speak with ultimatums. That's what I meant.

Question-participant. What do you think? When choosing from among mass media isn't there a need to care for the target audience and who we want to convey our message to, and only after that make the choice? And how is it possible to know how busy people are at certain hours?

Answer - **Aram Mkrtchyan.** There are very small segments and layers of society, and it is very difficult to figure out how to reach them. For example, MPs, I think they can be reached through newspapers (I assume they have no desire or time to listen to the radio). There is simply a need for a bit of research on the audience. What I meant was, there is no need to waste money by assuming that your target audience watches the program.

Question-participant. How frequently does the radio station make use of grant projects?

Answer - **Aram Mkrtchyan.** Our radio station is probably among those radio stations in Armenia who frequently implement grant projects. There may be one or two other radio stations that are active. Grant announcements are made quite often, but we do not receive invitations for cooperation. We are the ones that apply or try to cooperate with an NGO and then apply. Of course, the successful cases are not very many. Still, our radio station has successfully implemented a number of grant projects. For example, at the moment we are implementing a pre-election grant project jointly with Counterpart which is mainly in the context of awareness raising, explaining the electoral code, and reporting the situation in the regions. But we are actively involved in these activities together with NGOs. But I can't think of any joint grant project at the moment. That we have done much through joint efforts is an entirely different matter. For example, there is an organization called Clean Yerevan, which cleans Yerevan. We take part in their project by providing the music and our DJs participate in their events.

Media Communication-Adding Value to the Public Policy Process

Vahan Sirounyan. Budget Advisor/ MFE Workstream Leader in Support to the Roll-Out of Program Budgeting

Topic: *Budget process and accountability to the public*

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Anna Hovhannisyan. USAID Armenia Social Protection Systems Strengthening (SPSS), Legislative Outreach Liaison

Topic: *Budget process-an example of NGO-media collaboration for the public good*

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Question - **Arsen Karapetyan.** "Millenium Development Community Fund"

In some cases, the state budget encompasses beneficiaries or appropriates financial resources to groups which are very vague. The work you have presented is commendable and I would like to know whether any work is being done for the introduction of financial assistance mechanisms. As a tax payer, I am interested to know the procedure for beneficiary taxes. Is anything being done in this field?

Answer - **Vahan Sirounyan.** At present, the improvement we have spoken about was made by working jointly with the government for over two years. The program our company has been implementing is called the Program Budgeting Introduction Assistance Project and it is funded by the British government. In the course of the last two years, first with two ministries and later with ten more, we have prepared a statement on said ministries which was added to the state budget in the form of an amendment. Apart from the past practice of publishing in the state budget in the aforementioned three spheres - operational, agency and economic - it also contains information on how the resources are allocated to different programs, i.e., what kind of services are going to be purchased, which beneficiary groups are going to receive and what are the signs describing these services. At present, this is a pilot project and the information is being gradually improved. But the fact is, that the government has already made this big step. In the course of the last two years, the emphasis has shifted in comparison to the previous attempts towards results, towards those services which are being delivered. Our project will continue for another two years trying to assist the government, and we hope that at the end, the logic of the budget structure will be tailored to providing beneficiaries with information on matters that are of interest to them instead of the technocrat document which is impossible to fathom. We hope that after that, the government will be able to continue the process on its own with the right pillars erected in ministries and the government. But I would like to repeat what I said, that without increasing the demand on the other side it would be impossible to achieve significant results. The government doesn't seem to be interested in where the funds flow because this may create a problem for it, since in case of bad performance the gaps between planning and execution will become obvious. Therefore, it is our advice to NGOs to make use of the opportunities that are available now.

Question - **Arsen Karapetyan.** In many cases, communities receive transfers from the state budget and implement some vague projects which are contrary to the policy in a particular field. Is there a mutual agreement that links the community budget with the policy in different sectors?

Answer - **Vahan Sirounyan.** As I mentioned in my presentation, the process at the level of local self-governance itself implies some autonomy, which essentially is quite large in terms of handling the revenues attached to community budgets by law. This means the community has the responsibility to decide how to spend the funds. The appropriation of transfers from the state budget follows a logical scheme: with a view to community equalization, the government allocates financial resources to make the per capita income equal for all communities. From a program perspective, this is not a target appropriation, there is no program oversight, and the community has the authority to handle the amounts within the scope of its discretion. However, there are certain programs where the community receives transfers from the state budget to implement targeted programs. In this case, we can speak of significant state oversight which is sometimes more than necessary. Is there an oversight process by community in the budget process? There is. As a rule, the ministry of territorial administration and regional governments should ensure compliance of the process with the procedures in the law. If the community has certain powers then the latter's budget should be directed at the exercise of these powers. Apart from that, communities may also have voluntary powers and spend within the scope of these powers. There are different bodies responsible for budget review, but they do not find major deviations in community activities. But then, the self-governance mechanism enables the communities to make independent decisions on the spending directions that have nothing to do with mandatory powers. Both in the case of the NA and communities, the members should ask for an explanation on how the funds have been spent and monitor that the resources provided from their pockets are spent in a targeted manner, in line with the needs of a particular community.

Answer - **Anna Hovhannisyan.** In addition to what Vahan has said, I would like to say that starting from now, and within the coming 1-2 weeks, you will be able to learn how the government managed the 2006 budget spending, i.e., at this moment the government is elaborating a document called "budget performance." And thanks to the new budget format provided by the ATOS Consulting project, the document is available to the public. As we said, this is a pilot project and you can familiarize yourselves with the spending of the Ministry of Social Security. It is very simple. The same is true of health care, education, and culture. As far as I know, the NGOs had identified these four priorities around which their activities revolve. In a week or two, the government will submit it to the NA and it will be available to you. Try to find there answers to questions you are interested in. Thank you.

Question - **Lena Zezulin.** USAID Social Protection Project

You seemed to present the budget process as a market for the public good the same as the market for the private good. But is not the essence of public budget to deal with issues that are in market failure?

Question - **Vahan Sirounyan.** Undoubtedly, one of the objectives of the state is to ensure delivery of such services. I am speaking of public services that cannot be offered by the market, i.e., such that require joint decisions by members of society and that are difficult for the market to deliver. Take, for example, the infrastructure. There are countries where the rail, telecommunication services, or the metro are considered state monopoly. These are monopolous functions from a state perspective. But why have I drawn parallels between market relations and state relations? The reason for this is that in both cases, whether we are speaking of market goods or public goods, there is a need for a general consensus on what is produced, for whom, how and how much, and what the products are. If we look at things from this perspective, there should be no difference between market relations and state relations because in both cases when we speak

of services and production, vague contracts and relations can lead to undesirable consequences, which was a frequent occurrence in the past. Today the emphasis is gradually shifting. I of course, agree with the viewpoint that the government interferes in matters where the market is unable to ensure self-regulatory mechanisms.

Suggestion - **Fatma Khachatryan. Head of the NA Library**

I represent the NA library. I am pleased to hear that enquiries are being made about the NA here. It means that the NA is a working organism and that the people have demands and expectations of the NA. Apart from this, I have been working in the NA library for five years now and at different occasions I have requested different NGOs to send the outcomes of their studies or any other materials they have to the NA library, guaranteeing that they will be made available for those committees or MPs that are interested in the topic. If I had known that the issue would be raised here, I would have conducted analyses, but even without that, I can say that if there are 4,000 NGOs in Armenia, I am able to acquire materials from only 10-12 of them. But we have the possibility of conveying them to the MPs because we have a site where the library posts its news and what it has. To the delight of everybody here, I must say that there are committees, which after they have received the legislative initiative, ask for materials from the library in the form of conclusions of independent experts or for the analyses posted in the press that can help them ensure that before the initiative is transformed into a law, it is improved to have less vulnerabilities. In this light I am going to humbly ask everybody here, that if you do have such materials, please send them to the NA library and I promise I will inform you about the progress and the final outcome.

Question - **Nouneh Sarkissian.** I thank you for this proposal and I think that the participants will accept it with understanding because this is just another way of cooperation.

Fatma Khachatryan. I still have another experience. We have been cataloguing the daily newspapers, i.e., we take the most interesting articles and if there is an analytical dispute in newspapers, then we include them in our database. And if somebody is interested, for example, in the role of the credits system in education, I can help the person get familiarized with the opinions voiced in the media. So, I am going to ask you to help me. Just write to the NA library.

Question - **Nouneh Sarkissian.** Please allow me to ask my last question, very briefly. What is the most effective way to make sure that the mass media posts information on such complicated issues? What should be the form, and is there just one form and what practical role would you like to see for journalists? It is clear that there should be information. But what do you think? What should be the form? The question is to both of you.

Answer - **Anna Hovhannisyan.** There are different forms, and as I said, the best way for NGOs is to look at mass media not as means but as partners. For each single initiative there is also a need to work with mass media and to write a strategy for that. Let us assume that an NGO has been working on some issue. The NGO should be able to analyze the mass media to see which newspaper or TV is interested in it, and try to cooperate with them instead of waiting for the last moment when the study is ready and circulated, and nobody wants explanations. They should start cooperation from the first step and plan each next step.

Nouneh Sarkissian. Do you want to add something? Well, in this case, thank you and I would like to invite you to join us for the rest of the topics. If no, then thank you again and I think that in case there are questions our participants will get in touch with you. Do we have your contacts?

Answer - **Vahan Sirounyan.** Yes, of course, I hope my contacts are included in the paper. We are ready for cooperation any time. Thank you for your attention.

Lusine Hovhannisyan. Head of National Assembly Web division

Topic: www.parliament.am

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Notes

Onnik Krikorian. United Kingdom of Great Britain, blogger

Topic: *Blogging for mass consumption*

With regard to the last presentation on the parliament website, I would like to say that I use that resource a lot myself. I use the English section which is the disadvantage of the Armenian section, but it is really very useful. This information needs to be up there for journalist in particular, and also for civil society, because too often journalists write things about what legislation says, what legislation has been passed, and so on. However with the regard to the e-mail issue that someone raised, a blog would be the best thing that the parliamentary website could have. I just want to show you that in other countries blogging has also become a component of government, and it's interaction with civil society, the media, and the electorate itself.

Shows a website.

First of all, this is a US Congressmembers' blog, where US congressmembers basically can post. And through this mechanism, you can leave comments. So this is a way to contact your congressman directly on a particular issue or in response to an issue that he/she is supporting, a bill that is going to congress, and more than that, this is the issue that was raised with regard to email. You can have a parliamentarian or a congressman with an email and you can send them an email, but maybe they do not respond. And with this system of commenting, if they do not respond people can see, if they do not post people can see. People can raise questions as to what these people are doing, why they are not responding to my question, and so on. Of course it is a little bit more difficult than this, but I personally believe this is one means of open government.

Does everyone know what blogging is?

Basically I think that blogs are online dairies where people post their experiences, their opinions on a daily bases in chronological order, and people can comment on them and discussions could be initiated through the comment section (which I will show you).

Shows a website.

However, this medium really has proven to be popular, because people like interaction, people like to know that they have been listened to, people like to communicate, and this is the problem with static websites. As a result, professionals, organizations, media outlets have started to embrace blogging, and now blogging is actually very popular in the west. The US Congress has a blog and you know it is really very valuable, an important tool now. I have been in Armenia for eight years and I am a journalist, and I consider myself fairly independent and mainly freelance, and I run a blog and I use it to disseminate my work. At the moment I am working for the Eurasia network which is an US based publication on the elections in Armenia. But the election site will not be released until a few days before the election. Now, obviously, there is only a finite amount of information and images that can be put on the Eurasia website when it gets launched three or four days before the election itself.

We are talking about transparent elections at the moment. But I also believe transparency should go to civil society itself, and media, and so on. Every one of us needs to be transparent in our interactions, because you can say the government does not trust the government. I am really sorry, but the government also does not trust civil society, the government also does not trust media. So through my blog, when I do something, for example, two days ago I went out with Raffi Hovhannisyan, so I am

posting my impression, I am posting all the images I took, and just so that people know, I am not biased and I am not just following Raffi Hovhannisyán. This is why blogging is really useful. So I took pictures and wrote an article and published it online, but there should be discussions on issues. That is why I run a blog, and it is very useful for this purpose. For example a lot of comments were made with regard to this news: who did it, why did they do it, do we care if they did it or not, what ramification this has on Armenia, and so on. And the discussion can be initiated and I think really, in my personal opinion, this is the one thing which Armenian society needs more than anything else. I think it needs discussion. We are in a room, we are talking amongst ourselves, but who outside knows anything about what we are talking about here? Absolutely nobody, and this could remain like that. I think that is the problem in every area of life in Armenia. We are talking about openness and transparency, so let's be open and transparent, let's initiate this discussions for work that we already have. There is a problem with media in Armenia. We can talk about corruption in government, we can talk about dishonesty in government, but this exists in every other walk of life as well. Now with commenting, people can be held accountable if there is something that has been printed incorrectly. Someone has the right to respond openly and can get a response immediately. So this is why I believe in blogging.

Now let's take civil society itself. I am journalist, I cover a lot of NGOs, I cover a lot of issues: poverty, corruption, landmines, whatever it may be. Now, who do I have to go to in order to get expert information? Usually it is really difficult because you speak to someone and they are only interested in passing you off to the NGO which is run by one of their friends or by their relative. But there are a lot of people out there and that is really what irritates me the most. It is very difficult sometimes to find the right information on the internet as well. It is very difficult to engage in a discussion, and that is also why I believe blogging is very important, for civil society as well. Here is one excellent example that I have discovered. Ironically enough, it was established by a former Peace Corps volunteer and I think it is probably that he is aware of the importance of blogging and the interactions it allows you to have. It is basically a boarding school in Gavar.

Shows a website.

This is in English. By the way, things do not have to be in English. They could be in Russian, they could be in Armenian, they can be in whatever language you want, they can be bilingual, they can be trilingual, however many languages you want. So that is what we have with regard to a blog. This is a website, but I would say with that interaction ability. And Armenians are fond of interaction, and if you look at most web statistics from most media sites in comparison with forums, forums are like ten times more read. The only thing with those forums is that they are for closed communities, and this is why I do not like forums. That is why I think that a blog is a kind of hybrid between some static website and something interactive. So they are using it as a publicity tool. They use the mechanisms of a blog that really has very basic origins in order to try to do something much better. Why do I think this is important for civil society? Because people can communicate directly with the organization and raise issues that they want clarification on. For example, I was recently in Kutaisi in Georgia doing some work, documenting Georgian services for local government, and I posted these images on my site, and I raised this issue with deinstitutionalization of children. As a result, people who never really thought about the issue of deinstitutionalization of children in the Southern Caucasus started asking questions like what the situation was like in Armenia, what has been done, and so on. And I can basically engage in a discussion with them about the comments on the images, on the articles which I posted. I can put links to relevant documents that may be government policies, family code, whatever it might be. I think the possibilities are endless. But more than anything, as I said, people become accountable and this is two-way communication that exists.

Anyone can set up a blog. You can be an individual, you can be an NGO, you can be a journalist, anyone. So what is interesting is lots of specialists are now starting to

set up blogs in Armenia.

Shows a website.

I actually do not know who they are, but they are definitely economists and they are basically outside of Armenia. They are raising very specialized questions about the Armenian economy which, again, people have the ability to comment on. They are asking questions as well, they try to solicit feedback.

The regional coordinator of the entire Caucuses Resource Research Center in the South Caucasus is running a blog and he does the same thing. He set up his own blog, and by the way blogging is free. Recently I met him and we were talking about the issue of blogging and he was talking about all those reports. "Everyone is writing reports," he says. How many reports are there, hundred pages, two hundred pages? Who is reading them? I do not believe many people are. And he is the man who actually commissions reports and he quite openly says this. This is why we have summery pages, this is why we have conclusion pages. So he is using his blog basically to communicate the main issues, and then links them to the final documents for people who really want to go over details. He is using this way to basically try and attract more attention to the report, but also inform people.

Shows a website.

I would like to say that the whole point about blogging is interactive. There is not enough interaction and discussion in Armenia.

A year and a half ago I went to London to attend a conference being organized by Harvard University. They pay very serious attention to blogging because they believe in blogging as a source of information, especially from countries like Armenia where the media is not so well developed. They believe in the concept of citizen journalism. Now some people would say this is an issue with regard to the credibility of information. Sure, but it is also in media anywhere. I do not watch TV in this country because I know I am being lied to. I do not read print media because, one, I do not read Armenian, but I do not read English pages because I know that it is politically partisan anyway, whether it is pro-opposition or pro-government. I do not believe that we have to be concerned about other people, including members of the NGO sector, putting their own information online and acting like citizen journalists. I do not think we have anything to lose, and I believe it would create counterbalances.

Shows a website.

Slowly it is happening here and I think we will see more of it. I will give you one other example. Recently there were some reports from a rally in Yerevan and I read a news report on one online news service. It said basically, that Liberty Square was overcrowded, full to capacity, there was not enough room to stand. I would say there were hardly a thousand people there, but they printed it there. Now Internews also raised this issue, other blogs on online journals also raised this issue, we were there, we saw it was nowhere near overcrowded. What are you talking about? You are producing misinformation and civil society can use this.

Shows a website.

This is an Armenian blog run by the International Center for Human Development.

Also another reason why it is in your interest to think about using the blogging platform, we just had the parliament.am search engine shown to us. Most websites being put together for civil society do not have the ability in website. But blogging is standard. Not only is it a free platform, but it also has database facilities so you can have your own search engine there, and more than that, you can categorize. For example, people can go instantly to every single piece of information about poverty, or about corruption, about music, about anything you want.

A blog is a truly democratic platform, and yes, they can be misuse. But there is the ability to account for any misinformation, any lies, any slander, and so on. This is my opinion.

And sometimes they cover events which are not covered elsewhere. So for example, recently there was a youth movement action in central Yerevan, and I really did

not see any coverage of that platform on H1 nor on other news stations. But the bloggers were dealing with this issue. So if the mass media is not doing its job, then I believe bloggers can, and a blogger can be any person. A blogger can be anyone in this room and you create your audience based on your personality, based on the information you are conveying, and so on. Blogging is an important mechanism for communicating.

Also the other thing that really worries me about Armenia is that there is not a lot of focus on the regions. You know, mainly because a journalist does not go to the regions unless there some international donor is paying them to. But here we have a blogger based in Yerevan but who knows some guys from Gyumri, so she recently went to Gyumri and she traveled around and she took pictures of Gyumri. And the pictures show that Gyumri is still in a stage in which it really should not be, this long after the earthquake. And you could put links there which will take you to some other sources, and not everyone would agree, and will put to some other sources of information. Everyone has the ability to have their say, and I think that is what we need, that is democracy.

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John Hughes. ArmeniaNow.com

Topic: *Electronic journalism in a non-electronic society*

This is a political season and let me ask you a political question, if I were running for parliament and told you that I would promise you a faster internet connection in Armenia, would you vote for me?

It is not as many as I thought. As someone producing internet journals, we face an interesting challenge. We produce a journal, that by its very nature, you would think would have limited possibilities here. Five years ago my partner, Tony Halpin, who is the Moscow bureau chief for the Times newspaper of London, and I started Armenianow.com. We are a rather rare thing here. We combine something that can be interesting for you. We combine NGO and media, and I will explain that. We set up a web journal for the purpose of training journalists. Obviously, I am not the first guy who came here hoping to help Armenian journalists learn western style journalism. Plenty of people came before. Practically any time, you can go to any journalist here, go to a seminar and be taught how to do western style journalism. Well that is fine as long as they are in the classroom, but then what happens? The journalist goes, get taught to conduct themselves in a proper manner, to produce information that is a) accurate, b) fair and balanced, and etc. The journalist leaves the training session and goes back into the news room and encounters an editor who says, "I am sorry but the thing you have been taught does not fit with my parameters of what the purpose of this paper is, because we have been payed by a political person or a party."

So we have found that there is a big gap between the classroom and the newsroom, so we set up a training program that is an NGO called the New Times Journalism Training Center, so that journalist could have a place to practice what they have been taught. In the beginning of our program, most of our journalists started by being taught by a USAID program that was called Promedia. We became the laboratory where people could come, not to study journalism, but to learn how to do journalism. I have been asked plenty of times since being in Armenia to teach journalism classes myself. I would confess to you that the first journalism class I attended was one that I taught because I came from a system of journalism where it is developed as a craft and not as a science. And we believe very much that for people to fully understand the policies of independent and free western style media, it has to be done rather than listened to; and leave the theory in the classroom and go back to newsroom, so we started armenianow.com. If I had known then what I know now, we probably would never

have started. At the time that Tony and I started it, it never really occurred to me that less than 2% of the population in Armenia at that time used internet. So I am sure if we sat around in a room full of consultants and said, you know, we have this idea to start an internet journal in Armenia, my guess is that 80 or 90% of them would say that we were out of our minds because there is nobody to write for. I would agree with that argument, if it were not the internet. The condition of Armenia is such that if it was just Armenia, we would reach 2.5 or 3 million people, however we can double that if we include the diaspora. So obviously we have become a link between what goes on here and people abroad who need to know about it. Did we start as a publication for the diaspora? No, we did not and we still are not. There have been plenty of publications with that as well, with that intention, who wanted to tell the diaspora what was interesting for them because it involved them. We think of ourselves as a local publication with an international audience. We purposefully avoid having information anywhere other than within Armenia. We want to tell people what is going on here, so we started with zero, almost everywhere including the budget. We began just on the idea that Tony and I had, believing that it was important that we started in July of 2002. Today, the number that we get on our monitoring service made us as popular as the most read newspaper in Armenia. So even though we are in a place that probably now we could say there is 5 or 7 % penetration of internet among private users, even though we are in place with such low access, we still have an impact that probably could not have been predicted in those days when we were considering starting this. I want to make reference for the purpose of not what we do, but how NGOs themselves, in general, can use somebody like us. Ms. Hovannisyan made a very good point. Consider yourself as a partner with media, we are not advisory here. One of the absolute foundations of everything that we believe at armenianow.com is that media should not be one sided. It should not represent anybody other than the voice of the people, and that is what we are absolutely trying to do. To make that point, I will tell you that during the 2003 presidential elections, of course we covered that extensively as did everyone here, we were criticized as being oppositional, we were criticized as being pro-government and that is exactly what should have happened. Everybody here knows that you can buy an oppositional newspaper or you can buy a pro-government newspaper. But what if you just want news? That is what we have tried to create. So I have said that you have access to, first of all, a publication that believes in supporting NGOs who are trying to do good work here. You have a publication that will get your message to more people than any newspaper can get it to, and by the way it is in two languages. I often say that I am an editor of a magazine, half of which I can not read. So we hope soon we will also be able to publish in Russian.

Let me give you a couple of examples with Babken's help. Babken let's go to "Hi Santa." One of the things this sort of gets into, I do not know if you will qualify as civic society, but I hope it is qualifying just doing a responsible thing. One of the things that I want journalists here to learn is how to use their craft, their skills, their science for public good. So a few years ago we started a program called "Hi Santa." We started with two purposes: one, because we realized that we had a unique audience, we wanted to provide a bridge between people who might want to help needy people in Armenia and those people themselves. Clearly, many people were doing that, but the institutional face of charity is not nearly as impressive as a personal face of charity. So we have tried to put a personal face on needs that exist in Armenia and offer our readership a chance to do something about those needs. So once, a year we do a special program called "Hi Santa," during the holiday season. We invite our readers to make contributions to our program, and in fact, the response was so good that we set up a separate foundation that now exists in Armenian "Չմեռ Պսոս" foundation that year-round not only finds people to write about and solicit help for, but monitors the help that was given to those people. That is the accountability on our part so that we know if they have been given assistance, have they been using the assistance properly. Let me say that we do not give cash to people. I walked into our office after doing one of the "Hi Santa" programs and inside of our newsroom was a rectangular shaped clear

glass and it turned out that our "Hi Santa" director had gone out and bought windows for a family in one of the villages whose house was condemned because they had no windows. Our reader gave money and we bought windows, and I can not think of a better link between media responsibility and the opportunity to have an impact on social conditions. We have bought cows, we have bought sheep, we have bought chickens, and I am afraid I've forgotten what else we have bought. I said that to make a point, that in many of these cases we have found those people with the help of NGOs. I talked to our director the other day, and she told me that over the course of our program, I think we have involved the work of 47 NGOs, who in one way or other helped us to find these people and help us determine what the needs of these people are. Obviously we are not experts in social needs so we wanted the NGOs to advise us on how these people can be most effectively helped. A couple of years ago, we partnered our program with Shogakat television, so now in addition to producing these articles, we also produce video, I expect the connection is too slow to show you, but I do not know.

(Shows video)

We set this up for people not only to read what we are doing, but also to hear what these people themselves have to say. In any case, we set it up so that there is a way that people with a fast connection can put up one site and people with slow connection can put up another.

If you are an NGO with a reason to get your message to the media, please do not sit around and think that we know about you. I am often troubled when we produce stories and then someone comes and tells us that our article tells only part of the story because we were doing X, Y, Z. We are not fortune tellers, we can not read minds, and we can not know things unless they are told to us. Do not assume that anybody knows who you are, tell them who you are. And please, if you want somebody to know who you are, don't just go and say, have you got any idea how we can work with the media? Go with your own ideas and see how that correlates with the people whom you are talking to. In a country this small with this many NGOs, the message ought to be getting out there. If you have a message get it out.

I just want to give you some idea about our numbers. And again the point is the effectiveness of getting your message on the internet, even though it may not seem useful in this country. We started with zero, we now get about 15,000 unique visits per week. And just to give you an idea of how you can build an audience, even through what Onnik was talking about with blogging or in our case through a static internet journal. We started very slowly but then started growing quickly. Part of the reason is because, I think last October, rather than only updating our site weekly, we started putting daily news on the site. In November of last year, our daily readership was something like 3,660. Since then, because we began posting daily articles, and perhaps because people are more interested now because it is a political season and so on, but in any case, between November and today we have about 5,000 daily readers, so people pay attention and they notice change. If they know that they can get information they are ready to come back to it to try to get new information. The point I have been trying to make is that as an internet journal, we have a very active and immediate opportunity for messages to get out. We had the experience sadly last year of becoming a very important news source in Armenia on the day of the plane crash. It happened of course, that the crash took place on a Monday morning, on a day in which Armenia has no newspapers. So beginning within an hour after that plane crash, we were reporting news that people would not have gotten otherwise until at least the next day if not two days later; and we were able to give our readership an hourly update of what was happening. Yes, this was our coverage on the airplane.

(shows a site)

I hope I am not taking credit that we do not deserve, but I think we were the first to publish the manifest list from the airplane.

One of the fascinating things for me about Armenia, (obviously I know what a great place this is, otherwise I would not have moved here and been here for 6 years,

and I am delighted that I am and almost every day it is a joy, and every other day is a heartache and I am sure you know this better than me), I am amazed to learn where there are Armenians, until when I was assigned by a newspaper in California where I was working, to go to Armenia. I said, “yes, great, I will be happy to go to Romania.” I thought she said Romania. I had to look this place up on the map. Today I am happy to know that it was just my ignorance and not the ignorance of a very big world, because as of last month we have been visited in at least 110 countries. Once we had a visit from Tonga, we had a visit from Nigeria. This is not a Glendale press that we are talking about, we are getting people literally from all over the world.

Very quickly I will tell you now how we have made another link. Because of the ease with which we were able to train journalists on internet, it is really not compared to trying to produce magazines or newspapers. It was relatively easy for us to be able to have a training program that we could afford, so we used that as a training tool and now we are trying to take it to another level. So recently, we have begun producing special editions of newspapers and I bring this one only as a good example of how NGOs and media can work together.

(distributes newspapers).

In collaboration again with some NGOs and sponsored by UNICEF, we produced a special edition, this is a pdf file on health care in Armenia.

(shows in site)

From that we have produced the edition which has been handed out to you. Again, this was done with the help of NGOs and with the sponsorship of the British Embassy.

So 5 years ago we started up not knowing if we had readership at all, and I can tell you now that the newspaper which you hold in your hands was published in 25,000 copies, making it the largest print publication in Armenia, so internet has potential and it is up to you to use it.

Question - **Nouneh Sarkissian.** What would be your 5 recommendations to an organization to be able to articulate what it has to say through regular publications? What is the way you should be approached to do that in the best possible way?

Answer - **John Hughes.** It is the old fashioned way. It is by telephone, it is by walking into the office, it's by sending a letter, it is by going to the website and finding the address. It is simply, as I said before. The best chance is to know that there is a vehicle out there for you, but please do not embarrass yourself and do not annoy me by coming into my office without having read the website and knowing what is on it. So many times we have gotten phone calls from people saying they would like to form a collaboration with us. And then they get into the office and say they do not even know what we do. What you can do for me? - my reply has to be. You came to me, what do you want me to do? If you want to get your message to somebody you first of all should know what that message is yourself. Before you approach any legitimate journalist I think you need to decide for yourself why the information you want to give is a value to somebody other than you and your organization. I mean, we all live in our own, isolated small world, and I always think that my message is the most important one. So you need to convince me why your message is necessary, how my readership might use it, and why it is worth our time and energy.

**Improving Media-NGO
Partnership-Recommendations**April 15, 2007

Nune Sarkissian. Good morning. Today is the last day of our conference.

Susanna Shahnazaryan. Participant. I am a journalist and I would like to advocate for journalists for a moment. Counterpart has been implementing a number of projects doing good for hundreds of beneficiaries. We have spoken a lot about that. When we speak about cooperation between NGOs and mass media, there is a kind of asymmetry, as if NGOs and the public have, all at once, become one body and soul, powerful, while the mass media cannot meet their needs, cannot become a microphone for them. For example, let us assume there is a television company in one region. We don't have the means to conduct a survey. The printed media are issued once, at best, twice per month and there is no radio in this region. I would suggest that Counterpart develop a strategy, announce a tender for mass media to help us present the problems of NGO beneficiaries. We always see the NGOs in newspapers, on TV, everywhere, but not their beneficiaries. For example, not the disabled but the NGO having done something for them is presented. I would like our mass media to cover more of the problems and needs of beneficiaries. We are just a means to help them solve their problems.

Narine Mkrtchyan. CCDI. I am very happy that I have spent my last three days in this auditorium. I have concrete recommendations. As I have noticed from what our speakers and my colleagues were saying, the cooperation between NGOs and mass media is a necessity today, and it is also complicated for the activities of the civil society institutes. It is my belief that if we do establish such cooperation, the government will pay attention. We are the ones that should attract this attention. I have a concrete recommendation: we have the culture of communicating with mass media. I would suggest that Counterpart establish a working group which would be comprised of the most experienced mass media and NGOs for them to draft a concept paper on the cooperation between mass media and NGOs; and even pay a great deal of attention to grants, especially to advocacy grants and to award these grants to those projects that will guarantee cooperation with the mass media. This means that the international organization will create a precedent and leave the rest to us.

Nouneh Sarkissian. What do you think, which party should take the lead in the cooperation between NGOs and mass media? I, of course, don't think that we will have an answer to this question, but still, for projects that aim at the dissemination of information through mass media.

Narine Mkrtchyan. In view of the fact that we are speaking about the case of Armenia, I would suggest the mass media, since they are a bit more advanced in matters related to the formation of public opinion today. I cannot say anything about other countries, but in Armenia, the mass media can boast of more achievements than the NGOs. Not very big numbers of mass media testifies to this, while the number of NGOs is 4,000, there is an opinion that this is very good, but I think that this is very bad.

Nouneh Sarkissian. Do you know what a tremendous number over 50 TV companies is for a country like Armenia?

Narine Mkrtchyan. That also, I am not very well informed about such matters. The mass media should help a bit and assume the leadership. It also depends on mass media, which party is managing or funding, but the subordinate attitude is not desirable either. I remember that some ten years ago, the Yerevan Press Club was implementing a project with NGOs. The mass media were facilitating discussions in accordance with the nature of NGOs - women's or environmental. These were very interesting and mutu-

ally helpful discussions. Well, the center in Yerevan can organize such discussions and invite the mass media and NGOs according to their fields.

Nouneh Sarkissian. So, my understanding is correct. In addition to the need for the mass media to help rally the NGO sector around an idea, this is one of the problems: organizations want to talk about themselves, while mass media want to speak about beneficiary groups. I have always thought that this was not only the problem of the NGO sector but also international organizations. In this light, not only should the mass media try to raise this image, but the NGOs need to try and understand the interests of mass media and use them in the right way. Do you agree with this?

Susanna Shahnazaryan. Being the experienced person you are in your field, can you tell us something about the level of the NGOs and mass media in Armenia? Which of the two parties enjoys more public trust?

Nouneh Sarkissian. If we are speaking about Armenia, I think that the level of trust is the same for both parties. There may be a group that trusts a particular NGO, but as a power, which is the same.

Lena Hovsepyan. I would like to extend my profound gratitude to the organizers for these three days which were interesting and meaningful. I myself have got answers to many questions and I understood that these kinds of events are more important to those NGOs which have already been implementing projects. I have a couple of comments.

Nouneh Sarkissian. Can you give us an example of the type of questions that did not seem to have a solution to you?

Lena Hovsepyan. For example, before coming here I once needed to contact the National Assembly Committee on Health Issues and I found what the representative of the NA Library said very important, because I couldn't have imagined that the contact could be so easy, i.e. there is such an easy way to make yourself heard. I have an offer: if Counterpart has a possibility to organize something else for NGO specialists, they can publish an article from a program report.

Nouneh Sarkissian. Could you please clarify? Do you mean only reports?

Lena Hovsepyan. I am speaking about the lack of capacity to elucidate something, I am speaking about the transition from reporting to publicizing.

Nouneh Sarkissian. But do NGOs need to put that in the form of an article?

Lena Hovsepyan. I am speaking about the lack of presentation skills.

Nouneh Sarkissian. In other words, how to present a document or work to the public, how to convey that information to the mass media so that they are used.

Lena Hovsepyan. And in addition to this, develop a small set of guidelines to introduce the NGOs and their objectives which would enable us to quickly familiarize ourselves with their activities.

Nouneh Sarkissian. As far as my understanding goes, we are speaking about creating a separate catalogue about the Armenian NGOs. And do you think that this will be very useful to mass media?

Lena Hovsepyan. Yes.

Nelly Ghushounts. GUM NGO. I would like to go back to Ms. Lena Hovsepyan's first comment. We are Counterpart's partner organization in South Armenia and I would like to say that we have been delivering a training course to local NGOs on how to communicate with mass media. The course was designed in the framework of the NGO Civic Advocacy Assistance Program. Unfortunately, our NGOs have sent people that have less responsibility or volunteers, and as a result the knowledge imparted during the training course remains in the classroom and is not transmitted to the NGOs and, consequently, it is not used by them. My request to NGOs would be to send those people

that will later engage in building the relationship with mass media. Thank you.

Nouneh Sarkissian. In this case, dear Nelly, I have an offer. Yesterday I greatly enjoyed Kyla Springer's presentation, the way she spoke, her examples, her tools, her presentation skills and her experience as a journalist. In a word, I had her presentation in my mind the whole day. So, if our NGOs have the opportunity to conduct such trainings, my request would be to invite this kind of specialist.

Nune Aginyan. Transparency International. I would first like to thank the organizers of this event for all the interesting presentations that we have enjoyed during these three days. There were opinions about the deficiencies in the relations between mass media and NGOs. Included in the list of deficiencies was the fact that NGOs are not very transparent in their activities. I would like to speak about our organization and inform everybody here that for purposes of transparency and accountability, we have posted on our website all of the information on who our donors are, what kind of resources we have received, and what the outcomes have been. I would also like to say that during the expo our organization exhibited its mission, its activities, and you also have the opportunity to learn about this from our website. Where the relations between mass media and NGOs are concerned, our organization pays a great deal of attention to corruption. We have a section on corruption where we post brief information for mass media. Can success stories be printed in a separate booklet to encourage this kind of cooperation in the future?

Nouneh Sarkissian. In what form do you imagine those success stories, in one booklet? Can they be in the form of journalistic articles telling us about the success of such cooperation in a printed format? Does it have to consist of articles?

Nune Aginyan. It can also be in the form of articles.

Nouneh Sarkissian. This is a very interesting idea and it can become a very interesting and popular book.

Nune Aginyan. We also spoke about a forum that will contribute to effective work between NGOs and mass media. For example, there are always media representatives at our events and very frequently people representing different interests convene around the same table. They raise different questions and the results are always very effective. There are no one-sided attitudes (conflicts of interest) and eventually these meetings are always reflected in the mass media.

Nouneh Sarkissian. I have a question. What do you think needs to be done to ensure transparency of both the mass media and NGOs?

Susanna Shahnazaryan. I think that the mass media are interested in those organizations which do not have grants. These grants have generated a lot of confusion.

Nouneh Sarkissian. It's simply that this sector works through grants all over the world.

Susanna Shahnazaryan. We are for organizing forums, but who is going to initiate them, how do we cooperate? This should be a big document stating which party should be responsible for this cooperation.

Nouneh Sarkissian. We need to change the attitude.

Susanna Shahnazaryan. There are many recognized NGOs that do without grants.

Nouneh Sarkissian. For example...

Susanna Shahnazaryan. At the time it was the Greens' Union during Soviet times.

Nouneh Sarkissian. Which was funded by the state.

Opinion - I would like to share with you my opinion about cooperation. I think cooperation will only be possible when the two parties have an understanding of their needs. In other words, it is impossible to artificially mix the mass media with NGOs, both have to feel

the need. This is something very similar to coalitions. When the need is mature enough, they will be formed. Where transparency is concerned, I cannot say anything about mass media, but a mature NGO will be assessed by its system of accountability and transparency. This is one of the criteria which is manifested in publicizing the annual reports where the organization shows the sources of its resources and the amount of its funds. In my belief, there definitely are NGOs in the region of Lori that have adhered to such a system.

Opinion - NGO Aravot. Where grants are concerned, when people ask me whether we have grants, I answer that we don't and that we have projects instead. The word grant creates a different impression. At the moment, we have 7-8 projects, part of which enjoy international assistance, while the other part don't enjoy any assistance. We should not use the word grant since it creates the impression that we receive gifts, while it is in fact your project. The organization has a strategic plan, programs, objectives, developed projects that serve the goal of achieving the strategy. It either finds support or it doesn't.

Nouneh Sarkissian. In any case, it depends on the NGOs perception and the values inherent in a society.

Opinion - There was a word about success stories. I have a proposal. Don't let them be in the form of narratives, but let them serve the purpose of training. Think of what is attractive to mass media, what is needed by the mass media for establishing cooperation with this NGO. There should be some expert comments, some background information and a statement on what became the basis for such cooperation, so that any reader that has no idea about this NGO reads and learns something.

Nouneh Sarkissian. There have to be laws in the internal organization too, laws on relations, the language used, attitudes. The word "bite" should be removed from the vocabulary (the grant bit). Neither mass media nor NGOs are strong enough. They both have the problem of self-filtration, they both have financial problems. Let us try and formulate what the objective of the cooperation between mass media and NGOs is in one sentence.

Opinion - Lack of trust.

Opinion - The interest of both parties is not in a common field. The problem should be interesting to both parties, both parties should look at the same problem, the beneficiaries. The mass media think about disseminating some kind of information. NGOs should understand that the mass media can only write about this problem, while they should look for the solution.

Opinion - Both NGOs and mass media have financial and technical problems. In Goris, or rather the whole region of Syunik, we do not have a printing house. It is also very difficult for mass media. We bring the newspapers to Yerevan and print them here. Both need funds.

Nouneh Sarkissian. I wouldn't consider this to be a relationship problem, but a separate problem for both.

Opinion - The mass media are not in a stable financial situation either. They are also trying to attract some funds to pay for their printing costs.

Opinion - I think the mass media should be considered partners, to present and not to ask.

Nouneh Sarkissian. Which means that the main objective, the ideal option, is partnership. Can we use one word to describe this ideal situation?

Ashot Hakobyan. I think that we need to be more unencumbered and free when looking at this problem. We pay the mass media, in most cases, to help them rise to their feet (regional). But I would like to say that this year we will celebrate the 15th anniversary of our organization and we have been receiving funds for our projects since 1996. Before that, we had been working on the basis of community assistance, our own resources,

and we have many cases of cooperation with local mass media.

Lucig Danielian. Two things, one is to really do something about making sure to access everyone who wants to access and pay for that, there is no discrimination, for every NGO to pay for access to the broadcasting media. Newspapers are different. Number two, I think that all broadcasts belong to the public, all broadcast channels, radio, and television belong to public. I think we need to work very hard to put in free time for public service announcements.

Nouneh Sarkissian. Frankly speaking, I always fight to protect the rights of the mass media. Can you imagine what would happen if everything were free of charge?

Lucig Danielian. When we talk about cooperation between NGOs and mass media, it is not always cooperation. I'm sorry, the fact is there are different interests involved, they simply put a limit, three minutes a day, maximum, altogether.

Nouneh Sarkissian. This will again mean inequality.

Lucig Danielian. Yes, but there is a very easy solution to that, you can say that every broadcast session must allocate five minutes each day for free public service announcement. Why not?

Nouneh Sarkissian. These are small amounts.

Lucig Danielian. No, it has to be free, it belongs to public.

Nouneh Sarkissian. So, if my understanding is correct, there should be attempts at amending the legislation so that there are more opportunities for the public sector.

Ashot Hakobyan. It was only recently that I learned that the Vanadzor mayor's office has been paying the local TV company (Lori and Lori marz) from Vanadzor community funds. I didn't know about that.

Nouneh Sarkissian. By the way, this is a very common practice. The mayor's office commissions town news and the TV company produces it for a certain amount.

Ashot Hakobyan. But the question is that the NGOs are not aware of this.

Nouneh Sarkissian. This means that again we arrive at the issue of mutual transparency.

Opinion - Certainly the mayor does not pay for covering NGO work. Do we have the right to know whether the mayor paid for the mass media to cover NGO activities? For funds to be transferred from one budget to another, there should be a justification. We cannot say that the head of community paid.

Nouneh Sarkissian. I would like to ask Ashot to make a concrete recommendation with regard to what he said.

Ashot Hakobyan. I suggest that in the first place, there is awareness of what is happening.

Nouneh Sarkissian. In other words, to try and control the funds allocated to mass media by local communities.

Ashot Hakobyan. And after that, to make sure the council of elders understands that this does not mean it is the money of the mayor's office paid by the mayor. It is the money of the community.

Nouneh Sarkissian. It is assumed that this is for the sake of the public interest. Well, we all understand what we are speaking about, we all understand that there is a problem and there should be an opportunity to somehow control this.

Susanna Shahnazaryan. Two years ago we submitted a proposal to Soros Foundation to sponsor topic discussions for NGOs at the Goris Press Club, and because our TV company did not have a computer, we included a separate item in the budget for buying a computer for them. We got a refusal because this TV company broadcasts in Goris and did not cover many beneficiaries. But I think there should be exceptions to encourage

local actors. If this discussion is going to be on Yerkir Media and nobody from regions outside Yerevan is going to be able to watch it, then it will not have any results. Let's come up with joint recommendations.

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Nouneh Sarkissian. In other words, the regional communities should try and encourage the joint coalition approach.

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Recommendations. (extract)

Main purpose

Mutually beneficial collaboration in favor of society

Conclusion

NGO sector and mass media collaboration does not exist because of the following reasons

- Mutual mistrust
- Existence of mutual stereotypes
- Lack of NGO capacity and vocational training to interest mass media and make it a co-thinker
- Lack of mass media interest in NGOs and important topics for society

Suggestions

- Print activities and contacts of mass media and NGOs
- Media literacy courses (including practical courses and visits to mass media outlets)
- PR courses taught by professionals with international experience
- Processing and enforcement of NGO sector code of ethics, especially in relations with mass media (e.g. not to pay agreement for news)
- Mass media-NGO forum (meetings, round tables, discussions, seminars) for improving and stabilizing the cooperation
- Document success stories of NGO-mass media cooperation
- Create and launch a telecast about public sector
- Legislative enterprise for PSA free launching opportunity
- Develop a budget for the mass media that would protect and promote the public interest
- Work out mechanisms for securing mutual transparency

Closing Plenary Session

Alex Sardar, chair

Let's get started with introductions and some opening remarks for the closing plenary, hearing the reports from each of the tracks. The Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process Conference 2007 generously supported by the American people through USAID is nearing its conclusion. I want to once again thank all of our presenters who have come together, primarily from Armenia - all over Armenia, for the wealth of expertise, experience, and information they've brought to every session that we've had.

To give you an idea of what we've done, we had 37 presenters throughout the weekend, from the government, the NGO sector, media, and business. We've had 52 combined hours of discussions and working sessions. We've distributed over 3,000 pages of information, and have taken over 300 pages of notes from these sessions. All of this information regarding the issues we've discussed will be systematised and distributed back to the NGO sector in Armenia, to our presenters, and stakeholders.

I want to once again particularly thank our moderators, who have stayed with us throughout these three days, persistently facilitating and effectively helping the participants of the conference get the most concrete and concise information from discussions, recorded from the present closing plenary work. Let me just mention them once more, Amalya Kostanyan of Transparency International, Ara Nazinayan of Eurasia Foundation, Anna Sahakyan of Counterpart International Washington D.C., and Nune Sarkisyan of Internews Armenia. We're also ever so grateful to our partner NGOs and would like to mention them once more because they've done an incredible job of organizing this conference with us. The NGO Center Vanadzor branch under the leadership of Gayane Martirosyan, Civic Development and Partnership Foundation under the leadership of Hrayr Edilyan, and Goris Teachers' Union under the leadership of Artashes Torozyan.

I'd like to also thank the American University of Armenia, and its superb administrative team, working under the leadership of Dr. Lucig Danielian, for helping us and organizing everything that we needed this weekend, without a crisis, and I think that all our needs this weekend were met fully and on time. Thank you very much.

We've had a very dynamic, active, and interactive conference. We were going to apologize when we thought it may not be so active, but we've had a good crowd every session for these three days. Yesterday we were wondering whether our sessions were going to be effective enough. They got started and we saw how well our moderators were facilitating sessions and how active everyone was in the sessions. Let's go with it, let's go with it. It was wonderful to see everyone's engagement in the sessions. As I mentioned, we've had 52 hours of formal discussion. Now we are ready to hear what we've come up with, willing the Armenian NGO sector collaboratively to the next phase in the advocacy agenda, whether it is a common agenda or a complicated and diverse one, per your missions. So, let's go to the first report of Track A, Government-NGO relations, a systems approach to the public policy process and the first presenter Amalya Kostanyan.

Amalya Kostanyan, moderator, Government - NGO relations

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, honorable guests, and dear colleagues, Before proceeding to the presentation of our recommendations I would like to, and I think I am lucky to be the first to start. I would like to share my general impressions with you, because what happened in these two and a half days showed that the NGO sector, I don't want to say is now consolidated, but first, it is not indifferent to what is happen-

ing in Armenia, and second, it is full of energy because people here were defending their viewpoints or making their recommendations so passionately that one could easily become jealous that we have so much energy despite all difficulties. Indeed, many people ended up with very concrete recommendations, for which I am very thankful as a moderator, because we are all tired of general conversations on what is good or bad, what is right or wrong. We acknowledged, at least the group I was working with, that in many cases what is happening is also our fault. We also share the responsibility and should first address our own problems and only then accuse or criticize the rest of the actors in this process of policy development, formation, implementation, and monitoring.

Well, coming to the obstacles, I would like to briefly speak about our summary, and perhaps most of you will share our concerns, of what is obstructing, what is hindering us from effectively working with the state, from having a real impact on and contribution to the policy process. First, it is unfortunately the mutual mistrust. This is the case not only with the government, the authorities, but also the media, business, government, authorities, donors, and the public. In other words, we have adopted the approach of mistrust, which, unfortunately, is not ungrounded. This is not an ungrounded mistrust, but I would like to first of all state that not only do we not trust, but we are not trusted either.

There is also lack of expertise, and this equally refers to both the authorities and us - the NGOs. Where NGOs are concerned, certainly we do not represent the whole civil society, but we are a very active part of it. For this reason, I would like everybody to bear in mind that whatever I am saying here refers to NGOs and not to the whole civil sector. We have also criticized the donor community, because there were concerns... and it is good that we have representatives from these organizations. Many people were concerned with how the donors decide on, assist in, strategize on, and are concerned with the distribution of the resources, or how they encourage this cooperation. In many cases this is very formal in nature, and in many cases this is not good. I'm referring to the effectiveness of projects - whether they are in the field of awareness raising, training of NGO or government representatives, different advocacy, or election-related projects. There is no consistency, and in the opinion of our participants, there should be better coordination, because the whole assistance that we are getting and that could contribute to improved relations is not very effective today.

There is a lack of unity, unification, and accord within the NGO sector. Yes, we need to admit that this is the cause of many shortcomings. This, in its turn, has an explanation, but more importantly, we admit that we can become more powerful if we try to unify, of course not all of the 4,000 NGOs, but at least by fields, and thus use our influence on the policy process.

Lack of transparency with NGOs and the conflict of interests - I am very glad that we sincerely admitted that we had this problem. Neither the authorities nor the NGOs are transparent. NGOs don't always notify each other, the authorities, or their beneficiaries of what they do. This conflict of interest that exists in our society is probably an obstacle for us, the NGOs, because in many cases this conflict of interest causes us to be we are incapable of impartiality, of advocating for those beneficiaries or groups who we are called upon and meant to advocate for.

There is a lack of information on NGO activities. There was a lot of emphasis on the fact that the authorities or citizens know very little about us. Not everybody has access to the Internet, not everybody reads newspapers. In other words, we need others to know more about us to be able to look at us as more serious actors in this process. Maybe we need to raise awareness about ourselves.

There is a lack of motivation on both sides. This is a very interesting point. We also spoke about why the authorities are supposed to work with us if this is something we need more of. The point is that we need to motivate them, maybe this has to do with business attitudes, but before designing a project before finding the resources, before initiating something, let's think about how we can encourage or motivate the authorities to cooperate with us.

There was a lot of emphasis on the lack of equality. The authorities do not look at us as equal partners. Well, they don't, but we probably also have our fault in this because we are not always professional, consistent or unified, we don't use the range of possibilities in the administrative framework. We discussed this issue and we came to the conclusion that we have a lot to do here as well.

The lack of culture of law enforcement and inadequate implementation of legal acts - these two can be combined because we don't have much time for further discussion.

Then there is the problem of departure from the NGO mission for the sake of obtaining financial assistance. This is self-criticism. There are many cases when we reconcile ourselves with the means and donor programs that we are given, and the goals that are pursued are to the detriment of our mandate or our goal. I don't think I fully agree with this point, because almost everybody here has very general goals in their charters, such as fostering democracy or participation in the development of the market. In other words, I don't think this is a big departure. It would be correct if we didn't give such formulations but tried to make our programs conform with our goals.

We drafted a number of recommendations for which I am very thankful to my colleagues. I don't want to start a discussion now, because there is a lot of raw stuff in them, but I am glad to say that we established two groups in the course of these discussions which will deal with the implementation of some of our recommendations and I feel hopeful that we will succeed. The aim is to establish two public groups, and after a lot of argument we called them expert groups. By the way, I would like to mention that during the forum, the focus was mainly on our cooperation with the NA or local governments. There was more openness in the discussions with the executive. This is the reason why the recommendations concentrated more on the NA and local governments, but I believe this is even better. At first, there was a recommendation to open a kind of representative mission or a group, which would animate the relations by spheres and I am glad that the experts from the NA were also present. So, in the end we came up with an initiating group which will further elaborate on this recommendation so that we can see what we can do.

Where the design of the website is concerned, there were a lot of complaints on the lack of information about each other and the authorities. In other words, there are resources, but more time and effort is needed. So, there was a recommendation, and Counterpart International has to accept our condolences, because we added to its workload, on making use of the site Counterpart is going to open by posting this kind of information there. Counterpart will be responsible for coordinating the activities related to the creation of this database. We can start with ourselves, with the kind of advocacy activities we have been engaged in, then we can expand so that not only do we have information about ourselves, but we can also present our local experience in the above spheres as well as the donors' possibilities, the range of mechanisms and structures that already exist in Armenia and that are available to us.

Then, there was a recommendation to make use of the existing possibilities of policy formation and supervision of its implementation. This refers to a number of national and international projects, including the PRSP, Millenium Challenges Program, etc. In other words, all the projects that are the focus of attention. For example, there was a recommendation to assess and use the mechanism of social partnership developed in the framework of the PRSP.

Coordination of national programs - this, again, is meant for the donors. It is rather a call, to them because we are probably not in the position to do much. Then, there is the need to inform and coordinate the authorities more effectively to be able to avoid duplication and ineffective use of resources and time.

We had a great recommendation from the NA library and we had to admit the fairness of the criticism, because very few of us submit our publications or even general information on what we have been doing to the NA. I think we should by all means make use of this resource.

We also spoke about creating a public club. That was a very interesting idea that

we should request, or demand from the authorities to provide us with space free of charge, in different structures at different levels of national, regional, and local governance to open clubs for dialogue where people can come on a volunteer basis, raise questions and engage in discussions.

Also, publishing a brochure on the best practices of cooperation between MPs and NGOs so that we know that the MPs have had some positive experiences and maybe show other NGOs that this is perfectly possible, and encourage any further attempt at cooperation.

There was an interesting recommendation on NGOs applying a special model for assisting the state. All of you know that this is the second year the state budget has been providing funds to NGOs. There is also the question of what we are going to do if one day donors decide to leave this country. And our government has made some steps, not all of us here are happy with these steps and the distribution model of this assistance, so there was a recommendation to try non-optional but suggesting mechanisms on how NGOs should be funded by the state. By the way, this is not our subject, but I can add that in this country the business sector is in no habit of funding the NGO activities and maybe the next speaker will address this issue.

Using the voting records of the NA MPs - this is a very interesting recommendation and it is great that we have this resource today. We were able to familiarize ourselves with the analysis based on MPs' attendance during these 4 years, on how they voted on different issues and I think we should use them, especially those NGOs that strive for free, independent and transparent elections. Perhaps, this is too ambitious, but we will at least have the opportunity to inform the constituents on how the MPs have voted. I think there is a very good scope for making use of these data.

Finally, to draft a concept paper for stimulating more effective cooperation between local governments and NGOs. There are better opportunities for this, because different from both central and regional levels of public administration, local governments stand closer, physically and otherwise, to the society and people and because the legislation allows certain flexibility in relations. So, we have created these two initiative groups that will study the legislation and draft a package in the form of a concept paper and thus we will offer a much more effective and mutually beneficial model of cooperation and try to create some kind of framework for equality in this cooperation, so that both local governments and NGOs share and are held responsible for all their actions and inaction which will stimulate cooperation for the benefit of both sides.

Let us try and do this. I apologize for these aggressive pictures because we didn't have enough time to find more positive and constructive ones. They depict us trying to advocate and fight alone but it will help if we try to fight together, at least for some issues. Thank you for your attention.



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Alex Sardar. Thank you. Thank you Amalia, for a very interesting presentation and good discussion points. One thing Amalia pointed out- the focus that we NGOs also placed on the National Assembly, the legislative branch of government's partnership with NGOs- NGO partnership with local government. For two reasons, 1) given the constitutional amendments of 2005, one may disagree about the process, but we can generally agree that the final product is the same. The emphasis it places on powers of the legislative branch. The trends of decentralization and local government collaboration already exist in Armenia with NGOs. With the basis for our decisions, we focus discussions on those two branches of government, those two sectors of governance in Armenia. Let me just get to two issues that Amalia mentioned in her recommendations. On donor coordination, on behalf of the entire donor community, I can say in recent activities that there has been more sincere coordination and commitment particularly in the sphere of elections. On behalf of implementers of donor funds and donor programming. But those recommendations shall be shared with international donors

and implementers. I'm very happy to hear about the working groups, the expert groups. Surely, Counterpart International in its programming will support, in whatever form possible, the work of these groups and I know that other groups report the same recommendation as well.

Ok, just a little remark, we will hear the reports in their entirety, and all the formal presentations and remarks, after which we'll go for question, answer, and comments from the plenary hall. The next track of thematic area is business-NGO relations: New frontiers in sustainability and development, which will be presented by Ara Nazinyan of the Eurasia Foundation.

Ara Nazinyan. moderator, Business - NGO relations

Thank you. I would like to say once again that very interesting processes took place in these two and a half or three days. What was typical of our group was this nostalgia for cooperation or dialogue with business. In the course of these two days, when from time to time business representatives appeared and then quickly left the group, one could immediately feel a change in the atmosphere. Things like that were not unpredicted, still this thirst for communication was also reflected in our outcomes, in our initiatives, which gives us grounds to assume that this need, this demand, or this nostalgia for cooperation that was felt among the NGOs is well echoed in the business sector. The problem, perhaps, needs some analysis but what I can say is that the moment I read our recommendations you will see how significant this request, or demand, or desire is. A lot of questions mentioned among the first group discussion outcomes are also reflected in ours. Well, this is natural in view of this single sector of NGOs: problems-stability, problems-initiatives, problems-communication. This has its impact not only on the relations between the NGO sector and the government, but also the business sector and others. In this light, repetitions are not surprising. Still, there are some peculiarities and we will speak about them.

Where obstacles are concerned, we first spoke about attitudes. The problem of attitudes, of course, stems from the lack of knowledge and experience. However, there is this problem that first of all relates to the NGOs and also the business sector.

Tolerance became a very interesting topic for discussion as we found out that there was some kind of intolerance in our attitude towards the business sector. Why not state that there have also been cases of denialist attitude. This, of course, is a matter of choice of who to cooperate and who not to cooperate with, but if we see that business representatives are pushed out of our - the society's - sight from the very start, this, in my belief, has to do with the problem of tolerance.

Transparency, in the course of these two-three day endeavor was to find out ... As we are first of all speaking about business representation, we should try to look at the problem which is inside ourselves, inside the NGO sector. Transparency has become a catchphrase for society. Everybody has been demanding transparency in elections or transparency in business. Our question is, "how transparent are NGOs?" "Not very," is the common answer. There are very few, if any, requirements, set either by the government or the society for transparency of NGOs. Donors are different. Where donors are concerned, all reports are submitted in an appropriate and timely manner. This is of course a problem with NGOs and public attitudes.

We had a very interesting discussion when we tried to understand why businessmen are supposed to reckon with NGOs, when, and under what terms. And the idea of having or not having weight became a very interesting topic. The question was, "what is it that we offer to be reckoned with?" And the conclusion was that whatever we have to say, to serve, or to offer has to be formulated in an interesting and meaningful way.

The other problem that stems from this one, is that in many cases NGOs are incapable of or unwilling to provide services to business representatives and business structures. In other words, their usefulness to the business sector is doubtful. Although some vivid examples were raised during our discussions showing the existence of both cooperation and the desire for mutual positive results in the future, these, unfortunate-

ly, were exceptional examples, while our task is to transform them into a trend or a process.

There is the problem of mistrust, a very serious one, which again stems from the lack of information and transparency. There is the problem of morality or the lack of faith, in both the NGO and business sectors.

When we tried to address the problem of the legislative framework, the main emphasis was, of course, on the imperfect legislation, which constantly needs improvement. But in this particular case, it is interesting for us to understand that what has been discussed for years, was the topic of tax privileges and that there should be favorable conditions that will encourage cooperation with the NGO sector and that this is no longer a problem today. Tax privileges are not the factors that will contribute to or establish the cooperation framework. Quite the contrary, the legislative framework needs further improvement to allow the NGOs, for example, to provide services or engage in entrepreneurship, which in its turn will allow more practical cooperation, and, why not, also a source of income.

I have mentioned several times that the hunger for such meetings or communication was more than obvious in these 2-3 days.

Fighting corruption - there was an opinion and there was a lot of emphasis on this opinion, that if businessmen get rid of corruption, i.e., if this burden of corruption is reduced for businessmen, they will have the resources to cooperate or to make available for the NGO sector. This, of course, is an arguable position, but weak efforts in the fight against corruption were looked at as an obstacle for cooperation between the business and NGO sectors.

Making yourself clear, being perceived in the right way - there is a problem of mutual understanding and this, of course, has to do with how consistent the NGOs are in their undertakings with business. Not always and not in all events. Also, there is no strategy or if there is one, it is not clear on how they should communicate or cooperate.

In many cases there is a problem with the so-called "message," which we do not have, either in the form of programs or information briefs, to present to the business community. This was highlighted particularly by business community representatives. What they were saying, was that there was no need for two, three or even five-page proposals. Businessmen do not have the time to either read or study these proposals. They should be submitted on one page, be very brief and be justified with figures and outcomes. This, I think, is the direction that NGOs need to think about to present their packages in the business language.

The discussions surely offered different solutions. True, everybody needs PR. There is also a need for strengthening the internal capacity, which has been the focus of today's discussions, be it in the relationship with the government, business community, or mass media. But more important was the question of how we could involve business representatives in NGO activities. Should we not have any expectations, should we just go and ask for money or assistance, should we just try to capture their attention or establish contacts with individual businessmen? And, why not, also try to take part in business initiatives. There are a number of actions launched by this or that entity where there is some scope of participation which will eventually lead to more active and strong roles for NGOs.

Develop a mechanism for accountability clearly, this refers to the idea of being transparent and several options were mentioned in terms of reports on how we can strengthen the relationship between business and NGOs and, why not, also involve them in the governance structures of NGOs: managerial boards, committees or other structures which are in the position to supervise NGO activities and also act as links with the society.

We touched upon the problem of strategy and professionalism. There were, of course, different opinions on how professional we are. A great variety of training courses have been organized in Armenia in the course of the past few years. A lot of seminars and training sessions focusing on work with NGOs were designed, however,

the problem is still there and we still have a lot to do, to get united, to communicate - this also refers to internal unity, organization of inter-NGO activities, as well as cooperation with business.

There was an interesting discussion on what kind of services NGOs could deliver to businesses: information to be used for the design of business plans actions, information on society and programs, legal consultancy. There was an organization in our group which was very active in this field. In many cases such services, such consultancy can be very useful to business representatives. There is also the issue of research. In many cases, either because of lack of time or information, our businessmen do not conduct any large-scale research. But they are starting, and in this sense this can be viewed as a type of service. Trainings - again we spoke about positive experience. This field still has its gaps. Monitoring of the implemented projects - this is very important, especially in terms of using materials and resources and raising transparency and better provision of information. Business advocacy - we sometimes think about what an NGO can do to advocate for business, and I think this is a very interesting field where cooperation can lead to very interesting developments as testified by the positive experience in Armenia.

The question of mass media - again in two planes: mass media as a link with the public and mass media as business. We looked at both planes and tried to understand to what extent NGOs are capable of delivering services to mass media for the latter's usage. This problem can also act as a solution. We tried to be more concrete to think of the first step - where to start from - and the outcome of our discussion is that NGOs have, first, to decide why they are initiating something, what they are doing, what their expectations from and objectives of cooperation with the business community are. The goal should not only and exclusively be anticipating financial or material gains from business.

We had a very interesting proposal on publishing a magazine which would deal with the problems of cooperation between businesses and NGOs and, why not, also touch upon the positive experience in the above field which will serve as an additional incentive to business participation.

To know the businessmen and to know who to address - the businessmen who took part in the discussions of our group clearly raised this issue. What do you know about these people? Who are they? What are their interests? What are their expectations? What can your expectations be? In what language should you speak with them? This problem of knowing is very important, also knowing where to start from. The NGOs also spoke about not getting any response- the businessmen don't get back to them on the phone or they don't answer their letters. This is not the problem, we shouldn't get disappointed. Judging from what we heard about the international practice only 2-3 out of 10 applications receive an answer, and even less get funding, which means that the expectation of 50% successful contacts is not realistic.

Given the situation of our group, there was a wish to achieve broader participation of business representatives in future conferences and planned meetings.

There was an interesting proposal on starting a TV program series. Perhaps this was the outcome of one of the projects, when thanks to the joint efforts of business and NGO representatives a TV program series was organized. This can also be organized in the form of so-called video clips. However, in my opinion the TV program is a better idea enabling better coverage of the possible cooperation between businesses and NGOs. Also, it can be elaborated jointly with business representatives.

An action plan - clearly every initiative requires an action plan, but, more importantly, we can register the emergence of an NGO coalition, or perhaps, the initiating group for the coalition and I am going to ask Rouzanna Baghdasaryan, the Coordinator, to speak about the idea of the coalition and in the current business environment establish cooperation and encourage business. Also by using a rating system, it will be possible to get more involved in NGO activities. The problem of lobbying will also be covered by the coalition and there will be elaborations on the norms of social liability.

I would like to say that a number of approaches were discussed during these two days, including corporate social liability, social partnership, but as you can see no such provisions are included in our recommendations. They are in the process of implementation. There is nothing new to add in this respect. Assumably, they are being used and they will be improved.

Thank you very much, and I will ask Rouzanna Baghdasaryan to present the concept paper. The head of the coalition initiative group Rouzanna Baghdasaryan read out the names of the group members - Gayane Joumardyan from the Economic and Legal Reform Center in Vanadzor, Hovhannes Hovhannisyanyan from the NGO Nature in Gyumri, Rouzanna Baghdasaryan from the Civic/Public development NGO Center Leadership, Arsen Karapetyan from the Millennium Community Development Fund, member of the Civil Advocacy Union, member of the Board of the Legal Persons' Union, Zhirayr Martirosyan from the NGO Creative Union of Goris, and Narine Mailyan from the Small and Medium Business Fund established an initiative group and called it the NGO-Business Dialogue. We set the primary goal of the initiative group: mutual recognition with the aim of cooperation through the exchange of information. I was elected as coordinator by the group and on behalf of the group I would like to announce that all interested NGOs are welcome to join the group, which will soon decide whether the group will form a coalition or emerge as a business partner. This and many other questions will receive their answers in the course of our further discussions. Thank you.



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Alex Sardar. Thank you very much Ara and Rouzanna. We will be looking to our meeting to support the activities of this working group, this expert group. A couple of things that I would like to mention from Ara's presentation points. One thing that we are going to be hearing a lot is accountability. We usually hear accountability when the NGO sector is talking to government officials, or addresses government entities. I think, for a change, we are hearing from the NGO sector, constituents, stakeholders, and I am very excited about that. Also, government structures, including business sector representatives are opening up government structures, other NGOs, to a wider area of people that have been active in the NGO sector. I think some exciting things are awaiting us after this conference.

OK, back to our program, Track C, thematic area C, Community/Citizen NGO relations, with the people, for the people. Anna Sahakyan from Counterpart International will be presenting.

Anna Sahakyan. moderator, Community/Citizen-NGO relations

Good afternoon! I would first like to thank all the participants and NGOs. I am pretty confident that the discussions in the three other groups were as animated and robust as in ours. This was especially the case today when even during the break we had our participants sitting in our room and making recommendations for this final presentation. Thank you, once again to all participants and guests. I also have to apologize for the lack of time for editing and putting our recommendations into order.

So now we have come to the relationship between community and NGOs. This is an interesting topic and was a very interesting group. Since NGOs are the products of the community, they should represent the community and speak about the community's needs and roles. In the course of our discussions we have grouped our recommendations according to three key tasks which are, first, expanded cooperation within the NGO sector, second, increased level of public trust towards NGOs, and, thirdly, strengthened interaction between NGOs and the public.

Expanded cooperation within the NGO sector - naturally we had many recommendations and those included in this presentation are just a few of them. First, there was also a word about that here, we should think about encouraging joint programs and

institutionally developing NGOs. In fact, NGOs themselves pointed out the need for further institutional development. The general analysis of the NGO sector according to towns and regions played a great part for NGOs in terms of each and every NGO, hopefully, being aware of what is going on in their towns or regions, perhaps, also in other regions. However, general analyses of the NGO sector by regions and towns in the form of research is not available, or maybe it is necessary to expand, disseminate and periodically review and update it.

There was a lot of positive reaction to this event and there was a proposal that similar events or NGO conferences be organized on a regular basis. They can also have geographical or topic peculiarities to offer a lot of opportunities for NGOs to communicate, to familiarize themselves with each other's activities, and to develop joint proposals leading to targeted use of resources.

There were also other interesting recommendations, including the one on establishing an NGO Resource Center. We had a very interesting discussion on this topic, because there were different opinions on the need to establish a new entity which would collect and manage the relevant information. However, the majority was against establishing new entities. Instead, they were for using the existing resources and entities. It is simply necessary to locate these kinds of youth centers in the whole territory of Armenia to facilitate their use by NGOs. It was suggested that these centers have an electronic resource website and both business and NGO directories, so that anybody interested in them is able to find any information on the activities of different NGOs in the regions of Armenia.

In the framework of these discussions, there was also a word about youth centers established through government funding and it was suggested that NGOs should make use of these centers and their resources instead of wondering where they can find the data they need.

The focus of the second task was the increased level of public trust towards NGOs, mentioned by some of my colleagues in their previous presentations, and also the issue of transparency. We listened to one of the speakers making a presentation on the issue of transparency. The NGOs came to the conclusion that there was a lack of transparency to the public and this, naturally, has to do with accountability. If NGOs are accountable to their donors they should also be accountable to their beneficiaries. Establishing this kind of mechanism is naturally a problem for beneficiaries, because the latter do not even know what an NGO is and what it is doing, hence, the need for increased public trust. If beneficiaries are not involved in NGO activities and don't see the outcomes of these activities, it is natural that they will not have trust. Of, course during the discussions, one of the NGO representatives said that the public is simply not interested and that you can post any poster you like or publish any booklet you like, people will not read them. They will not read about the NGO's interests and achievements. It was suggested that the people should be involved in NGO activities from the very first day, from the initial phase of all projects. There is a need to find solutions to people's problems together with the people, with the participation of the people, and side by side with the people and then NGO representatives should go on working with the people.

There was also another interesting recommendation based on what NGOs identified as their weakness - the informal education opportunities for NGOs in the field of PR. This is a huge gap, since the NGOs should know the public very well, the mass media, and the government. One of the participants in our discussions was right when he said that every single employee of mass media and the government is part of society, is the SOCIETY. This is the reason why we shouldn't merely ask for a meeting with government representatives, but we also need to know what we are going to speak about, also in front of the public. This will enhance organizations' professionalism.

I'll try to move on faster. The third task was that of increased level of public trust and it was mentioned that there is a need to be more open with beneficiaries and inform the latter of organizations' interests. One of the causes of the public passive attitude, is that it is not involved in NGO activities. There is a very interesting fact: if a problem impacts your child's interests then everybody is sure to be interested in it. It

was also mentioned that there should be frequent contacts between mass media and NGOs.

It was mentioned that NGOs should have a source of income to be able to ensure sustainability of their activities. We had a vigorous discussion on this topic and some of the participants spoke about the need for an NGO to have some flexibility to modify its mission depending on needs, and not to look at where the funding comes from or at donor requirements. At the same time, it should be able to identify what is important in its mission not to be after funding only. So, if an NGO has its own income it will be able to go on with the mission it started and use the additional income to expand its mission.

One of our final recommendations has to do with ensuring regular feedback from beneficiaries so that the latter are able to make demands of NGOs on what they have been working on. If beneficiaries are involved in NGO programs there will be both accountability and transparency. Direct contacts are an important precondition of the success of NGO activities. This much on the whole! Thank you!



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Alex Sardar. Thank you, Anna! Some things close to my heart and I think all our hearts in this thematic area. Let me point out a few things. Again, the theme of accountability goes across all thematic areas, all tracks, sustainability to work with communities. I think that's something that we have been talking a lot about in the NGO sector in Armenia. We've had several round table discussions, our partners all know about these issues. I am very happy to see that the NGO community is also recognizing this as an important issue to continue working on. Regarding the resource center, one thing that CI will be looking at is how our partner ISOs will be able to expand their services. I understand that the recommendation comes from a need to have resource centers in smaller communities and more accessible resource centers. I understand that, and I will be looking at how we can expand that function of the ISOs. I also support the creation perhaps of other resource centers or sharing of the resources that already exist. To move to the next track I invite Nouneh Sarkissian from Internews Armenia to discuss media NGO relations, with defining interaction for the public interest.

Nouneh Sarkissian. moderator, Media-NGO relations

Thank you. The last three years of my life have been marked by constant warfare with CI. But I think that at the end of these three days my attitude will change a bit in the first place, because I see there is a need for communication among the people and NGOs and there is a need to create a kind of stable ground to be able to have a more effective debate, for which organizations like CI are much needed.

I am the fourth speaker, probably because I am going to speak about the "fourth power." I would also like to say that listening to my colleagues made me both happy and sad, because I saw that all of these topics - the society, the authorities, the mass media - are interrelated and it is impossible to look at the problems of mass media and NGOs without looking at their relations with the authorities or the public. On the other hand, I understand that if we, say, change these words - the mass media, the government - we will have pretty much the same recommendations for all groups. In this light, what I think is that we should also think about a creative approach. Let's think for a while that we also need some imagination and that this is what the society needs from us. Whatever we want to do, the advocacy we want to engage in or the beneficiaries we want to represent - we need to do that in a very creative manner to arouse interest among the citizenry. In any case we should feel as part of the whole because without that we will not be able to make any progress in the modern world, in the 21st century. Unfortunately, I must admit that we, including the country, the NGOs, and the mass media are in the stage of consolidation and perhaps it is high time that we should really think about development. This is my small introduction for which I am sorry.

What I really have to say, is that in the course of these three days the discussions in our group were very active, very practical and simple, probably because the relations with mass media are always more simple than those with other sectors, since whatever discrepancies these two groups - the mass media and NGOs - have, we still have the same goals, we are still able to find common goals.

However, we tried to identify some of the problems in the course of the discussions and, of course, we came to certain conclusions which, for the sake of concreteness, can be summarized under one title - cooperation for public benefit. Because, in the end, the most important thing in these relations is not that NGOs should talk about themselves, but rather about their beneficiaries. They should represent those interests and not use the mass media as a tool for PR, but one to inform the public. This was the axis of our discussion and I feel confident that all the NGOs will remember this in their relations with mass media.

In the course of these days we spoke about many problems that are typical of these relations. There is this mutual mistrust. My colleagues mentioned this in their presentations and I also have to repeat that NGOs are called "grant-eaters" by mass media. They think that NGOs are engaged in senseless seminars and so on, while NGOs accuse mass media of looking at everything through the prism of business, and of being after money. Yes, true, they want to make money, but everything should be done to eventually bring us to the final goal.

There are stereotypes on both sides. This, in itself, is the continuation of mistrust, but everything should be done in order to eliminate these stereotypes.

Among those discussed, was also the question of making mass media interested. Everything needs to be done to make whatever you are doing, whatever information you are disseminating interesting to mass media and, consequently, to the beneficiaries and the audience. If the topic is very sad and there is just a press release that does not say anything, you will never be able to accomplish your goals. There is also a problem on the side of mass media, because at present they are not much concerned with public interests and if we are speaking about these public telebroadcasters they are very far from the idea of public interest.

Our recommendations are neither too large nor too many and I would like to see a more creative approach, but what we have is probably enough.

One of the recommendations is about publishing a mass media and NGO directory. There is probably such a directory about both sectors but it may need to be upgraded so that the directory is useful to both mass media and NGOs, for both sides to have information about each other as well as about the authorities and businesses. Perhaps, in the course of its preparation, due consideration should be given to making it colorful, attractive, and so on. But first of all it should contain the relevant information and be available to all sectors.

There is a need for media literacy courses. They will include a huge amount of information. There may be different courses, including practical courses with mass media visits, joint work using mass media as teachers during these courses. What does this mean? This means that most NGO representatives have a very poor idea of how mass media works. This does not refer to everybody but to many, especially in view of the fact that the sector is not stable, younger staff is hired, there are constant reorganizations and many people have no idea of how to work with mass media, how the latter organizes its work, and what tools are used in this work for our - the NGO - advocacy purposes.

Courses of PR - this issue has also been under the focus and I must mention, in the course of recent meetings I always remember that many PR courses are continuously organized, and probably there is a need for these courses. Maybe we need to think of how to institutionalize them, maybe we need an NGO PR school, where in the future it will be possible to think in more practical terms to avoid repetition and ensure stability for this kind of school which will help the NGOs understand where to find the needed information, also in terms of research and not just having PR.

There is a need to develop a code of conduct for the NGO sector and a strong

need to enter into agreement with mass media on not paying for the news. To some extent this is related to the topic of media literacy. In many cases, we ourselves - the NGOs - spoil the whole idea of cooperation and mass media in the first place. We try to buy everything, we try to buy the news, the airtime, and the journalists. With this we simply spoil the idea of cooperation and the opportunity to jointly come to democracy, since the mass media have their laws and it is only in some cases that mass media can be effective in terms of conforming to the norms of ethics. One of the requirements should be to never pay for news. This is only one point but we can succeed. We just need to have an arrangement and this arrangement can be our code of conduct. In the course of the discussions, we understood that in the past, World Learning developed such a code of conduct. It remained on paper and it was never brought to life and applied. So it probably needs to be reviewed and we would suggest that it were reviewed particularly in the part referring to mass media. It also needs to be used, because there are many cases when we draft documents and other organizations that award grants may not address this, but we need to understand that we are speaking about our interests in the first place and not that somebody gives us money to work.

Mass media-NGOs joint forums - I am not speaking about one conference, nor am I speaking about several seminars, but about continuity of such forums, about using every single opportunity to expand it. It can take the form of an Internet forum or a big conference. We also spoke about the fact that although this conference was approved by many of us, it more resembles a monologue. It would be better if it was transformed into a dialogue with the participation of mass media so that we were able to share our problems from time to time and better understand each other.

There was a very practical recommendation, which can be applied very easily and be very interesting, about creating a publication series which will include the success stories of cooperation between the mass media and the NGO sector. We thought that this could be published in the form of journal articles and the first volume, or the first two-three volumes of this publication, would be very small. They should also be complemented with expert analyses and just try to explain what the purpose of the handbook is, and this positive experience can be used in the work of both NGOs and mass media.

There was also an idea about producing a series of TV programs on the public sector, which will be broadcast all over the country. I mean the public sector, and not NGOs, since we have the problems of the public sector, i.e., the problems raised by the public sector. I don't know to what extent this is possible. We spoke about the example of the Press Club Plus program which can be done not only with the participation of politicians, but also NGO representatives who could be the experts or consultants, etc. Donors can also think about encouraging such recommendations and approaches when both NGOs and mass media act together.

The possibility of broadcast free of charge through the public service announcement of the Legislative Initiative Social Partnership - I would like to say that I have many reservations, but, of course, I agree that both public ads and commercials are not viewed in the same plane. In any case the former needs to be distinguished and be more accessible than commercials. As far as I know, Counterpart has such an initiative and a lot is being done, so I think that this also echoes the wishes voiced during our discussions.

Oversight at all levels of mass media funding directed at the coverage of public interests - what this means is that there is a line in the state budget for public television, but in addition to this the community budgets also from time to time allocate some funding to private organizations and newspapers, assumingly for them to satisfy public curiosity. But very often it is unclear what this funding is spent on. In many cases it is spent on local government PR. There is a need for NGOs to oversee, to some extent, or to make some impact to achieve the fulfilment of their goals.

There is also a need to create mechanisms to ensure transparency on both sides. For the time being we are unable to explain what these mechanisms should look like,

but one thing is clear - that there is a need for such mechanisms.
This much. Thank you for your attention.

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Alex Sardar. Thank you very much, Nouneh. Again transparency, accountability, another common theme here. Two points I want to come back to: the idea of expanding dialogue, in this case to media and NGO sectors. Counterpart International is committed to supporting that. We hope that there will be more participation from various sectors, but I am glad to see that the absence or the lack of cooperation has been a topic for NGO communities and all these perspectives and we are working to constructively solve it. One issue that we have been working at for years has been paying for news. Every budget that we get for a grant has line items for "Paying for the News." So, I am glad that the NGO community is recognizing this as an issue, a problem, to be dealt with.

We are very happy for the privilege of having Karl Fickensher here, our acting USAID Mission Director to Armenia.

Karl Fickensher. Acting USAID Mission Director to Armenia

Thank you, I am really honored to be here and make remarks to the closing session. Let me start with another theme, which is congratulations and thank you, to our partners, represented at the table here. Thanks to our hosts at AUA, but more importantly thanks to you, all of the participants, for the truly fantastic conference. I am not talking about the logistical triumph that people from every marz of Armenia, from a wide variety of sectors are here. That's a lot of achievement and especially giving up three days of your weekend.

More importantly, congratulations for the numerous concrete suggestions and recommendations you have come up with for how to move forward and strengthen advocacy and the participatory policy process here in Armenia. You've taken a very critical look at your strengths and weaknesses. We've heard today and during the past conferences, open, honest, and self-critical discussions on the opportunities that civil society faces. It's been described as dynamic, active, and contentious. Whenever you engage in such an important dialogue there will be contention. The fact remains that you've been so. I think one of the common themes is that even though its representative and part of the same sector you really have to get together through partnership to move forward. Only through incentive based collaboration do you move towards the next step. We, USAID, have already seen a lot of tangible success in NGOs and the civil society sector. I think we've had some part in that, that's why we've supported civil society in the past.

We will continue to support civil society in the future, we believe it's a vital part of our drawing democracy and a market economy. At the same time, I am here to tell you that the support will always rebust and fill forever. U.S. government assistance to Armenia has been strong and indeed will grow. The money that we use to support civil society institutions will not always be the same, and that is why we'll be looking to you, the civil society, to act on these recommendations, to come forth with concrete ideas and take the development of the civil society sector to the next level. We always try to make sure that every dollar and dram spent is used most effectively. In the future, this is even more important. So, you're to be congratulated on the successes that you've made, on some of the things that you've come up with these days. We will be here to support you in the future. we look forward to our future work together.

Alex Sardar. Thank you very much, Karl. Now that we have heard the reports of each of the tracks, I'd like to give opportunity for the plenary to give comments, ask questions, make remarks, but what I would like to ask you to be concise and concrete since we do have very limited time, and so we can close out the plenary on time.

Question - Artemis Lepejyan. "Women's Union of Saint Virgin Sandukht" NGO

My question is addressed to the speakers from the business track:

1. In the RA, it is a widespread practice for businessmen to establish NGOs and work through these NGOs. Given this fact, how should other NGOs work with businesses? I am speaking mostly about the large business. When we try to work with them, they tell us that they have been working with others.

2. I think there is a problem related to working in Yerevan. The NGOs in Yerevan have difficulty in working with both the mayor's office and businessmen. In the regions it is easier to work with local governments which is not the case with Yerevan as a separate region. This is a rather complicated process, the NGOs try but they cannot succeed.

3. Youth centers are created by the government and they are all delegated centers and I think that it is rather difficult for an NGO to have access to these centers. How, in your understanding, can NGOs use these centers?

Answer - Ara Nazinyan. 1. The problem of large businesses working through their own funds was discussed in our track. Frankly speaking, there is nothing bad about that and this is a phenomenon that should be welcomed. I mean when funds are created to work through NGOs. What we need to focus on is that this reflects the problem of trust, which we have already spoken about. If there wasn't the problem of trust, I think businesses wouldn't need to create such NGOs. I am pretty confident that those funds are not being used for all matters. They are mainly charity organizations. Where the problem of development programs is concerned, then there is a shift from charity to development and social liability. By creating charity organizations they may later cooperate with stronger NGOs in the framework of development programs.

2. It is both difficult and easy to work in Yerevan because the large business is mainly concentrated in Yerevan in quantitative terms. Of course there are difficulties, but there are two sides to the problem.

Comment - Tamara Abrahamyan. Araza NGO, member of the PRSP Working Group.

I would like to remind all the participants that the PRSP is the document intended to safeguard the social stability of our country. The MTEF, the state budget, and the rest of the policies and resources in our country are to be directed at the PRSP. And now the problem of participatory institutions and partnership is raised at the stage of review and I have to tell everybody here, and I can also show on a diskette, that our problems have parallels with those of the government. All these discussions are organized in due time. My recommendation would be to present the outcomes of our discussions to the government and to the working group. The speakers in our discussions can act as authorized representatives and during the coming review of social issues they will be able to take part and have an impact. By taking part in your discussions, the NGOs included in the PRSP will act as spokesmen authorized by you and try to make a policy impact. I would ask you to take this into consideration and use it, because it will raise the effectiveness of today's superb session if we are able to do that.

Alex Sardar. Counterpart International is planning to publish the outcomes of these sessions. Of course, it will take some time, but we will try to make the publication available to all participants, including those working for the PRSP for you to be able to use them with your partners.

Amalia Kostanyan. As for me, I can say that if we are invited we will cooperate with pleasure and have our position.

Question - **Edgar Khachatryan**. Vanadzor Office of Helsinki Civil Assembly

Large business is under government protection in Armenia. Under such conditions, it is a bit unclear to me how any cooperation between NGOs and business is possible. Don't you have any concerns about pro-government NGOs getting the funding? And my second question is, aren't you afraid that under such conditions, NGOs will become more spoiled? Trying to achieve financial stability they will try to accommodate themselves to the government.

Answer - **Ara Nazinyan**. There is no need to be afraid. I think that the problem is about the weight of NGOs. If an organization has authority, a strategy, and a focus, there shouldn't be any fear of cooperation. If the question is what the changes in the anticipation of funding could be, well, yes, there may be changes, changes in the form and not the content. Such changes may include the ability to speak with businesses in their own language and, why not, also offer alternative approaches to get rid of such pressures from the government. Believe me, businessmen are not delighted with the pressure they are getting from the state. The community could come up with alternative approaches and there may be very interesting developments. So there is no need to be afraid.

Question/comment - **Edmon Maroukyan**. Youth Center for Democratic Initiatives

Since there was a question about the use of the youth centers, I would like to repeat the offer I made in my group. The government established youth centers from the state resources. If I am not mistaken, currently there are such centers in 6 regions which have been transformed into the so-called "party offices." Well, if we are not going to exercise control, organize our events, and become more demanding towards the centers established at the expense of our taxes, then I don't know when we should do that. So there was a recommendation about better cooperation to prevent these centers from becoming "party offices." I don't want to go into detail, but everybody knows that they have become "party offices." We need to establish control over them. I want to say that 300 million drams are envisioned for these centers and this money comes from our taxes. Thank you.

Comment - **Arsen Karapetyan**. Millennium Communities Development Fund

1. I would suggest that the next such conference be organized in one of the regions, because it was mentioned that there was not sufficient participation from our colleagues from the regions. If such a conference is organized in a region there will be more representatives from the community, the mass media, the state authorities, and the local governments and we will also have the regional perspective.

2. Since the recommendations are to be categorized into 4 groups I would suggest that those recommendations that are repeated in all groups are generalized to avoid making the subject boring while the interim recommendations are grouped according to directions. Thank you.

Answer - **Alex Sardar**. Thank you. We have already spoken about organizing conferences in the regions and with partner organizations, the Civic Development and Partnership Foundation and GUM. We will continue the negotiations with them on how we can support these kinds of events. Thank you for the recommendation relating to the editing.

Comment-participant. I think there is no need to create another structure, because there are a lot of resources available, one of them created by the Eurasia Foundation as well as regional centers which develop their strategic policies on how they are going to help, not only the NGOs, but community organizations in general. A different problem is that they haven't been very effective in this kind of work and maybe we have something to

do here. In any case, I would suggest that these organizations become more interested, because there are resource centers that are created for all of us. Thank you.

Answer - **Anna Sahakyan.** I would like to clarify by saying that the participants thought that it was unreasonable to create a new body, but that the existing bodies should be made use of. Perhaps I haven't said this but essentially that was what I wanted to say.

Comment-participant. I would like to say that we do not have any worries about working with the business sector, since the recommendation came from our groups and the initiating commission also was in our group. We do not have any worries, because we look at the business sector in its totality: small, medium, and large businesses. That is to say, we can also cooperate with those small and medium businesses that have problems, especially in fields where NGOs can be more helpful and stand on equal ground. And, of course, if it enjoys the protection of the state, the organization will try to deal with this problem and present different viewpoints for the benefit of this cooperation. Thank you.

Comment - **Elmira Balasanyan.** President of the NGO "Have a Safe Trip"

As a professional journalist, I found the recommendation on publishing a periodical extremely important. My recommendation would be to include in the editorial board both the capital and the two ISOs we are currently cooperating with and to ensure even distribution of materials. Otherwise, there was a word about the differentiation between regions and the capital, whose advantage I cannot see so that we avoid these kinds of things in the future.

Comment - **Souren Poghosyan.** Program Budgeting Specialist

I don't have a question. Just yesterday we were speaking about this problem during the discussion on the mass media-NGOs and I would like to share this with you. It is a pity that, according to the information I have, the government is preparing a proposal on program budgeting reforms and there is no interest from the NA, NGOs, and mass media. I would also like to inform you that last year, and this year as well, a number of ministries have submitted their reports on their activities in the new format. I call on all the NGOs to study these reports, because we spoke about transparency and this is something to be demanded. You will have the opportunity to study the reports of the regional centers you were speaking about in ministry reports. Raise questions and demand that the government work better!

Alex Sardar. We only have time for three questions.

Question-participant. Simply, we spoke a lot about delivering services to businesses. I just want everyone of us to ask the question of whether at the present time, we are ready to deliver services to businesses and ensure the quality businesses are going to demand. In general, are the NGOs ready to offer quality services? I would simply ask you to take this into consideration.

Answer - **Ara Nazinyan.** Yes and no. Some services are being delivered. They are few, but still, we have some. There are examples and I think you will be able to find information about them in the conference summary. So, the NGOs that have the intention to work in this field are able to know more about that. There is experience and it's positive, but of course there is a lot to do.

Comment - **Hovhannes Baybourdyan**. Youth for Peace and Development, NGO, Gyumri

We have spoken a lot about NGOs and PR, we expressed a wish for a more informed business sector or society. I would like to say that equally important is how we transmit the message, we need more interesting events. For example, our organization has reviewed the process for organizing its courses. Our new approaches focus on the attractiveness of the form our message is put into. And also for mass media, for their coverage, interesting attractive environment, PR in such a form. This is the way to solve all the problems. As I said our organization has reviewed the way it organizes its trainings with this heavy three-day schedule, teaching methods, etc. A tent, out of town, we relax, communicate with each other, and study. In other words, I agree with the opinion that we need more creative approaches in our work with the public. What is the difference between an NGO and a political party? The latter also publishes periodicals and booklets. Who reads them? And now we also want to publish a periodical and disseminate it among all the NGOs and regions. We will see us in this publication and be happy. Who else is going to read? Who else will get this? Thank you.

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Alex Sardar. This was probably the last one. Thank you all for your participation. I have a few final remarks. I would first like to say that CI will continue to support the activities of the NGO sector in Armenia, especially in their advocacy efforts and their work and actions to secure participation in the public policy process. We look forward to your cooperation in the process of implementation of the recommendations made here, not only in the framework of grant projects, but also in general. If there are any other recommendations on establishing expert groups, carrying out some additional work, and making the recommendations and actions around different issues more concrete, we expect that we will be working on them and we will try to bring what we have on paper to life. Please fill in the evaluation forms before leaving this auditorium. With this, I would like to close the 2007 Conference and say that together we are launching a new stage in the NGO sector, in the fields of advocacy and the public policy process, based on a novel and active cooperation that has a solid foundation. It is a veritably new process. Thank you all for your participation.

Powerpoint Presentations of the Speakers

Track **A**

Eleanor Valentine, Project Director, USAID-Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project

Topic: Opportunities of parliament in working with NGOs in the policy making process (see speech - page 257)

<p><i>National Conference on the Role of NGOs' in the Public Policy Process</i> <i>Yerevan, Armenia</i> <i>April 13-15, 2007</i></p>	<p>Challenges and Opportunities in Government-NGO Relations:</p> <p>Opportunities of Parliaments in Working NGOs in the Policy-Making Process</p> <p>Eleanor Valentine, DAI</p>
<p>NGO ASSETS</p> 	<p>GOVERNMENT POLICY</p> 
<p>PARLIAMENT</p> 	<p><u>PARLIAMENTARY MECHANISMS TO RECEIVE NGO INPUT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Committee Hearings■ Policy Debate Forum■ Expert Studies■ Training Programs■ Inter-party Groups■ International Networks

"Informed parliamentarians working with others to reduce corruption through improving legislation, engaging citizens, and active oversight of government"

"The principles of transparency, independent media and unencumbered civil society are all extra parliamentary tools to help curb corruption. In addition, they are all intrinsically related - a weakness in one will result in weakness in the others."

GOPAC

"Informed parliamentarians working with others to reduce corruption through improving legislation, engaging citizens, and active oversight of government"

"The principles of transparency, independent media and unencumbered civil society are all extra parliamentary tools to help curb corruption. In addition, they are all intrinsically related - a weakness in one will result in weakness in the others."

GOPAC

Eleanor Valentine. Project Director, USAID-Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project

Topic: *Tips in working with parliamentary committees (providing expertise and testimony) (see speech - page 31)*

WORKING WITH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

Eleanor Valentine, DAI

INFORMATION FLOW



COMMUNICATION







KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE

- Know your allies
- Know your opponents
- Know those with expertise
- Know those who need to be educated

Ashot Yesayan. President, "Social Dialogue and Social Support" NGO

Topic: Benefits of NGO-government partnership (see speech - page 22)

 <p>Social partnership as the most important way of ensuring social politics and coordination of interests for all sides Ashot Yesayan Yerevan, Armenia April 13, 2007</p>	<p>Vision-2010</p> <p>Civil society is very active. There are flexible mechanisms for conflict resolution, which respond very rapidly.</p> <p>There are three-levelled mechanisms for dialogue with civil society at national, regional and local levels.</p> <p>All sides of social cooperation have social responsibility for the development of the country.</p> <p>With the strengthening of local self-governance, communal governance is also taking place.</p> <p>During the process of negotiation of civic interests, all parties have equal opportunities for fulfilling the responsibilities stated in agreements.</p> <p>Social partners have professional staff with substantial responsibility.</p> <p>New partners are ready to help the state in protecting the rights and dignity of its people and citizens.</p>
 <p>The dangerous consequences of lack of cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Political ◆ Economic ◆ Social 	<p>Political consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The dismemberment of national cohesion ◆ The deprivation of civil rights and voting rights of some levels of society ◆ Low level of the Government's reputation ◆ Lack of democracy in the regions ◆ Pressure on the Government from the local and international community
 <p>Economic consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Low level of signing three-party collective agreements and conducting negotiations ◆ Numerous violations of provisions of the Code of Labour ◆ Fleeing of professionals and young employers, with which we become a donor country and which influence the prevention of external and internal employment migration ◆ The extension of salary payment which is in accordance with the work done ◆ High volumes of participation in the black market and high risk of corruption ◆ Isolation of employees and employers in the politics of the economy 	<p>Social consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Social isolation ◆ Deprivation of rights ◆ Deep social polarity ◆ Failure to fight against corruption and/or shady business endeavours ◆ Gender inequality ◆ Ineffective use of human resource potential

Problems of social partnership



- How to increase the ethics of social partnership?
- How to assist NGOs?
- How to make the balance of participatory procedure positive?
- Will social partnership encourage increases in industry?
- How to prevent communal isolation?
- What kinds of partnerships are necessary to encourage cooperation?
- To what extent will the availability of information counteract one-side politics?
- What role should the Armenian Apostolic Church have in the process of the development of civil society?

Goal

To achieve “de jure” and “de facto” cooperation between NGOs and Government in the Republic of Armenia, which is an important virtue in the development of civil society.



Main Principles



- Democratic and effective governance
- Existence of social reconciliation
- Availability of information
- Existence of transparent activities
- Existence of participatory process
- Social dialogue
- Close social cooperation and collaboration
- Close link between-individual-family-community-social group-the state
- Responsibility between people
- Consideration of the abilities of parties
- Link between employee-employees’ rights protection unions-state
- Unification of policies between republic, region and community

Tools

1. On the basis of a cooperation strategy, create national, regional and communal united policy model, and a guide for its implementation and use it in each community
2. In the mid-deadline financial projects, also include NGO financing, according to criteria decided on beforehand and ensure its transparent implementation
3. Organize an expert group and invite experts from each party to create a legislation package of social cooperation
4. Implement a structure of governing, solving, monitoring and analyzing problems which occur



Purpose of partnership

- Implement modern technologies of cooperation to escape monopolistic governance
- With the help of social partners, ensure the protection of freedoms and human rights
- Improve the quality and quantity of human resources, create such a structure that will lead individuals and social groups to a dialogue and negotiation process
- To make the PRSP document the property of social partners, so that PRSP represents the interests of all parties and at the same time their responsibilities
- New and improved three-party politics “Family-Community-State” and the activating of partnership and cooperation
- Decision making based on knowledge and cooperation



Fields of cooperation of partnership



- Policy, strategy and observation development
- Legislation study and draft making
- Governance
- Mid-deadline financial projects
- Financing
- Public updating
- Service provision



Goals of partnership



- Mutual policy and draft making which defend interests of majority
- Protecting rights of individuals and social groups
- Assist in family strengthening
- Organize participation in budget making and in creating mid-deadline financial projects

Fair rules and politics

- Mutual organization and implementation of mid-deadline social politics of cooperation development
- Competing elections for NGO financing - fair rules, equal and transparent opportunities for everyone
- Strengthening and development of main principles of cooperation
- Improvement of governing process of partnership, Multi-budgeted communal financing equal to its development

Focus of Attention: Governance

- Fair use of rules, respect towards democracy, respect for human rights
- National cooperation as an immediate policy, taking into consideration local peculiarities
- Development of NGOs' abilities and their involvement in the social integration process
- Inter-communal and inter-regional integration with social elements
- Development of communal policy, inclusion and implementation
- High level responsibility from interested parties
- Collaboration and dialogue, conflict resolution, vision and quick response

Mobilization of abilities

- ◆ Cooperation between NGOs and regions/ communities to ensure that their suggestions and voices are heard
- ◆ Conformity between actions and politics
- ◆ Punishment of those who inhibit initiatives of ordinary citizens
- ◆ National and communal dialogue for policy making
- ◆ Annual forums with social partners
- ◆ Annual reports' assessment of research on the overall situation, immediate response, plans for future collaboration

Civil society, participatory process

- ◆ Search for partner organizations
- ◆ Clarify and confirm future spheres and methods of cooperation
- ◆ Clarify future methods of mutual communication
- ◆ Think of mutually offered services or mechanisms for offering them



The structure of the council

Cooperation, head of the forum, Community Union

Members

- One NGO representative selected from each of two regions and cities
- One forum representative
- Community Unions
- Group of experts



- Working group from the Government PRSP
- Deputy heads of regions
- One representative from donor organization

In the Republic of Armenia the best mechanism for the development of civil society is in cooperation and collaboration



If you want to soar, you'll never take off with one wing



Thank You for Your Attention



Theresa Khorozyan. Election Program Manager, Civic Advocacy Support Program, Counterpart International

Topic: *NGO oversight of the public policy process (see speech - page 263)*

NGOs influence on policy-making

Conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process
13-15, April, 2007
Yerevan, Armenia

Have Armenian CSOs reached a point where they play an indispensable role, alongside government, in public policy-making in Armenia?

The Impact Of Civil Society Organizations In Developing Countries On Policy-Making

Impact of CSOs remains low in many countries of Asia, Latin America, Middle East and Mediterranean, and Post-Communist Europe and Eurasia.

CIVICUS, Civil Society Index 2003-2005

Main barriers to CSO Policy Engagement

- CSO staff do not have sufficient capacity..... 62 %
- CSOs do not have enough funds to do this..... 57 %
- CSOs do not have sufficient knowledge about policy processes..... 47%
- Policy processes are not open to CSO engagement..... 46%
- Policymakers do not see CSO evidence as credible.... 38%
- Policymakers tend to be corrupt..... 16%
- CSO staff do not have enough time..... 10%

Source: Khorozyan et al (2006)

The Impact Of Civil Society Organizations in Post-Communist Europe and Eurasia in Policy-Making

Limited influence of CSOs on policy-making due to:

- Dependency of CSOs on foreign donors, and perception of citizens that CSOs represent only specific interests but not those of society at large
- Lack of both representation and strong base in communities
- Lack of advocacy and research skills and limited use of data-based analysis.

CIVICUS, Civil Society Index 2003-2005

The Armenian Civil Society Organizations and Policy-making

Mission Focus of the Armenian CSOs:

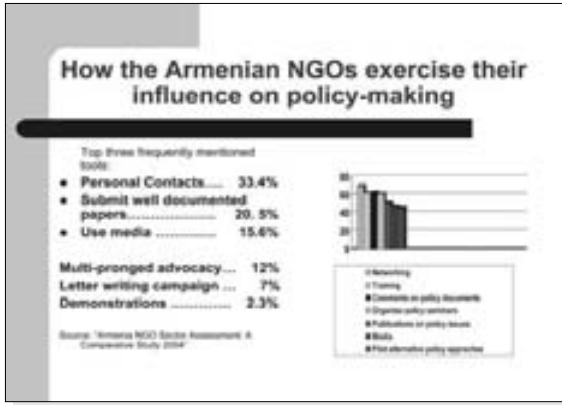
- Public Education and Information Dissemination.....57.6 %
- Service Delivery53.6 %
- Advocacy32.9 %
- Cultural Promotion28.0 %
- Public Health.....27.1 %
- Support to own special groups.....26.8 %
- Research.....25.6 %
- Environmental Protection.....14.1 %
- Sports..... 8.1 %

Armenia NGO Sector Assessment: A Comparative Study 2004, WL, 2004

Effectiveness of NGO Efforts in Influencing Government and National Assembly

Armenia NGO Sector Assessment: A Comparative Study 2004, WL, 2004

Degree of Effectiveness	2004 (%)	2005 (%)
Highly effective	14.9	10.4
Somewhat effective	16.0	17.8
Not very effective	11.2	11.0
Ineffective	13.0	7.8
Complete waste of time	7.5	1.4
Never tried to influence	35.4	31.7



- ### Main barriers for effective influence of the Armenian CSOs
- Rely more on personal contacts and less usage of classical tools of policy engagement
 - Difficulty building broad-based support and limited support of communities
 - More accountability to donors than to the public
 - Limited capacity in policy research and analysis
 - More reactive and less proactive
 - Less reliance on networking and strong cooperation

Lessons Learned from Success stories

The Mental Health Foundation Reinforces the Armenian Law against Involuntary Hospitalization of People with Mental Disabilities

Main focus for further improvements:

How to provide the right advise, to the right people, in the right way, at the right time.

Lena Nanushyan. Expert, NA Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Healthcare and Environmental Protection

Topic: Experience of National Assembly Social Affairs Committee in working with Armenian NGOs (see speech - page 34)

The experience in working with NGOs from the point of view of the NA committee on social affairs, health care and environment

L. Nanushyan
Expert of NA standing committee on social affairs, health care and environment

Types of experiences in working with NGOs

- *Parliamentary hearings*
- *On Site Public Meetings*
- *NA website*
- *Subcommittees, working groups*
- *Supernumerary experts*

**LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
PROCEDURES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Article 22. Parliamentary hearings

1. According to this law, Committees in the fields of their expertise should hold at least one parliamentary hearing in each sitting and notify the Chair of the National Assembly about it. (Amended. 18.01.2005) The committees may take a decision on organizing parliamentary hearings by notifying the Chair of the National Assembly.
2. The date, hour and place of the hearings, as well as the list of speakers and invitees shall be approved by the decision of the committee. The day of a hearing must not be Friday or coincide with the day when the National Assembly is in session.
3. The information on organizing the hearing shall be provided to the mass media at least three days prior to the day of the hearing.
4. The hearings shall be held according to the procedure approved by the committees having organized them.
5. The hearings shall be chaired by the chairs of organizing committees.

Parliamentary hearings

Difference from other types of meetings.....

- *Parliamentary hearings on specific issues are not just dialogues or exchanges of ideas, but give parliamentarians the opportunity to get information/support from government, experts, civil society, as well as from organizations which are likely to be influenced by the policy changes*

Parliamentary hearings

- Place - National Assembly
- Duration- One-day sitting
- Participants - parliamentarians, government representatives, NGOs representatives, independent experts, professionals

Types of parliamentary hearings

- Information consideration
- Monitoring consideration
- Legislative consideration

Information

Parliamentary hearings

An official means of getting information on urgent policy issues from many different sources

- *Example-Parliamentary hearings* on preventative actions against bird flue in Armenia.
- *Purpose*-discuss the current situation and preventative actions against bird flue.
- *Participants*- Representatives of RA Ministries of Agriculture, Healthcare and Territorial Administration, poultry industry, Association of consumers and representatives of a number of international organizations.

Monitoring

Parliamentary hearings

- Is the implementation of laws and the use of budget resources efficient
- *Example*- Hearings on refund of the deposits in Armenian Savings Bank
- *Participants*- Ministry of labor and social affairs, parliamentarians

Legislature

Parliamentary hearings

- Targeted at the legislative initiatives discussed in the National Assembly, or the concrete preparation for policy implementation.
- Budget hearings
- *Example*- Parliamentary Hearings on RA draft law on «Drugs»
- *Participants*- NGOs, international organizations and pharmaceutical firms, especially Armenian Pharmaceutical Association, association of drug importing and producing legal entities, drug store executives

Current situation and development trends of RA healthcare structure	August, 2003
On optimization process of RA healthcare structure	February, 2004
Child and maternity healthcare issues in the Republic of Armenia	March, 2004
Anti-smoking issues	November, 2004
Reforms on healthcare maintenance, contribution to family medicine, necessity to regulate situations, issues and legislature	March, 2005

RA draft law on «Healthcare»	June, 2005
Actions to prevent bird flue in RA	February, 2006
Legislative initiatives on regulations on drug circulation and scientific basis for drug policy	April, 2006

Checklist for organizing NA Committee hearings

- Decide the purpose of the meeting
- Develop an agenda for the parliamentary hearing, a list of speeches and a list of participating organizations
- Prepare documents for circulation / information papers, media papers, and fact summarizing papers
- Send invitations to relevant organizations so that a list of participants may be sent to committees
- Assure the participation of mass media in parliamentary hearings
- *Those who wish to participate in or be present at the hearings may send a written letter to the chair of the NA two days before the hearing, presenting the text of their speech or confirmation of their attendance. The applicant can participate or be present during the hearings, with the notification of the chair of the NA.*

Parliamentary hearings Progress...

- **2004- Parliamentary hearings on anti-smoking issues**
- **RA law on «Limitations on selling, consuming and use» - Adopted 24.12.2004**
- **Results ????????**

Parliamentary hearings Progress... Working with NGOs

- **Aravot** daily newspaper publishes the draft law for public and experts.
- RA draft law on Healthcare was also discussed in sitting of the healthcare council in addition to the Chairman of NA of RA
- **2005- Organization of parliamentary hearings on RA draft law on Healthcare**

List of parliamentary hearing participants

- RA Ministries of Healthcare and other Ministries
- Yerevan Municipality, Marz, Medical Institutions/Private Medical Institutions
- Confederation of RA Trade Unions
- Medical universities and colleges
- International NGOs.
- United States Agency for International Development /USAID/
 - Armenian Social Transition Project /ASTP/
 - World Health Organization /WHO/
 - World Bank /WB/
 - OXFAM
- Local NGOs:
 - *Healthy Future* Health NGO
 - Armenian association of family doctors

Result

Suggestions on RA draft law on Healthcare to Standing Committee on social affairs, health care and environment of National Assembly were made by the following organizations:

- Center of experts on drugs and medical technologies LTD
- Great Britain OXFAM Armenian branch
- Healthcare National Institute of RA Ministry of Healthcare
- Civil society partnership network
- Center of Economic Law NGO
- Armenian Social Transition Project

Reference of objections and suggestions of interested organizations on RA draft law on Healthcare

<i>The author of objection, suggestion (the date)</i>	<i>The content of objection, suggestion</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>

Results - Cont'd.

Proposals (about 90) according to which amendments were made are the following:

- authorities of local self governing bodies and territorial administration bodies in the field of healthcare
- article on medical NGOs
- regulations on healthcare issues of village communities
- on development of state order on training of health human resources financed by state budget
- on chapter on health education
- on regulation and improvement of diagnosis and treatment issues

Other public meetings...

- Marz meeting /outgoing/
- Purpose- Examination of community healthcare insurance model
- Participants-NA parliamentarians, experts, local and international NGOs
- Result-proposals on improvement of medical care in villages



www.parliament.am

- **Standing Committee on Social Affairs Healthcare and Environment**
- Social security, healthcare, nature protection, labor, employment, family, housing construction
- social@parliament.am
- Committee members



Constituency relations

- Your name
- Your e-mail address
- Address
- Text

<p style="text-align: center;">Subcommittees, working groups, Supernumerary experts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For the purpose of initial discussions of draft laws and other suggestions (proposals) and presentation of related suggestions, Committee can group subcommittees from its members, as well as create working groups to formulate the problems, deadlines and procedures and choose their heads. ▪ Working groups may include National Assembly parliamentarians, as well as National Assembly Committee members, fraction experts, parliamentarian assistant, <u>other professionals, scientists, and public officials.</u> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Future Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minutes of parliamentary hearings /published on the site of the committee/ ▪ Brief report on hearings for mass media ▪ Minutes of hearings and the list of discussed questions - NGOs, experts
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Zhirayr Edilyan. Executive Director, Civic Development and Partnership Foundation (CDPF)

Topic: *Parliamentary voting record project-presentation (see speech - page 40)*

 <p style="text-align: center;">Civic Development and Partnership Foundation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MP VOTING RECORDS project presentation</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">"MP Voting Records" project goal:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">To insure transparency of NA Deputies' performance by providing information and data on their voting records</p>
<p>The "MP Voting Records" project creates easy access to the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voting records of each piece of legislation per deputy, political party, fraction ▪ Attendance/performance information per deputy, political party, fraction ▪ Data on legislative initiative combined by topics/areas 	<p>Some facts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 72% of surveyed Advocacy organizations do not use voting records for lobbying and advocacy campaigns ▪ 50% of respondents have comprehensive understanding on possible ways of using voting records

Accomplishments:

- Voting records database is created for period 2005-2007
- Fact-sheet on frequently asked questions regarding the National Assembly
- Fact-sheets on NA Structure and Performance for 2006
- Beneficiary needs assessment

NA Structure:

Number of Members: The National Assembly is comprised of 131 Deputies

Committees: There are 6 Standing Committees in the National Assembly, including:

- Social Affairs, Health Care and Environment
- State and Legal Affairs
- Financial-Credit, Budgetary and Economic Affairs
- Science, Education, Culture and Youth
- Foreign Relations
- National Security and Defense

Proportional Representation: The present 131-seat Armenian parliament is comprised of 75 seats proportionally-elected, and 56 seats chosen on the basis of single mandate representation. In 2005, the formula for electing a new parliament changed to 90 seats being determined by party list or proportionally elected and single-mandate seats were reduced to 41.

Current National Assembly Composition.

There are now 12 major parties and 43 independent deputies in the National Assembly, including:

- Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) – 48 Seats
- Rule of Law Party (RLP) – 9 Seats
- Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) – 7 Seats
- United Labour Party (ULP) – 6 Seats
- National Unity Party (NUP) – 5 Seats
- Armenian People's Party (APP) – 5 Seats
- Republican Party (RP) – 3 Seats
- National Democrats' Alliance Party (NDAP) – 1 Seat
- Constitutional Law Union (CLU) – 1 Seat
- National Democrats' Party (NDP) – 1 Seat
- National Democratic Union (NDU) – 1 Seat
- Armenian Democratic Party (ADP) – 1 Seat
- Non-Party Deputies – 43 Seats

First Project: Fact-Sheets

- NA Rules of Procedure
- Forest Code
- Law on Radio and Television
- Draft Law on Lobbying
- Constitutional Amendments
- Ratification of several international conventions

CDPF looks forward to collaborate with interested parties to provide information on NA deputy voting records.

Zhirayr Edilyan

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Nune Pepanyan. Professionals for Civil Society NGO

Topic: *Practical tools for partnering with local government (see speech - page 271)*

Regulations: social cooperation between local self-governing bodies and non-profit organization



Հանրապետության տարածքում կազմակերպվող սոցիալական համագործակցության կարգադրություն



Favorable conditions for the implementation of "Social Cooperation"

- The understanding of the importance of, and need for, social cooperation by Vanadzor's mayor's office and local NGOs
- International experience in social cooperation
- Existence of an advisory group for social cooperation
- Seminars and debates with representatives from NGO's, International Organizations, the mayor's office, and the marzpetaran
- Assistance from the Marzpet of Lori and the Mayor of Vanadzor for the realization of social cooperation
- Financial grant projects from America-Armenian Assembly NGO
- Innovation and perseverance



Implementation of the regulations of Social Cooperation

Social Cooperation, as a legal tool of cooperation between local self-governing bodies and non-profit organizations, is implemented for the following purposes:

- To strengthen the effectiveness of budget use for solving of social problems
- To use/attract additional resources for the social field/sphere
- To increase the responsiveness to, and popularity of, the provision of social services
- To adequately distribute accountability between civil society and the state
- To enhance the population's trust toward the state

The principles of the realization of Social Cooperation

Social Cooperation is implemented by taking into consideration the following principles:

- Selection and prioritization of social problems
- Unification of methods to solve social problems
- Combination of budgetary and other financial means
- Competition for choosing the non-profit organizations
- Ensure publicity of all activities
- Wide use of the civic resources
- Combine the responsibilities and initiatives of the corresponding individuals, according to the conditions of the contract

Directions of Social Cooperation

- The struggle against poverty
- Aid to mothers and children
- Social assistance for disabled, unemployed, elderly, the poor and the ill
- Health care prevention
- Youth policy
- The development of local self-government and local initiatives
- Education, culture, science
- Physical education and sports
- The preservation of the environment
- The strengthening of the NGO sector

Karen Baghdasaryan. Chief Marketing Officer, Broncoway

Topic: The Business sector's view on corporate social responsibility in Armenia (see speech - page 282)




Corporate Social Responsibility

Where Business and Community meet to benefit

Environmental Research & Conservation

Broncoway perspective
Armen Baghdasaryan, CSR Officer, COO
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armen@broncoway.com
www.broncoway.com

Where do we fit

- Young (est. 2002), dynamic company
- Technology centric (web, graphics, software, hardware)
- Geospatial services (GIS)

Why UN Global Compact? Why Environmental Conservation & Research?


- GIS instrumental for Environmental Research and Conservation
- Joined the game by participating in Mapping Armenian Deforestation research project in 2005.
- Since then, expanded the range of supported projects and partnerships, network with NGOs, Academic institutions and International Organizations

What we do

- Provide volunteer workforce for environmental and conservation projects – with Broncoway Senior Management team leading and serving as an example
- Logistics – use of its office space and computer equipment for research purposes
- Self-initiated research – scouting trips to discover hot spots and areas of interest
- Project development and assistance with fund-raising
- Technical assistance including GIS based mapping and analysis

Our Partner Projects

- Studying and documenting Ancient Armenian Rock-Art
- Mapping Armenian Deforestation
- Assessment of Carbon Stocks for Armenian Forests
- Raising Public Awareness and Training on the danger of using DOT for treatment against fleas in Armenian villages
- Establishment of regional Eco Research Center and Library in Vanadzor



Conservation of Armenian Cultural Heritage

- **Ancient Armenian Rock-Art project**
- **The Problem:**
 - Unknown to the West
 - Disappearing (erosion)
- **Solution:**
 - Importing modern research practices
 - Inventory and documentation for future generations using modern Geographical Information Systems



Ukhtsar Rock-art: a Success Story with continuation

- First ever attempt in Armenia to look at rock-art within the context of Landscape, physical environment
- Supported by British Council Armenia
- Promoting Eco-Friendly research practices (e.g. Solar energy)
- Generating genuine scientific and cultural interest towards Armenia
- Research paper being published in a world renowned pre-history journal
- 2007 - more comprehensive work under planning, extended partners network




Mapping Armenian Deforestation

- Advancing the use of modern geospatial technologies in Armenia.
- Contributing to the fight against deforestation by visualizing the problem and helping to increase the public awareness over the extent of deforestation and its impact on the environment of Armenia.
- Partnering with Armenia Tree Project NGO and Kingston University London.
- Results included in a documentary ("From Need to Greed") by VEM Media Arts

Assessing Carbon Stocks in Armenian Forests

- Assessing the potential of Armenian forests to sequester Carbon Dioxide
- Key to Carbon Credit Trading under the Kyoto Protocol
- Led by Environmental Conservation Research Center
- Collaborators include the local forestry agency in Vanadzor and Broncoway
- Pilot study successfully completed
- Planning to extend the research to incorporate larger areas

Raising Public Awareness on the danger of using DDT

- **Dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane**
- DDT was the first modern pesticide
- Banned for agricultural use in many countries since the 1970s
- Widely used in Armenian villages, not only as a pesticide, but also as a treatment against fleas - applied to children!
- Research links the use of DDT to cancer and other illnesses
- Public Awareness and training on danger and long-term health impacts is required
- Project being developed jointly with Environmental Conservation Research Center (Leader) of the American University of Armenia

What's in the Agenda ?

- To extend partnerships to include local stakeholders in Armenian Marzes
- Seek to involve the UN Global Compact and its member companies
- Promote the CSR culture, with particular emphasis on Environment and Nature Conservation

What's in the Agenda ?

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Our Partnership Network



Knarik Arabyan. NGO Center

Topic: Experience of charity by for-profit organizations in Armenia-presentation of research findings (see speech - page 287)

"NGO CENTER"
Civil Society Development
Organization

In the framework of the project "Involvement of the commercial sector in establishing social partnership in Armenia"

Results of the study of the charitable activities of commercial organizations in Armenia

This publication was prepared with the support of Counterpart International (CPI)/Civic Advocacy Support Program and the U.S. International development agency (USAID).

Viewpoints expressed here are those of the author (authors) and might not coincide with the viewpoints of Counterpart International (CPI)/Civic Advocacy Support Program and the U.S. International development agency.

Definition of main concepts:

Charity
voluntary, not for profit material and non material support (hereinafter referred to as charity assistance), not forbidden by the law (not subject to compensation or with privileged conditions) provided to natural persons and non-commercial organizations by natural or legal persons for the implementation of the objectives of Article 2 of this law. Allocation of monetary and other material resources to political parties and commercial organizations is not charity.

"Charity Act of the Republic of Armenia"
(Article 3. The concept of "charity")

Social partnership

A form of partnership between central or local authorities, commercial and civil society organizations, for resolving social problems through involvement of additional resources in the social sector.

"Manual on social partnership," "NGO Center" civil society development organization

Baseline situation

- the concept of social partnership is discussed in Armenia
- significant efforts are made at establishing partnership between authorities and non-commercial organizations

- non-commercial organizations make allocations to charity
- the legal framework for charitable activities has been established in the Republic of Armenia

Results expected from the survey

- ◆ Information about the modes and directions of charitable activities conducted by the commercial sector,
- ◆ Understanding the probability and opportunities for conducting charitable activities, as an institution, through social partnership

The survey project

- ◆ **Objective of the survey:** *To study the charitable activities of the commercial sector in Yerevan*
- ◆ **Participants:** 50 commercial organizations in Yerevan
- ◆ **Subject of the survey:** Experience of charitable activities among commercial organizations

Hypothesis

Social partnership mechanisms are not used by commercial organizations as a method for charitable activities

Objectives of the survey

- ◆ To identify the purpose of charity work conducted by the commercial sector,
- ◆ To study the mechanisms of charity work conducted by the commercial sector,
- ◆ To study the nature of charity work conducted by the commercial sector

- ◆ To clarify the role and application of social partnership in charity work conducted by the commercial sector
- ◆ Identification, selection mechanisms, and criteria for beneficiaries of charitable activities of non-commercial sector
- ◆ To study the approach to regulating charity activities of commercial organization

Methodology and sampling of the survey

- ◆ **Main cluster:** Commercial organizations registered in the database of "Business directory and yellow pages of Armenia" (2006)
- ◆ 50 organizations were selected based on *location and prominence*
- ◆ Selection was done by random systematic sampling

◆ The survey was conducted anonymously by a formal questionnaire

◆ The questionnaire included 19 questions

◆ The survey was conducted April-July 2006

Respondents' areas of activity

Area of activity	%
Scientific-research	0
Social activities, sports and physical education	0
Subsistence production	0
Import	4
Transport	4

Construction	4
Education	8
Culture	8
Information	8
Tourism	12
Healthcare	12
Manufacturing	16
Business Services	20

Finance	24
Trade	60
Services	68

Charity experience of the commercial sector

• <i>Charity work only based on own initiative</i>	40%
• <i>Participated only in other charity initiatives</i>	12%
• <i>Charity work based on own initiative, as well as participation in others' initiatives</i>	20%
• <i>Did not conduct charity work</i>	28%

Reasons mentioned by organizations without charity experience

- ◆ Our organization is small, we cannot afford charity

- ◆ We ourselves are still in the development stage and cannot allocate resources to charity, although we see that possibility in the long-term

Conclusion:

- ◆ **72% of 50 respondent organizations have had charity experience**

- ◆ **Commercial organizations have a positive disposition towards charity**

Purposes of charity

	Purpose	Frequency	%
1	Support to social and economic risk groups	34	94
2	Support the victims of emergency situations	10	28
3	Support cultural development	17	47

4	Support the preservation of material and cultural values	4	11
5	Support environmental protection	5	14
6	Support the implementation of social programs	4	11

The majority of benefactor's resources are allocated to:

- ◆ targeting the needs of social and economic risk groups, 94%
- ◆ cultural development, 47%

◆ Social assistance is provided particularly to orphans, disabled people, persons impacted by war, and vulnerable families

◆ Support to those groups is in the form of *financial and other material* assistance

Approaches to regulating charitable activity

- ◆ Frequency
- ◆ Regularity
- ◆ Procedures for selecting beneficiaries
- ◆ Cooperation
- ◆ Forms of charitable activity

a) frequency of charitable activities

	Frequency	Frequency	%
1	Usually not conducted, but there have been a few cases	6	17
2	Conducted as needed and as possible with no regularity	14	39
3	Conducted based on rules and frequency defined by the organization	16	44

Conclusion:

- ◆ Basically, commercial organizations (44%) have a planned approach to charitable activities
- ◆ *In a sense, those organizations have accepted some social responsibility*
- ◆ As a rule, they work with the same target group. As mentioned by one of the respondents, his organization has been providing assistance to two non-governmental organizations for several years in a row

b) regularity of charitable activities

44% conduct activities based on defined rules and frequency, with the following defined frequencies:

	Frequency	Frequency	%
1	Once a week	3	19
2	Once a month	4	25
3	Once every quarter	3	19
4	Once-twice per year	6	37
5	Once every few years	0	0

It can be concluded that:

- ◆ The majority of commercial organizations are involved in charitable activities
- ◆ Charitable activities of commercial organizations are conducted at least on an annual basis

c) Procedures for selecting beneficiaries

- ◆ 39% have principles for selecting beneficiaries, and those principles only define the social status of the beneficiary and do not reflect defined mechanisms and steps
- ◆ 61% to not have principles for selecting beneficiaries

Beneficiary selection principles	Frequency %	Defined beneficiary selection principles		
		Legal persons	Applicant beneficiaries	Vulnerable groups
Available	14 39 %	0	36 %	64%
Not available	22 61 %			

d) cooperation in charitable activities

Types of structures		%
1	Non-governmental organizations, foundations	39
2	State non-commercial organizations	31
3	Central and local authorities	22
4	Religious organizations	14
5	Informal authorities	11
6	International organizations	11
7	Commercial organizations	6
8	No cooperation at all	44

Comparison of the definition of social partnership and the results of the survey

- 39% of respondents cooperate with noncommercial organizations
- 22% of respondents cooperate with central and local authorities

- Cooperation by any respondent has not been three-sided and does not have a regulated nature
- Commercial organizations participate in the charity activities initiated by other organizations through sharing the expenses, since the latter has already applied to them
- According to the largest number of responses (44%), those involved in charitable activities prefer to work directly with the social group affected by the given problem

It can be concluded that:

- During its charitable activities, the commercial sector does not use social partnership mechanisms
- Commercial organizations do not yet acknowledge the need for social partnership

e) Forms of charitable activities

	Frequency	%
1 Based on competition	0	0
2 Project proposals are selected and financed	4	11
3 Donations to non-governmental organizations, foundations	10	28
4 Donations to state non-commercial organizations	10	28
5 Assistance directly to beneficiaries	20	56

Conclusion:

- The commercial sector (56%) prefers to provide charitable support directly to beneficiaries, thus making sure the support serves its purpose
- Allocations are also made to state non-commercial organizations, non-governmental organizations, and foundations – equally at 28%

- **Competitive system**, which is one of the mechanisms of social partnership, is not used by any commercial organization for charitable activities
- Regulating and managing charity activities from the viewpoint of social partnership is not yet a priority for commercial organizations

IV. The nature of charity allocations

	Nature	Frequency	%
1	Monetary support	28	78
2	Other material support	18	50
3	Psychological support	11	30

Conclusion:

- ◆ According to the highest indicator, the major part of charity given by commercial organizations (78%) is of a financial nature
- ◆ Commercial organizations make actual investments in resolving certain social problems

V. Charity regulations, procedures, documentation

	Frequency of formulation	Frequency	%
1	Always	12	34
2	Often	8	22
3	Sometimes	8	22
4	Never	8	22

Conclusion:

- ◆ The charity initiatives of commercial organizations are basically part of the policy: "always 34%," "often 22%"

VI. Assessment of the effectiveness of charity mechanisms used

#	Effectiveness	Frequency	%
1	Fully effective	4	11
2	Effective	24	67
3	Not very effective	3	8
4	Totally ineffective	0	0
5	Do not know	5	14

Conclusion:

- ◆ The majority of respondents (67%) consider the charity mechanisms used as "effective"
- ◆ It is not always that charitable organizations are concerned with the effectiveness of the mechanisms they use

Interestingly:

- ◆ No organization mentioned the use of an assessment system for judging the effectiveness of charity. This means that it is not yet developed and is not considered important.
- ◆ For many, the question of "effectiveness" was a surprise.
- ◆ The respondents usually judged their activities based on the positive effects they had on the beneficiaries. That is, if the beneficiary is satisfied, then the mechanism is effective.

VII. Tax privileges for benefactors

	Frequency	%
Yes	6	17
No	17	47
Do not know	13	36

Conclusion:

- From among the 36 organizations conducting charity work, only six were aware of the corresponding tax privileges,

- From among the 36 organizations conducting charity work, 17 were convinced that the law does not define any privileges, and 13 did not know

- It was assumed that at least 20 organizations should have known about the "regulations" and used the mentioned tax privileges.

- All six organizations aware of tax privileges mentioned that they have never used them,

The reasons presented were:

- Extremely complicated "red tape"
- The "small" amount of tax privileges, are not "worth the effort"

Resources allocated to charity, *in the last year*

#	Financial support	%
1	6 000 000 dram	6
2	200 000 – 90 000 dram	14
3	Do not know	80

Interestingly:

- From among the 33% making regular allocations to charity, only 20% have mentioned the size of charity allocations they made

- Respondents had difficulties answering the question about the amounts allocated to charity

The reasons are:

- Diversity of charity allocations (monetary assistance, property, food, etc.)

- Charity allocations are not always regulated

VII. Impact of charity on the lives of beneficiaries

Description of impact	Frequency	%
Improved the situation of vulnerable people	26	72
Have done it "to have a clean conscience"	4	11
Organization's image improved	3	8
None, it is just customary	1	3
Do not know	2	6

Interestingly:

- Very often, respondents could not describe the impact of charity

- They answered "positive" and then explained

- Answers similar to the following were often mentioned: "***we have no expectation from our charity work, except helping people and lightening their burden***"

- The majority of commercial organizations (72%) underlined the humanitarian aspect of charity

Conclusion:

- a) *what is the composition of charity in commercial organizations*
 1. Commercial organizations basically have a **positive disposition** towards charity
 2. Commercial organizations conduct charity work mainly **based on moral motivations**

- 3. Charity allocations are mainly aimed at *resolving social and cultural problems*
- 4. *Commercial organizations prefer to work directly with beneficiaries, rather than through an intermediary organization*
- 5. *Charity activities basically have a regular nature and are part of the organization's policy*

b) how is it manifested?

- 1.1. The majority of commercial organizations conduct charity work through donations and financing project proposals
- 1.2. The nature of assistance is mainly financial

- 2.1 The charity activities of commercial organizations are based on humanitarian concerns, and are rarely conducted to improve the organization's image
- 2.2 Currently, tax privileges are not the motivation for charity work by commercial organizations

- 3.1 Commercial organizations work with certain social and economic at-risk groups, charity is basically provided to orphans, disabled, persons impacted by war, and vulnerable families
- 3.2 Investments in the cultural sector aim to preserve material and cultural values

- 4.1 Commercial organizations doing charity work do not make efforts to find partners
- 4.2 Although cooperation, mainly with non-governmental organizations is a fact, the role of commercial organizations in that relationship is passive. They get involved in charity work only when presented with a request or project proposal.

- 4.3. Cooperation between commercial organizations and central and local authorities has a circumstantial nature
- 4.4. Commercial organizations are not active in establishing social partnerships, although they obviously participate in activities for resolving social problems
- 4.5. Commercial organizations do not assess the effectiveness of the charity work they conduct

- 5.1 The majority of commercial organizations plan charity activities at least once a year, and consider them a part of the organization's policy.
- 5.2 The majority of commercial organizations regulate their charitable activities or programs.

c) Why is this?

Charity has a cultural ground in Armenia. For centuries, numerous social, educational, and cultural problems have been resolved mainly by benefactors and patrons of the arts/literature.

Although efforts are made today in the Republic of Armenia to reestablish traditions of charitable giving, it is nonetheless obvious that the efforts of the three sectors - government, civil society, and commercial organizations - for resolving the same problems are scattered.

According to one commercial organization, it is still not clear why one should work with non-commercial organizations if it can provide assistance directly to beneficiaries

Basically, commercial organizations are not aware of the activities of non-commercial organizations and their role in resolving various problems; a representative of one commercial organization was of the opinion that non-commercial organizations should show more initiative and be more interested in presenting their activities, so that commercial organizations can become aware and capable of making decisions with regard to partnership.

The majority of commercial organizations have reservations with regard to disseminating information about their charitable activities. A representative of one commercial organization mentioned that the public is extremely distrustful of the charity work conducted by commercial organizations, considering it to be solely for commercial and financial profit purposes, with total disregard for moral aspects.

Recommendations:

Provision of information to commercial organizations on the concept and mechanisms of social partnership,

Provision of information to commercial organizations on the activities of noncommercial organizations

- Provision of information to commercial organizations on local and international experience, with regard to mechanisms of social partnership with non-commercial organizations and governmental structures,
- Promote dialogue between commercial, non-commercial organizations, central and local authorities for identifying expectations with regard to social partnership and outlining the possibilities for partnership

To cultivate a positive disposition toward charity among commercial organizations and provide incentives at moral and legal levels.

To provide information to the public on the charity programs of commercial organizations and their social significance

Armen Shahbazyan, Business Association Specialist, Competitive Armenian Private Sector Project (CAPS)

Topic: *Business associations as a way to improve public policy (see speech - page 299)*

Business Associations as a Way to Improve Public Policy

Armen Shahbazyan
USAID Competitive Armenian Private Sector Project

Business Associations in General:

- Are formed by private business representatives, usually in specific industry or sub-industry sectors
- Represent one, and stronger voice of the industry
- Know and represent better industry needs

Business Associations in General:

- Are more rational in their thinking and recommendations, because they are represented by practical business people
- They do not always represent the whole industry and may have limited membership by size, by structure, and ownership of the companies

Critical to Policy issues:

- BAs express aggregated policy needs of companies they organize
- Get together to better struggle for more favorable environments to do business

Examples:

- ✓ simpler and predictable taxation policies
- ✓ less taxes
- ✓ tax waivers for startups
- ✓ improved physical infrastructure in regions

BAs could serve as regulatory bodies as well

- If they have expertise
- If government recognizes and values their capabilities
- If the overall industry cluster trusts them

Examples:

- Provide training and certification that can serve as a basis for licensing
- Quality competencies for international trade

Armenian Hotel Association and Armenian Restaurant Association will be providing training and certification in Hospitality and Customer Care

Armenian Guides Guild has already started training and certification of tourist guides

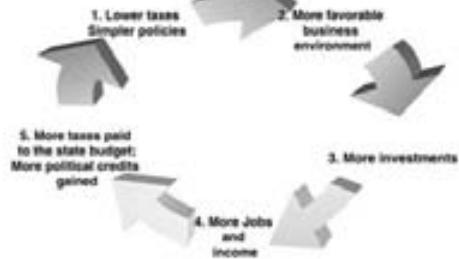
Union of Incoming Tour Operators of Armenia is planning to launch "Tourist Friendly" Certification

BAs's and Government interests do not always match

- Lower taxation contradicts state budget income policy
- Less complicated policies limit corruption opportunities

Governments do not like strong organizations capable of winning battles

Cooperation leads to win-win situation, however...



Challenges...

- Associations need to build their research capacities to make their policy recommendations more professional and stronger
- They need strong legal skills as well, to synchronize proposed policy changes with overall legislation and make it easy for the Government to pass the amendments

Challenges...

- Governments may try to block initiatives of BAs if bureaucrats are connected to individual businesses and protect their interests
 - However:
 - Associations serve as an efficient tool to fight this unhealthy environment, since their members directly suffer from the unfair competition
 - They use their unified power to fight the unfair practice (e.g. through raising the issue publicly and affecting the decision of electorate)

Challenges...

- Many BAs lack mobilization skills
- Small BAs are less effective:
 - Government is less interested in proposed policy changes if the association represents interests of smaller group of companies
 - The outstanding part of business community does not support the policy changes if its voice is not heard
- Armenian BAs do not have lobbying skills

Conclusion and Recommendations


- Business associations play a critical role in improving the business policy environment of the country, because they represent aggregated voices of the industry
- However, they do need help to build their economic and legal research capacities and presentation skills
- They also need to know techniques of effective lobbying

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Government should recognize the value of BA services for the private business industry and grant them a mandate to serve as regulatory bodies (hospitality certificate of AHA and ARA, tourist guides certification by AAG, "Tourist Friendly Certificate" by UITO).
- Government should encourage BAs to participate in policy discussions: it saves resources and the output is more practical and realistic. Plus, government gets political credits in the form of gaining the trust of the business community if it involves and listens to business associations.
- Government should spend resources to build capacities of BAs through financial and technical means.

Zaida Arguedas. Deputy Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of the United States and Director of Global Democracy Programs

Topic: *Building infrastructure for fundraising from private sources*
(see speech - page 66)

<p>FUNDRAISING FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY</p> <p>Zaida Arguedas League of Women Voters of the United States April 2007</p>  <p>League of Women Voters of the United States</p>	<p>AGENDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> League of Women Voters <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Research <input type="checkbox"/> Build Relations <input type="checkbox"/> Keep Funders Informed <input type="checkbox"/> Identify New Funding Streams <input type="checkbox"/> TIME TO THINK ABOUT YOUR NGO <input type="checkbox"/> Closing <p>League of Women Voters of the United States</p>
<p>LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National NGO since 1920 • Non partisan, membership NGO • Headquartered in Washington, DC • Offices in each of the 50 States • 850 chapters nationwide • 150,000 members • Advocacy and education NGO <p>League of Women Voters of the United States</p>	<p>STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a focused message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What do you do? Why are you the best? ■ What is your value to the community? <input type="checkbox"/> Create an internal infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allocate your own resources (budget, staff) to fundraising <input type="checkbox"/> Work in coalitions and seek like-minded partners <p>League of Women Voters of the United States</p>
<p>RESEARCH</p> <p>Do your homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn all about your local donors, businesses, other <input type="checkbox"/> Request written information about them <input type="checkbox"/> Who do you know? <p>League of Women Voters of the United States</p>	<p>BUILD RELATIONS</p> <p>Start with your local community, local businesses, local banks, local vendors, and foundations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Research the company and determine if they make gifts and learn what they have funded in the past. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine what your organization has in common with the donor. <p>League of Women Voters of the United States</p>

BUILD RELATIONS

- Once you have completed your research, reach out to your contact via mailed letter. Provide a brief synopsis of your needs and ask to meet them in person.
- Based on the response to your letter develop a further strategy for solicitation
- Do not expect a gift in the first year
- Make your "ask" when the time is right

League of Women Voters of the United States

KEEP FUNDERS INFORMED

- Keep funders and *possible funders* informed and active in your projects.
- Stay local, do research, use your personal contacts to solicit corporate or foundation support.

League of Women Voters of the United States

IDENTIFY NEW FUNDING STREAMS

- Membership dues
- Partnerships and coalitions
- In-kind donations
- Volunteers
- Fee for services
- Gifts from family and friends

League of Women Voters of the United States

EXERCISE

ASSUME THAT I AM A POSSIBLE FUNDER

- Tell me the mission/goal of your NGO and why are you unique
- Tell me why *I* should fund your NGO?

League of Women Voters of the United States

DON'TS

- DON'T** – be critical of other NGOs in your conversations with donors and funders
- DON'T** – claim your NGO can *solve the problem alone*.
- DON'T** – ask for too little or for too much – check record of giving.

League of Women Voters of the United States

DO'S

- DO** – cultivate relationships with potential funding organizations, including the business community.
- DO** – let potential funders know your need.
- DO** – meet your obligations once you receive a grant.

League of Women Voters of the United States

Raffi Niziblian, Director, Deem Communications

Topic: Marketing non-profit projects to the business community-social marketing (see speech - page 68)

<p style="text-align: center;">Corporations with a conscience</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Raffi Niziblian</p>
<p>Mission and objectives of NGOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare of society • Advocating for human rights • Preserving and protecting the environment • Accessibility to education for all • Gender issues • Aiding weaker communities • Assisting individuals with special needs • ... 	<p style="text-align: center;">Mission and Objectives of Corporations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer quality goods and services • Increase market share • Show profit • Maximize return to shareholders • ... Increase profit • More profit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project a valued image to its market and potential market
<p style="text-align: center;">NGO meets Corporation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy, wealthy society with continuously increased purchasing power. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Community Economic Development (CED)</p> <p>is a process that is used to analyze economic systems and their impact on a community. The key concept of CED is using local resources to meet local needs, while at the same time creating healthy and economically viable communities.</p>

11 criteria for CED:

1. Use of Local Goods and Services
2. Production of Goods and Services for Local Use
3. Local Re-Investment of Profits.
4. Long-Term Employment of Local Residents
5. Local Skill Development
6. Local Decision-Making and Ownership
7. Healthy Citizens
8. Positive Physical Environment
9. Neighbourhood Stability
10. Human Dignity
11. Support for Other CED Projects

CED examples

Business and CED Pro Bono

To help these **lawyers** access the network of **community-based and non-profit organizations**, many CED or business law pro bono programs now exist.

Act as an intermediary between the private attorneys and the community-based organizations.

Helpful links to CED

- <http://www.abanet.org/legal/services/probono/business-ced.html>
- www.benton.org
- <http://www.unep.ca/economy/ced.html>

"The World Social Forum

is an open democratic space of debates of ideas and multiple and plural reflections in favour of the development of alternatives to the neo-liberal policies and behaviors imperialists."

by definition on the official WSF website

The Charter of Principles

established after the first Social Forum of 2001

- #4. (The alternatives proposed) ... are designed to ensure that globalization in solidarity will prevail as a new stage in world history. This will respect universal human rights, and those of all citizens - men and women - of all nations and the environment and will rest on democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.

Useful links - WSF

- <http://www.portoalegre2002.org/homepage.asp>



Poghos Shahinyan. National Road Safety Council

Topic: *Beyond funding: business' benefits from partnership-presentation of MURANO and NRSC seatbelt campaign (see speech - page 70)*

Business – NGO Relations
New frontiers in sustainability and development
By Poghos Shahinyan
Executive Director NRSC

Who we are...

- Non Governmental Organization
- Non-partisan
- Umbrella

Our Mission

- We believe the number of accidents may be substantially reduced. In this regard, it is our mission and philosophy to develop solutions that will help modify behavior and enhance the quality of life by preventing fatal and serious injuries. Acting on a non-partisan and non-governmental platform, we support and initiate activities that will have an impact on reducing traffic accidents.

Objectives

- NRSC, Armenia Chapter was founded on the sole principle of making our environment a safer place to live as well as on uniting organizations and individuals around our mission. We see our nation with safer road environment. We anticipate taking into account the education required to gain knowledge about the complexity of road traffic. We believe that the improved planning, design and management of the road system shall support a safe road environment.

Our Local NGO Partners

- Automobile Federation of Armenia
- "Achilles" Society for the Defense of Drivers Rights
- Protection of Consumers' Rights NGO
- Armenian Public Health Association
- British Alumni Association

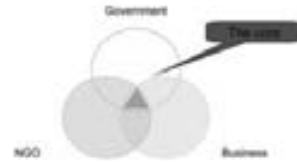
Our Local Business Partners

- First Insurance Company
- Nissan & Murano
- Renault
- Mercedes Benz represented by "Avangard Motors"

Our International partners

-  FIA Foundation for the automobile & society
-  Euro NCAP
-  EuroRAP
-  ECMT / OECD
-  John Smith Trust

Stake Holders



Who is Guilty?

Road Accident data for Armenia 2001-2005



A Safe Road System



NRSC Business joint campaign

- TV campaign
 - Seat belt campaign
 - Drunk Driving
- Radio campaign
 - Seat belt campaign
 - Drunk Driving

Business and Society

Businesses as Part of Our Society

■ "It may well be in the long-run interest of a corporation that is a major employer in a small community to devote resources to providing amenities to that community. That may make it easier to attract desirable employees, it may reduce the wage bill or lessen losses from pillage and sabotage or have other worthwhile effects. Or it may be that, given the laws about the deductibility of corporate charitable donations, the stockholders can contribute more to charities they favour by having the corporation make the gift than by doing it themselves, since they can in that way contribute an amount that would otherwise have been paid as corporate taxes."

Walter Dill Scott
1912

Businesses as part of our Society

■ **The view of business as necessarily selfish, narrow and instrumental, is, as it always has been, nonsense. Business which is selfish in motivation, narrow in outlook, and instrumental in behaviour is rarely successful business.**

John Kay

Advocacy as a Process

- Advocacy – Հանրի պաշտպանություն
- Advocacy - Ձևազույլություն

NGO – Business relations

- Trust 
- Professionalism 
- Networking 

Business Interest


- FIA - Federation International de l'Automobile
- Formula 1

NRSC Sustainability

- Donor funding
- Business funding
- Business initiative

Abgar Yeghoyan. President of "Protection of Consumers' Rights" NGO

Topic: *With business, but not for business-how to avoid conflict of interest and maintain independence (see speech - page 72)*



With businesses for the consumer

Abgar Yeghoyan

14 April, 2007
Yerevan

The "Protection of Consumers' Rights" non-governmental organization (PCR) was established in Yerevan in 1997.

PCR Mission

Support the provision of quality goods and services, which are safe with regard to life, health, property and environment, to consumers in Armenia.

3

PCR strategic principles include

NOT TO TAKE monetary resources for operations of PCR from businesses or the government.

4

Options for relationship with businesses

- Direct/mediated
- Indirect/mediated

5

Direct relationships

with companies providing public services

- "Yerevan Djur" CJSC
- "Armwatersewage" CJSC
- "Armenian electrical grid" CJSC
- "Armentel" CJSC
- "ArmRusgasprod" CJSC

6

The methods of work

- Submitting consumer complaints to supply companies
- Discussions on issues of protection of consumers' rights
- Exchange of information

7

The methods of work

- Consultancy for companies on working with consumers
- Joint visits and monitoring of services
- Distribution of PCR produced posters and booklets by companies

8

PCR – "Yerevan Djur" CJSC

- PCR has proposed to "Yerevan Djur" company to allow the 15,000 consumers in Yerevan and adjacent villages, who have not installed water meters, to pay only a small part of the unrealistic amount of arrears they have accumulated, with the conditionality that they will definitely install water meters.

9

PCR – "Armwatersewage" CJSC

The "System audit" Ltd. established by PCR will provide "Armwatersewage" CJSC with paid public awareness services in Marzani, Sevan, Gavar, Dilijan and Yardenis cities, during which the following measures will be implemented:

- Hot line
- Publication and dissemination of posters and booklets
- Preparation and broadcast of TV and radio programs.
- Preparation and broadcast of public service announcements,
- Visits, roundtables, meetings at community level

10

PCR – "Armentel" Ltd.

PCR encourages "Armentel" CJSC, repeating the precedence of 2006, to relieve the enormous debts of consumers, accumulated due to Internet viruses, which will result in:

- Improved rating of the company
- Increased consumer trust

11

PCR – Internet service provider companies

PCR has proposed to eight Internet service provider companies to inform consumers on the threats of Internet viruses and protection methods, through implementing the following measures:

12

PCR proposals

- To add a point in the contract on provision of services on the possibility of emergence of such problems and the necessary measures for avoiding them
- At card sale points, provide information to consumers together with the card
- Include a warning on Internet cards to be printed in the future

13

Trade and industry chamber of the Republic of Armenia

Social partnership

- Training courses for members of the chamber, who are domestic producers or companies importing and retailing goods in Armenia
- Public awareness campaigns
- Discussing the results of the monitoring of the consumer market conducted by PCR

14

Indirect/mediated relationships with businesses

Through the following governmental structures:

- Public services regulatory committee
- Committee for protection of economic competition
- National standards institute
- State quality inspectorate
- State food safety and veterinary inspectorate

15

The methods of work

- Resolving consumer complaints issues through governmental structures
- Analyses of the practical application of legal acts conducted by PCR and presented to governmental bodies
- Independent expert assessment of legal acts and their drafts
- Meetings-discussions

16

Corporate social responsibility criteria

- Activities for protection of consumers' rights
- Policy for environmental protection
- Policy for staff development
- Fair trade

17

Corporate social responsibility: new principles

- Businesses should respect consumers, rather than being scared of tax, customs and other governmental control bodies
- New measures, services, trainings for businesses
- Introduction of mechanisms for recall of low quality and unsafe goods

18

Corporate social responsibility

Proposal of PCR to National Standards Institute on establishing a technical committee for CSR ISO 26000, with the following membership:

- Representative of the National Assembly
- Representative of the National Standards Institute
- Representative of businesses
- Consumers
- Representative of the "Consumer rights protection" NGO

19

Food safety monitoring

As a result of the food safety monitoring conducted by PCR (labeling, expiring dates, storage conditions, availability of certificates):

- Quality products are identified
- Becomes possible to distinguish between conscientious and non-conscientious producers and traders
- Support is provided to conscientious producers and traders
- PCR uncovers non-conscientious producers and traders through governmental bodies and mass-media

20

Application of the "Rules for expert assessment of unsafe food raw materials and foodstuff, recall from consumers, their use and disposal" drafted by PCR

- Provision of information to businesses on the rules for exploitation
- Incentives for businesses so that unsafe foodstuff do not reach the point of disposal, but are rather sold at discount prices before their expiry dates
- Introduction of disposal mechanisms

21

Unified taxation framework

PCR proposes to have one unified taxation framework for sale of goods and thus create equal conditions for operation of all traders.

Currently there are four taxation frameworks:

- Street trade – not taxed
- Kiosk – taxed per square meter
- Open air market – taxed per square meter
- Shop – through VAT based on the volume of trade

22

PCR objectives

Change the provision stipulated by the Customs Code on import of goods up to 50 kilograms of weight and values up to 300 U.S. dollars subject to compulsory certification into Armenia without certification.

23

PCR objectives

Forming social agreement with private companies operating in one sector on not violating consumers' interests, where the PCR will be the party monitoring that process.

With businesses for the consumer

24

Mane Mamyan. "Yerevan Water" Company

Topic: Interest of business in long-term development of non-profit organizations (see speech - page 73)



Our Meetings

- **Bi-monthly meetings with the director**

The major participants:

- The Protection of Consumers' Rights NGO
- The Union of the Social Advocates
- The Armenian Consumers' Association
- The Union of Workers in Housing and Communal Sphere

Երևան Ջուր + 

Our Meetings



Recognition

Trust

Solutions

Discussions


Երևան Ջուր + 

As a Result

- **3 Working groups consisting of representatives of the Yerevan Djur corporation and the NGOs**

The Issues

- Monitoring continuous provision of drinking water
- Condominium management, maintenance and technical service provision by the condominiums' internal networks
- How to promote the process of water meter instalment on already existing meter connection points

Երևան Ջուր + 


The Perspectives



Երևան Ջուր + 

The Perspectives

- **Strategic Cooperation with NGOs:**
 - **Winner-Winner Version**
- **Building of social strategy**

Երևան Ջուր + 



Երևան Ջուր +
 Yerevan Djur

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



Preeti Shroff-Mehta. World Learning, Trainer

Topic: *The role of the public in issue identification: a comparative perspective*
(see speech - page 89)

**Grassroots Inclusive Democracy:
Role of the Public in Advocacy**

**Preeti Shroff-Mehta
World Learning**



11/16/2007 World Learning 1



Social Citizenship for Grassroots Inclusive Democracy

"New Approaches to Social Citizenship Seek to Move Beyond Seeing the State as Bestowing Rights and Demanding Responsibilities of its subjects. In doing so, they aim to bridge the gap between citizen and the state by recasting citizenship as practiced rather than given...this recognizes the agency of citizens as 'makers and shapers' rather than as 'users and choosers'..."

A New Weave of Power, People and Politics.
Vanektaen and Miller (2002)

11/16/2007 World Learning 3

Citizen Advocacy and Engagement Contexts

- Specific Policy, Law, Service, Program Access
- Decentralized and Inclusive Governance
- Civil Society Movements and Transformation

11/16/2007 World Learning 4

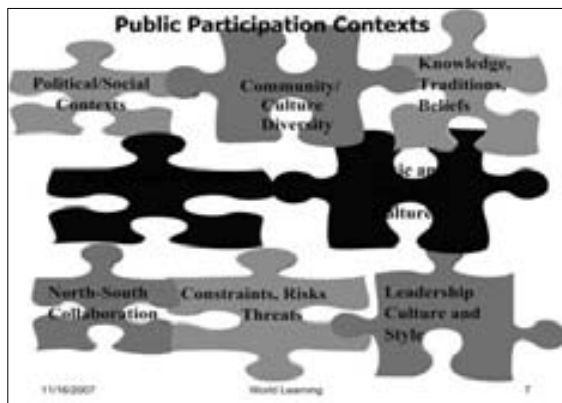
Citizen Advocacy Environment

State-Civil Society Contexts

Emerging State Weak CS Angola Ethiopia	Strong State Weak CS Morocco Russia	Strong State Strong CS India Brazil	Weak State Strong CS Somalia The Amazon
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11/16/2007 World Learning 5





Mark Granius. Counterpart International, Consultant

Topic: Networks and coalitions-beyond the rhetoric (why coalitions and networks create confidence in the public) (see speech - page 91)

Partnerships and Coalitions:

Increasing Effectiveness and Public Confidence

Counterpart Civil Society Conference
Mark Granius
Armenia - April 2007



An early American political cartoon drawn by Benjamin Franklin to emphasize unity of the 13 colonies. He also said: "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately."

Partnership and Coalition Opinions

- What positive and negative words do you associate with partnership and coalition?
- What has been your actual experience with partnerships and coalitions?
- Do you agree that people working together are more effective than people working alone?
- Why is there resistance toward forming coalitions and are there any good examples in Armenia?

Defining the Terms

Partnership: A relationship between two or more entities which exists to add real value to all parties and mutual activities. Fundamental partnership principles include trust, respect, open communication and accountability.

Coalition: an alliance or combination - often temporary - of individuals, organizations, factions, parties or nations.

Why Cooperate?

Partnership: (1) Experience; (2) Funding and Other Resources; (3) New Programs; (4) New Methodologies or Intellectual Property; (5) Geographic Presence; (6) Contacts and Relationships; and (7) Influence and Increased Status

Coalition: (1) To oppose a common foe, law, issue or activity; (2) To achieve a common goal; or (3) To educate the general public or key decision makers.

Benefits of Partnership and Coalitions

- More and louder voices behind one message
- Better media coverage; public awareness and image
- Different tone of voices, targeting different decision-making personalities, behind one message
- More votes behind one issue or one party
- More hands working on a common activity
- Increased geographic coverage
- Increased technical knowledge
- Increased access to government decision makers

Benefits of Partnership and Coalitions (2)

- Larger resource base and resource sharing
- Rapid and cost effective distribution and research
- Brings together array of skills, ideas and connections
- Reduce duplicative efforts
- Consistency of activities and message
- Often leads to synergies and economies of scale
- The feeling of being part of something bigger than your individual organization
- Can better identify gaps in legislation or government service provision

Pitfalls of Partnership and Coalitions

- Loss of organizational sovereignty
- Division of resources
- Distracts time and resources away from NGO's regular work
- Difficult to make decisions and take action
- Action you may not agree with taken in your name
- Too many compromises

Pitfalls of Partnership and Coalitions (2)

- Often imposed by a donor program or grant
- Less individual initiative and accountability – "groupthink"
- Uneven burden on some NGOs; "free riders"
- Real or perceived inequalities of participating NGOs
- Causes conflict and infighting among organizations that hadn't previously existed
- Credit for success must be shared

Levels of Partnership and Coalitions

Strong: Overall joint-strategy and regimented structure; Low organization and task diversity; Strong agreement on problems and necessary actions; Low competition among members; Short-term dedicated staff; Higher member time and financial contribution required; Regimented structure

Moderate: NGOs ensure that their activities consider other partners; Moderate organization and task diversity; Operates in spurts of action

Loose: Existing information sharing network; NGOs assist each other on an ad hoc basis; High organization and task diversity; Non-controversial or divisive issue; Low cost to members; Large / international in scope

Type of Campaign

Process: Long-term almost perpetual campaigns; Targeting fundamental change in public opinion; Success is incremental; Coalition evolves away from individual NGOs into an institution; Many volunteers

Action: Shorter-term campaign focuses on rapid result; Specific objective and coalition disbands when achieved; Involves hard lobbying or parliamentary targeting; Rapid decision-making; Issue is considered urgent and needing immediate attention; Primarily paid staff; Short but high funding needs

Lessons Learned in Coalition Building

Top Five

1. Participating organizations' mindset and motivation must be aligned toward partnership
2. Roles must be assigned (convener, facilitator, communicator) and workplans designed and followed
3. Coalition should have identity including logo, clear mission, slogan and materials
4. Membership should be wide but layered – ideal management / founder body should be 5-7 organizations
5. Like any effective and sustainable organization – processes must be in place and be followed

Additional Tips for Effective Coalitions

- A coalition is not an end result or an impact in itself
- Turf protection and mistrust must be overcome
- Not every decision needs consensus and coalition partners don't need to agree on everything – have voting procedures in place
- Decision makers must be at key meetings or delegate
- In a dispute, work backwards until common ground can be found
- Coalitions that exist for a compelling reason and have committed members have the best likelihood of succeeding
- Every single member must enter the coalition knowing that they are surrendering control and must regularly compromise
- Think in terms of “can I accept this” instead of “do I fully agree”
- There should be a designated key contact from each organization to maintain consistency

Additional Tips for Effective Coalitions

- Members should complete and discuss coalition readiness questionnaire
- Involve all coalition members through communication and delegation
- One organization cannot dominate a coalition – decision making and dispute resolution procedures must be clear, documented and followed
- Goal and objectives must be realistic; limit number of issues coalition is addressing and set easy initial indicators to build confidence and trust
- Don't neglect fun and creativity in coalition management and activities
- Meetings should be regular and minutes should be taken and disseminated - meetings can be complimented by smaller working groups who are in charge of completing certain initiatives
- Prepare for, map and strategize against your campaign's opposition
- Change takes time – perseverance and follow-through are essential

Cases in Coalition and Partnership

Kazakhstan NGO Legislation Coalition: Group of 200 NGOs that successfully advocated for the dismissal of repressive NGO legislation

Kazakhstan Coalition of Disability NGOs: Group of 15 NGOs that advocated for a national rehabilitation policy and 1,350% budget increase

Kyrgyzstan Election Coalition: Group of 7 NGOs that introduced candidate questionnaires and ensured a freer and fairer election in KG

Bulgaria Coalition 2000: An anti-corruption coalition of NGOs that has seen corruption in Bulgaria drop every year but one during its 10 years

All Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV: A coalition of NGOs that has supported 15,000 people with HIV/AIDs and changed laws

America Votes: Coalition of 33 of the largest liberal member-based organizations in the US – they helped the Democratic party win majorities in both the US Senate and House of Representatives

Mark Granius. Counterpart International, Consultant

Topic: Tools for ensuring accountability to the public (annual reports, membership meetings, transparent governance, etc.) (see speech - page 102)

Ensuring Public Accountability

Counterpart Civil Society Conference
Mark Granius
Armenia - April 2007

Defining Accountability

1. The *assumption of responsibility* for actions, products, decisions and policies within a role or employment position and encompassing the obligation to report, explain and be *answerable* for resulting *consequences*.
2. Requires individual and organizational *management, performance and financial account or justification* of its activities to another *stakeholding group or individual*.
3. Being *responsible to someone else* for your activity.
4. Being *obliged to answer* for one's actions, to an *authority* that may impose a *penalty* for failure or a *reward* for good performance.

Defining Accountability

In very simple terms – every action has a consequence

Action → **Consequence**

At a minimum, accountability entails operating legally, honestly and transparently

At best, accountability entails operating at the highest possible levels of productivity, performance, ethics and cost effectiveness

As an NGO, you claim to speak for others and you are spending someone else's money – Therefore, operating in an accountable manner is essential

Related Terms and Techniques

Accountability → **Performance Measurement, Cost Benefit and Report**

Legitimacy → **Sustainability and Constituency**

Integrity → **Transparency**

Democracy → **Taking Responsibility**

Accountability Loop

Every organization should define and enforce an Accountability Loop focusing on 4 components, including:

- (Corrective) Action
- Measurement
- Reporting
- Communicating



Accountability and NGOs

Historical discussion of accountability began with a focus on governance, evolved to the private sector and more recently landed squarely on the nongovernmental sector.

The existence of NGOs is a fundamental element of freedom of expression in a democracy, and must be vehemently protected. Regulation on NGO creation and activity should be limited to (1) preventing tangible harm to others (2) receiving public financial benefit.

While NGOs have scolded governments and businesses to be more accountable, governments and businesses are now imploring NGOs to be more accountable as well.

Accountability and NGOs (2)

NGOs do not DESERVE to exist no matter how humanitarian their aims are. NGOs must justify their existence in the marketplace like any other organization that requires resources for operations and activities.

With 4,000 registered NGOs in Armenia, competition is intense and accountability is becoming extremely important.

While many Armenian NGOs have improved their program and financial management to comply with donor accountability standards, they have had more problems justifying their existence to their own constituents, stakeholders and governments.

Public and Constituent Accountability

The Do Not's:

- Derive all your funding from one donor
- Engage in nepotism and conflict-of-interest practices
- Only do things when you are paid to do them
- Ignore partnership and information requests
- Make large or strategic decisions without getting input from members or beneficiaries
- Spend money lavishly
- Neglect professionalism, quality and customer service principles

Constituent Development Case I

In Turkmenistan, an environmental NGO that managed 10s of 1,000s of donor dollars, conducted 100s of trainings and disbursed numerous grants to local NGOs in their region, was called into court on a politically-motivated charge and were ordered to close down.

Nobody was in court for the trial and not one person protested the court decision. There is no doubt that they did great work – the tragic conclusion was that they absolutely lacked a constituency. Don't let this happen to your organization!

Public and Constituent Accountability

The Do's:

- Actively seek out members, partners and volunteers
- Create an ambitious and comprehensive media strategy
- Communicate regularly with members, partners and the general public
- Be forthcoming and transparent with organizational finances and decision-making mechanisms
- Engage in advocacy and representational activities
- Design and deliver a comprehensive portfolio of member benefits and services – be able to show constituents the value supporting your NGO

Constituent Development Case II

The Civil Society Development Foundations (CSDF) of Bulgaria and Slovakia were started as grant-makers for USAID and PHARE. CSDF Bulgaria had a strong leader and was a favorite local NGO of donors, but remained isolated from the rest of the Bulgarian NGO sector and didn't spend time developing a constituency or cultivating members. The organization ceased to exist one month after donor grants finished. CSDF in Slovakia worked to get members, advocated for constituents, cultivated local funding sources and democratized the NGO. CSDF Slovakia is now one of the strongest and respected NGOs in Slovakia and has expanded its work internationally.

Who are NGOs Accountable to?

While governments are primarily accountable to their citizens, and businesses are primarily accountable to their shareholders – NGOs must respond to their boards of directors, their donors, their members, their beneficiaries, their governments, media and other stakeholders.

With weak boards, few members and disinterested governments – NGOs often become solely accountable to their donors. Most NGOs do not solicit strategic or operational advice from their members and many do not even report on their activities to their members.

General Public Accountability Tools

Events and Actions:

- Open House
- University Guest Lectures
- Organizing Job Fairs
- Competitions and Awards
- Staging Public Cultural or Educational Events
- Fundraising Events
- Signing Public Code of Ethics
- Commission and Publicly Post Annual Audit
- Regular Meetings with Government Officials
- Participate in Government and Other NGO Events
- Volunteer Public Work Days and Clean-Ups

General Public Accountability Tools

Communications:

- Large Package of Communication Products
- Mass Mailings
- Advocacy Action Alerts
- Press Releases
- Flier or Poster Campaigns
- Public Service Announcements
- Issue Success Stories
- Conduct Issue Research and Make Policy Recommendations

Constituency Accountability Tools

Hard Communications:

- Annual Report
- Website
- Newsletter
- Listserve

Soft Communications:

- Media and Commercial Communications
- Creating and Using a Telephone Tree
- Issue-Based or Quarterly Meetings

Constituency Accountability Tools

Information Gathering:

- Telephone Hotline
- Walk-In Hours and Consultations
- Web or Actual Suggestion Box
- Case Recording and Management
- Regular Surveying and Canvassing

Constituency Accountability Tools

Constituent Services:

- Conducting Research and Making Policy Recommendations
- Staging Advocacy and Information Campaigns
- Providing Free Trainings and Consultations
- Managing a Listserve with Opportunity Announcements
- Disseminating Information and Factsheets Regularly

Ensuring Public Accountability II – Tools and Techniques

Tool I – The Annual Report

Even though non-profit organizations aren't required to produce annual reports like publicly traded companies are, most non-profit managers recognize the value of producing one.

Annual reports can help you demonstrate your accomplishments to current and future donors, cultivate new partnerships, and recognize important people. At least as important, is to communicate to YOUR members, beneficiaries, constituents, governmental authorities and the general public.

The Annual Report – Top 10 Tips

- 1 – Define your audience and tailor your content
- 2 – Catch and keep reader attention
- 3 – Tie a theme throughout the report
- 4 – Highlight impact and results, minimize activities
- 5 – Include a financial statement and audit report
- 6 – List donors, volunteers, contributors and partners
- 7 – Be creative and entertaining
- 8 – Maximize use of photos, charts, logos and quotes
- 9 – You can be professional without being elaborate
- 10 – Explain how readers can get involved

The Annual Report – Questions

- How do I represent bad financial information?
- How should donors be organized?
- How much should I spend on an annual report?
- When should we begin writing our annual report?
- Which staff members should be included?
- What should come first in an annual report?
- How many pages should the report be?
- Should my organization do an annual report? YES

The Annual Report – Exercise

Take 10 minutes and draft a Table of Contents – answer the following:

- What would you put on the cover?
- Who would write the introduction letter?
- What sections, topics and unifying theme will you use?
- What financial information will you include?
- Include creative inserts, boxes and appendices

The Annual Report – Sample

Project Photo	Cover
Chairman of the Board Letter	1
What We Do and Who We Are	2-3
Civil Society Programs	4-5
Environmental Programs	6-7
Health Programs	8-9
How You Can Get Involved	10
Donors	11
Financial Information	12

Tool II – The Organizational Dashboard

What is a dashboard on a car?

At a glance, you can see how fast you are going, how much gasoline you have left, if the doors are all shut tightly and if there are any dangers (low oil, low battery or overheating engine).

This analogy holds true for NGOs to create and use an Organizational Dashboard. At a glance, you want your board, management, staff, beneficiaries, members, government officials, stakeholders, media and the general public to know how well and how fast your NGO is operating.

The Organizational Dashboard

An effective NGO Dashboard is a communication, management, and oversight tool. It aims to tell the story of the success or potential problems of the organization. The NGO Dashboard should be a call to action to achieve or reward for performance, the goals an organization has set for itself and to demonstrate the impact on the community you serve.

The Organizational Dashboard - Elements

Key Elements of an Effective NGO Dashboard are the success factors that indicate achievement on:

- (1) Financial
- (2) Efficiency
- (3) Mission Levels

Indicators must be concrete, measurable and consistent over time.

The Organizational Dashboard – Exercise

What indicators would you include on your NGO's Dashboard?

Tool III – Certification Process and Checklist

Create a list of the 8 broad categories and 100 indicators that you feel comprise a strong organization.

Engage in regular internal and external audits based on consistent indicators.

Yelena Sabirova. Counterpart International, Trainer-Consultant

Topic: Constituencies: how to mobilize and utilize (see speech page - 108)



People and Organizations in Civil Society

- Not all NGOs may engage in advocacy.
- NGOs are communications workers, committed to the interests of citizens and public.
- NGOs help others realize the necessity for radical reform of the current practices.
- NGOs unite people to influence the Government, other organizations and the general public.

Advocacy entails:

- ORGANIZING THE VOICELESS TO SPEAK UP FOR THEMSELVES.
- PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION OF THE INTERESTED, INFORMED AND CRITICALLY DISPOSED GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES.
- DEVELOPING "TOP-TO-BOTTOM" RELATIONS.
- ENGAGING SUPPORTERS/PROponents – CONSTITUENTS.
- EXPANDING THE POWER BASE - ORGANIZING THE COMMUNITIES FOR PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND SOLUTION .
- ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - ESTABLISHING ESSENTIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY, NGOS AND OTHER GROUPS.

Target group

The term **CONSTITUENCY**: Includes all citizens concerned with a common issue, and not solely those who the citizens' actions are aimed at.



Attitude Towards Power

The traditional understanding of power:

- Power of "somebody over somebody"
- Power "over" ...

- Alternative types of power:
- Power "to do something"
- Power "for" ...
- Power "with" ...

The power of numbers (a great number of people).

Participation is the basic operation principle of development programs

PARTICIPATION - INVOLVING PEOPLE:

- - in a decision making process,
- - in project implementation, and
- - in sharing the results of development program activities and the methods for involving them in the evaluation of such programs.

**What is participation?
(and What is non-participation) ?**

What is the goal of a "participation strategy"?

- Where the purpose is to substantiate and legalize a decision which has been made by an outside expert, without the involvement of people who live in a given situation and with a given problem - THIS IS NOT PARTICIPATION.

Who makes the final decision on an issue?

Actual participation should involve people in the preparation of a decision affecting them to some extent or other. Where people were only asked to provide information, and were not involved in the ways the information was used - this is not participation in the full meaning.

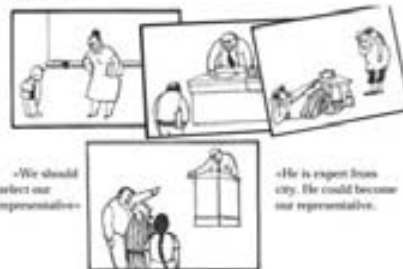
What is the result of participation and who benefits from it?

Where participation brings no benefits to anyone involved in the process to some degree, this is not participation in full measure.

Hindrances to Expanding Participation

Hierarchy and control

Hierarchy and control are norms in life of people, which hinders participation.



Incorrect use of the term "participation"

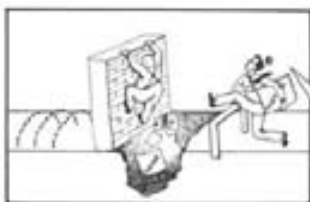


• Staff of the organisations determines the priorities, plans and evaluate programs not involving us in these processes.

"Top-to-bottom" approach



Bureaucratic hindrances



• The problem is that we have people to decide but have no power to apply. While one works, the other is busy with bureaucracy and hinders the accomplishment of our plans and new ideas.

Professional hindrances

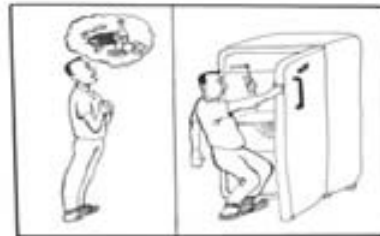


• People can not do it themselves. They have no skills. They need experts and professionals like us, the former working about development. I am devoted to work with socially vulnerable layers of population. By the way, my rate is 1,000 plus other expenses.

Political hindrances



Participation generates expectations



Weak organizational development



Negative positions: superiority



Negative positions: detraction



Negative positions: The process of participation takes a lot of time.



Advice on ensuring participation

- PARTICIPATION CANNOT MERELY BE PROCLAIMED; IT HAS TO BE PUT TO PRACTICE.
- ENSURING PARTICIPATION REQUIRES TIME, RESOURCES, UNDERSTANDING AND PERSISTENCE.
- PARTICIPATION ENSURES STABILITY, MAKES DEVELOPMENT-AIMED ACTIVITIES MORE EFFECTIVE, AND HELPS BUILD UP LOCAL POTENTIAL.
- INVOLVING PEOPLE IN PARTICIPATION PRESUPPOSES A DIFFERENT WORK STYLE, DIFFERENT APPROACHES AND METHODS, AND DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS; AND THE DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS ON ALL LEVELS SHOULD BE AWARE OF THIS.
- A STRATEGY ON TARGETED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE DEVELOPED.

Accountability

Open accountability:

- a tool for prevention or overcoming of conflicts with the stakeholders
- a tool for interaction with the stakeholders
- an institutional development approach
- a mode to attract new opportunities and find unexpected allies and helpers

Deming Cycle



Reporting meetings

GOAL:

- ARE TRIGGERED BY CITIZENS
- PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY OF OFFICIALS

RESULTS:

- PERSUADING RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS TO UNDERTAKE MEASURES FOR PROBLEM SOLUTION
- PASSING A CLEAR DECISION ON FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Thank you for your attention!

Anush Sukiasyan. "Protection of consumers' rights" NGO

Topic: Individual case work as a way to gather policy implementation data and build a constituency

"Protection of consumers' rights" NGO (PCR) - society/citizen relationships

14 April, 2007 Yerevan

PCR Mission

Support the provision of quality goods and services, which are safe with regard to life, health, property and environment, to consumers in Armenia.

PCR strategic principles include

Responding to each and every consumer's request

Received complaints, comments

- Relating public services
 - Gas Supply
 - Water supply
 - Telecommunications
 - Power Supply
- Food safety and quality
- Household appliances quality and safety
- Personal services

Methods of working with consumers

- Hotline
- Complaints, letters
- Visits
- Training courses

Measures taken

- Consultations
- Legal formulation of requests, demands and their provision to consumers
- Letters to relevant organizations
- Legislative proposals based on problems
- Organizing training courses and seminars

Consumers feedback

- Record book for registering information on consumers
- Electronic Network
- Forms for registering training participants

Mobilization of the public

Public mobilization and consumers' involvement in the activities of the organization are effective means for resolving general problems.

The rule for ensuring the transparency of PCR activities

At the end of each year, PCR prepares a report on its activities and disseminates it through its beneficiary network.

Cooperation/coalitions, networks, forums

Cooperation with various non-governmental organizations operating in Yerevan and marzes

- Yeghegnadzor "Civic center" of "Against legal arbitrariness" NGO
- Sisyan "Ecosis" NGO
- "Green union of Vayk"

**Cooperation/coalitions, networks,
forums**

Founder of the Armenian Organic Farming Fund

Member of coalitions since 2001

Objective: to combat corruption.
Public desks have been established.

**Cooperation/coalitions, networks,
forums**

Membership of Civil Society

Objective: jointly promote active participation and
involvement of the public in drafting, adoption,
implementation and supervision of public policies.


**Relationships of the PCR and the
public are based on mutual trust and
support.**

Track D

Bob Evans. IREX, Chief of Party


Topic: *Message development, delivery planning and impact evaluation (see speech - page 138)*

Public Relations 101: Understanding and Using the Tools




Agenda

- Public Relations (PR)
 - What it is and isn't
 - What it can and cannot do
- PR Tools Overview
- How PR can help your group
- Implementing PR as a tool




Objective

To provide you with **at least** one idea that will help you further your mission




PR: Understanding the Basics




PR is not...

- Rocket Science (whew!)
- Advertising




	Control	Credibility	Cost
Advertising	High	High	High
PR	Low	Low	Low



PR is...

A strategic communications process that helps manage, protect, and enhance the reputation of an organization, its members, and its services.



PR is...

- Simple
 - One call can earn media coverage
- Cost-effective
 - You can reach thousands, even millions
- Powerful
 - The right story with the right message can have a huge impact



Public Relations Can...

- Build an image
- Reinforce and further an organization's reputation.
- Raise awareness
- Educate
- Increase understanding
- Change behavior
- Build credibility
- Influence opinion leaders
- **Motivate your audience to action**



Public Relations cannot...

- Eliminate the "competition"
- Eliminate others' opinions
- Compensate for bad decisions, corrupt practices, or weak marketing positions
 - Substance is required, must be relevant



PR: Understanding the Tools



Public Relations tools

- Press releases, media alerts, press conferences
 - For timely/breaking news
- "Backgrounders"
 - Meetings to build relationships, educate
- Special events
 - Planned meetings
 - Created events for key audiences
- By-lined articles
 - Gives your organization's POV on issue
- Speeches



Public Relations tools

- "Pitch" letters or calls to media
 - Propose coverage
- Photos, videotapes, other visuals
 - Materials given to media to help tell your story
- Brochures, newsletters, other collateral
- Web site content
 - Blogs, discussion boards, etc.



Using the Tools

- Keys to success:
 - Think like the audience
 - "Consumers"
 - Reporters
 - Legislators
 - Community leaders



- Know what makes news
 - Controversy
 - Change
 - New
 - Unique
 - Unusual



Using Tools with the Media

- Relevance
 - News you can use (tips)
 - Link to emerging trend
 - Timeliness
 - Event this weekend (TV/daily newspapers)
 - Event in two-three months (local magazine/monthlies)
 - A local angle
 - Reporters want to personalize all stories



PR: Setting the Stage to Use the Tools!



Can PR Help You?



- First -- answer these questions:
 - What is your mission?
 - Are there any misperceptions in the marketplace that prevent us from accomplishing our goals?
 - What audiences are most important to us ...
 - General public?
 - Special interest groups?
 - Partnering organizations?
 - Industry influencers?
 - Government officials?



And most importantly...


- What is your message?

"It is always a risk to speak to the press: they are likely to report what you say."
 -- Hubert H. Humphrey

Setting the Stage: Key Message Development

- What are Key Messages?
 - Clear, concise, memorable thoughts that align with your business objectives
 - The thoughts you most want your audience to remember above all else
 - Key to gain organizational alignment to the messages:
 - Ensures all are speaking with "one voice" to outside audiences




Setting the Stage: Key Message Development

- Why do we need key messages?
 - We live in an era of information overload and sound-bite journalism
 - Message points ...
 - Define your agenda to help you focus
 - Make it easy for you to "tell your story"
 - Make it easy for others to remember it
 - Give yourself a "life raft" to cling to if the waters turn rough
 - Ensure consistency throughout your organization



Setting the Stage: Key Message Development


- How to Create Key Messages
 - Primary messages and proof points:
 - Headlines followed by the "story" (journalists)
 - Assertions followed by the supporting evidence (lawyers)
 - At least one, no more than four
 - A "one-pager"



Hypothetical Example #1

- Primary message point =>
- Proof points =>


- Focusing on a few key messages is key to effective communication
- People are bombarded by thousands of messages a day, so only the most compelling and easy to remember messages get through
- Helps you prepare for discussions
- This one discipline alone has helped win presidential elections



Hypothetical Example #2

- Primary message point =>
- Proof points =>

- The ----- Company is a ----- company, with its cornerstone foundation in -----
- -----helps millions of citizens live longer, healthier lives with innovations like -----
- Locations in----- and soon----- are bringing ---- to Armenia!



THE NEW YORK TIMES THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1992

THE 1992 ELECTIONS
PRESIDENT-ELECT

Clinton: A Winner Forged From Discipline, Luck and Purpose

Yet it is instructive to note that when Mr. Clinton's chosen advisers were asked to name the lowest moments of the Democratic campaign this year, they do not invariably mention the embarrassments and setbacks over matters of essential substance, the Vice-presidential pick or Mr. Clinton's past jobs, each of which at times threatened to engulf the campaign.

Instead, they talk about the success and failures of their message and how they chose to deliver it. In the end, when they stuck to their message, they overcame their obstacles.



Key Messages: Not just for Media

- Can work in communicating with all your audiences
 - Community leaders
 - Organizations
 - Members
 - Business partners
 - Legislators and others
- Use across all forms of communication
 - Elevator conversations
 - One-on-one meetings
 - Public speaking
 - Presentations for funding



Keys Message Point Success

- Frequent and consistent delivery
- Constantly reviewed and updated
 - Ideally, the support points change, not the primary messages
- A part of the fabric of your organization
 - Practiced with friends and family through "interviews"




Key Message Exercise

- Small Groups
 - Think about your next event
 - Communications objective: To increase attendance to the event
 - Develop key message with proof points
 - 10 minutes
 - Got




PR: Putting the Tools to Use



Putting the Tools to Use

- Understanding and utilizing the tools that help deliver your messages
 - Call to a local reporter
 - News release to several reporters
 - Letter to the editor of the paper
 - Newsletter to your associates
 - Special event
 - Brief speech at —
 - Presentation to government officials
 - New page on your web site
 - Ideally, a combination of several of the above



Putting the Tools to Use

- Identify media contacts and build relationships
 - Newspaper feature writers and editors
 - Radio newscasters, producers and DJs
 - Television assignment editors, producers and reporters
- Watch for and create opportunities
 - An upcoming meeting or event you can leverage
 - The launch of a restaurant or the emergence of a consumer trend that you can connect your message to in a relevant way (i.e. "makeover mania" = prep for the ring)



Tools: The Ideal Package

- Suggested PR plan for your next event:

Develop Key Messages	6 months out
Write News Release	3 months out
E-mail and call local monthly publications	3 months out
E-mail and call local daily newspapers	2 months out
• Features Editors	
• Sports Editors	
Call all local TV stations	1 week out (call day of event to confirm attendance)
• News editors (or reporters)	
Post event	E-mail "thanks" to all who covered the event
Event debrief	Review coverage and process/capture learnings



Tools Exercise

- **Small Groups:**
 - Develop a skeleton plan for your next event
 - Include key messages & suggested headlines
 - 10 minutes
 - Go!



Putting the Tools to Use

- **Preparing for the interview**
 - Tips for talking to the press
 - You are in control
 - Focus in delivering your message
 - know what you want to say, be informed and be prepared
 - Look for an opportunity with the last question
 - Prepare for the worst questions
 - Remember this equation $A = Q + KM$



Putting the Tools to Use

- Use blocking and bridging (B&B) to get from the question to your message ($A=Q+KM$)

“Does anyone here have any questions for my answers?”
—Henry Kissinger



Putting the Tools to Use

B&B language:

- “It’s our policy not to discuss those types of things, but I can tell you ...”
- “I think what you’re really asking is ...”
- “Let me clarify. What we’re really talking about here is ...”
- “That speaks to a bigger point, which is ...”



Putting the Tools to Use

- **More Interview Tips:**
 - Keep your cool – don’t be arrogant or hostile
 - Be repetitive but not robotic
 - Use easy to understand examples or stories to illustrate your point
 - Say only what you want to say, then STOP
 - You can call a “time-out” – its ok to pause
 - If you don’t know, don’t speculate
 - Never repeat a negative
 - Remember there is no firm beginning or end to an interview
 - Choose the proper backdrop for a broadcast story



Putting the Tools to Use

- **No perfect interview:**
 - Don’t be too hard on yourself
 - Do monitor the coverage closely to learn from each experience
- “Your passion for a subject will save you.”*
– William James
Harvard Professor of Psychology



A quick recap

- Public relations can be simple, costeffective and powerful
- Remember the three key steps to putting PR to work for you
 - Know what you want to say
 - Tap the PR tool box to create opportunities to deliver your message
 - Be prepared for the media interview – this is your chance to tell your story



Kyla Springer. Counterpart International, Communicate Associate

Topic: *Media toolkit for NGOs (see speech - page 320)*

Media Toolkit for Nonprofits



What's Inside?

- Success Story
- Press Release
- Press Kit
- Photos
- Speakers' Bureau
- Press Conference
- Stylebook
- Quotes
- Press list
- Media advisory
- Opinion and Editorial Pieces
- Website



The **Press Kit** shares the nuts and bolts of your organization with a media outlet. It may be your first impression with a media outlet and should be packaged as such – sleek, well-branded, and concise.



A **Speakers Bureau** is a list of in-house experts who are available to speak about various topics with media outlets – they can tweak your story and add depth.



Your **Press List** is the glue that can hold your media outreach together. Creating relationships with media, well in advance of your events, will increase the chances that media will attend because they **WANT** to.



A **Press Conference** can 'hammer in' your message through a more engaging dialogue and create relationships with media representatives



A **Media Advisory** functions as an alert of an upcoming event. You can let media outlets know, in advance, that you are planning a news-worthy event, and invite them to attend.



Photos can instantly show the impact of a program and grab your audience's attention, begging them to read on and learn more.



A **Success Story** is your organizations' paint brush. This is the tool that can bring your work to life.

To use media tools well, we have to look at the world through our audiences' eyes - not our own.



- It's not about our organization.
- It's about what we do for our audiences.

Connect with Your Audience

- We cannot change our audience
- What Are **Their** Values, Wants, Desires?

Instead, we can latch on to:

- existing values
- existing feelings
- existing desires

We CAN change what they DO

– Show them a NEW way to get what they want

- Example: If they value independence, show them how participating in your voting campaign will help them reach THEIR goal



What do teens value?

Independence, control, rebellion



In Ukraine, youth vote like American youth – they don't.



"Vote for a Better Future"

VS

"Vote Now. Or Your Babushka will Vote for You."



What do they want?



What Are You Supposed to Do?



Get Tested
• Call Them

Logo – The graphic identity only.

Brand – The essence of the organization, the promises we make to our audiences, donors and beneficiaries.





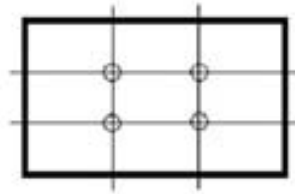
Photos are Worth a Thousand Words







Rule of Thirds





Aram Mkrtychyan. Radio Hay, Executive Director

Topic: From pop to politics-how to work with radio

USAID
National Endowment for Democracy
GOVERNMENT

National Conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process
April 14, 2007

From Pop to Politics-how to work with radio

Aram Mkrtychyan
Radio Hay

From Pop to Politics- how to work with radio

Why Radio?

- ❑ **Cost**
Low cost production in comparison with TV is the best advantage of radio as a medium.
- ❑ **Reach and Frequency**
With the help of radio's mobility, radio has the widest exposure compared with any other medium. Radio can reach consumers no matter where they are.
- ❑ **Target Audience Selectivity**
Radio is an effective medium because of its ability to target specific audiences. The habits of radio listeners are taken into consideration which enables to convey the right message to the right audience.
- ❑ **Creative Opportunities**
Radio's multidimensional function can make it to have a better chance at stimulating the imagination of the listeners.

From Pop to Politics- how to work with radio

Why radio?

Radio stations in Armenia are:

- ❑ The most independent and non-partisan among other media outlets
- ❑ Mostly driven by commercial competition
- ❑ Open for technological innovations and creativity
- ❑ Mostly have clear formats and target specific audience

From Pop to Politics- how to work with radio

Two wrong stereotypes

1. NGOs mostly perceive radio stations as purely commercial entities uninterested in public policy issues
2. Radios perceive NGOs as "being grant eaters", utilizing international donors' funds without real results.

From Pop to Politics- how to work with radio

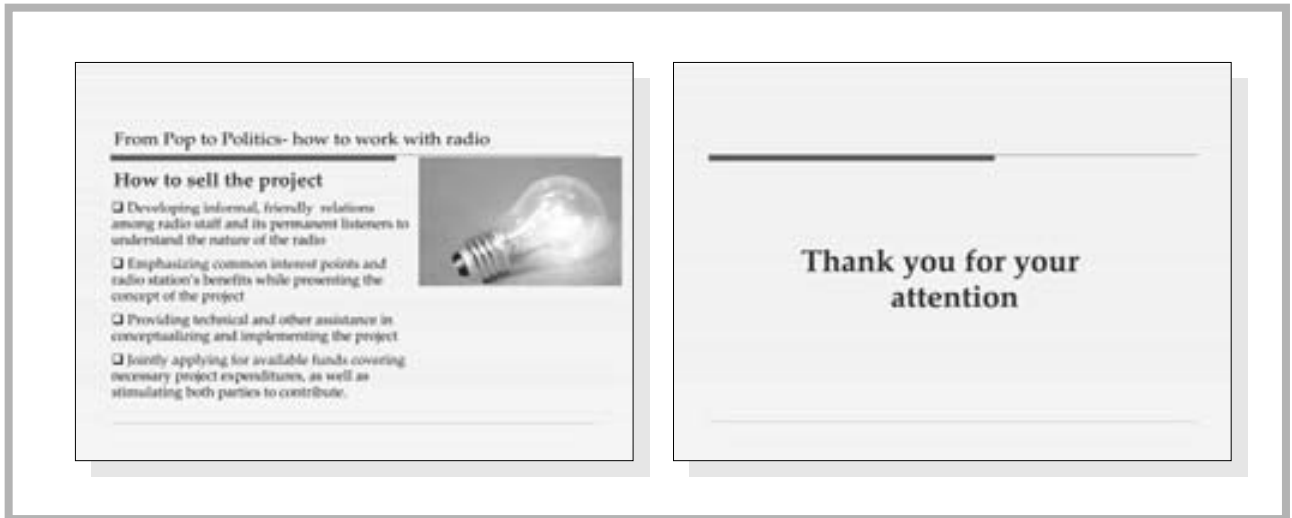
From consuming to partnership

- ❑ Stop buying advertising air time on randomly selected sections
- ❑ Identify the target audience/ segment
- ❑ Identify the habits and taste of the target audience
- ❑ Identify the radio station's reach of the selected target audience
- ❑ Identify common-interest aspects of the public policy issue
- ❑ Identify the indirect benefits the radio station will have from partnership

From Pop to Politics- how to work with radio

Project development

- ❑ Develop an exclusive project that may benefit radio by increasing its audience and concentrating on target segment.
- ❑ Involve celebrities and public figures
- ❑ Contribute to the establishment of the radio station's brand and mission
- ❑ Offer services that can be useful for the selected radio station



Vahan Sirounyan. Budget Advisor/ MFE Workstream Leader in Support to the Roll-Out of Program Budgeting

Topic: *Budget process and accountability to the public*



Market and Public Goods

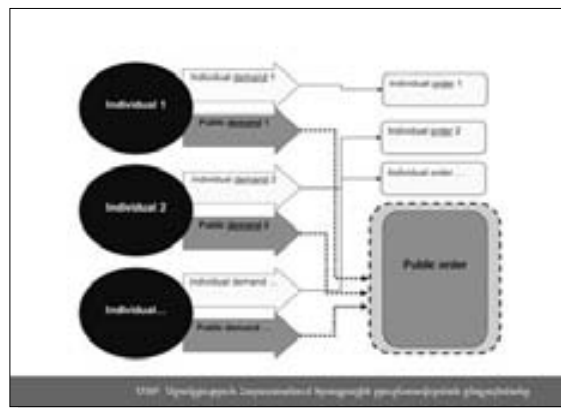
Individual demand

For example, the consumption of cream, additional training, personal security services, etc.

Public demand

For example military, formal basic education, police services, preservation of the attributes of an independent state, specific features of the national state, etc.

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Agreement between public administration bodies

In the Soviet period...

State administration bodies had the obligation to:

- Decide on what public services to produce, for whom and how to produce them
- Organize the production of public services

The public had the obligation to:

- Work

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Agreement between public administration bodies

In democratic systems

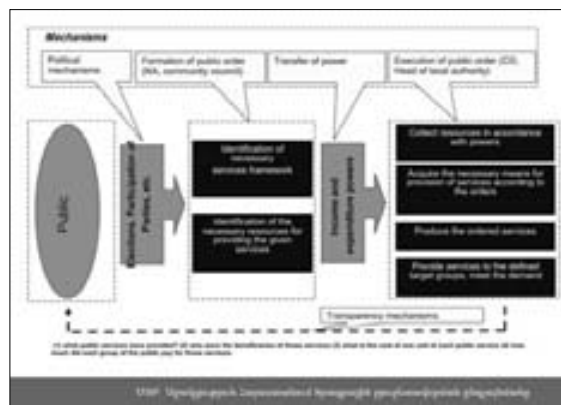
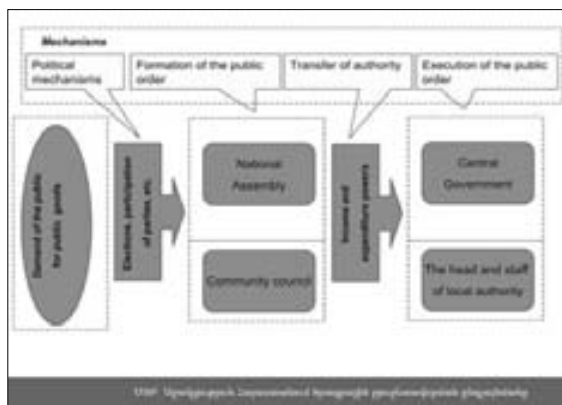
The public has the obligation to

- Decide on what public services to produce, for whom and how to produce them
- Supervise public services' commissioning and provision processes

State administration bodies have the obligation to

- Organize the production of public services ordered by the public

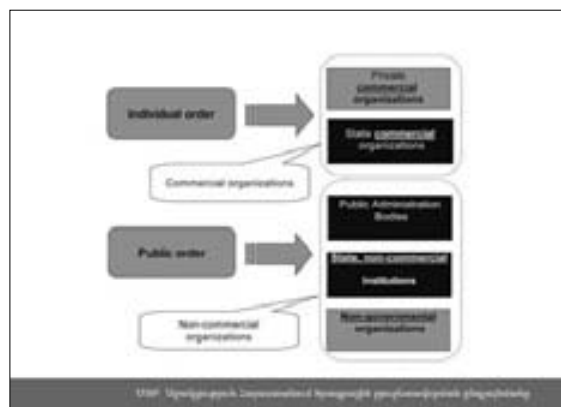
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Market and Public Goods

- Each individual should take into account that he or she lives within the framework of a set of individuals, i.e. the public.
- In these conditions, other than our individual demands, certain public demands are also formed:
 - For example other than the circumstance that individually we want to (and have to) pay for our children's individual education, we also want to (and are ready to) pay for the basic education of all members of our society, so that they are able to become full members of the community
- In order for producers to know our demand, it is necessary to formulate the demand formally, i.e. form the order.

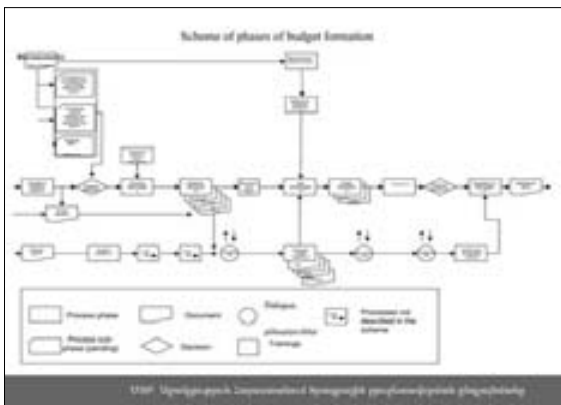
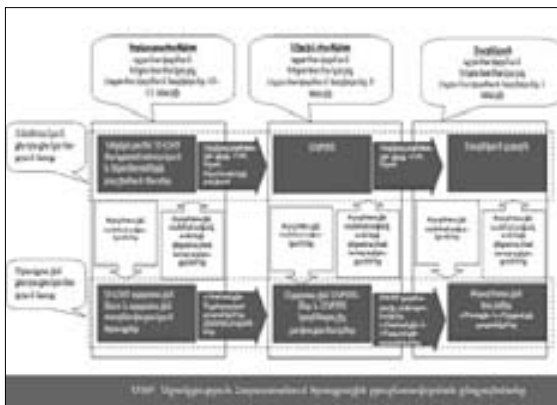
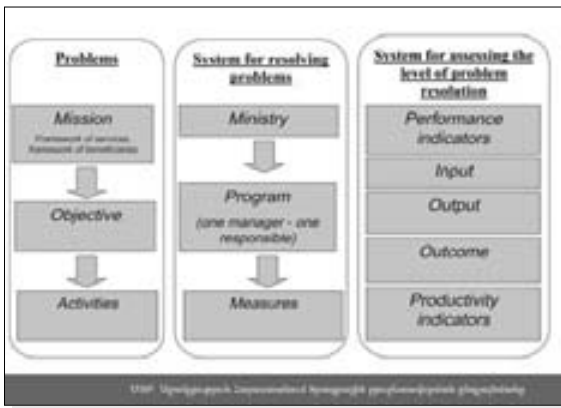
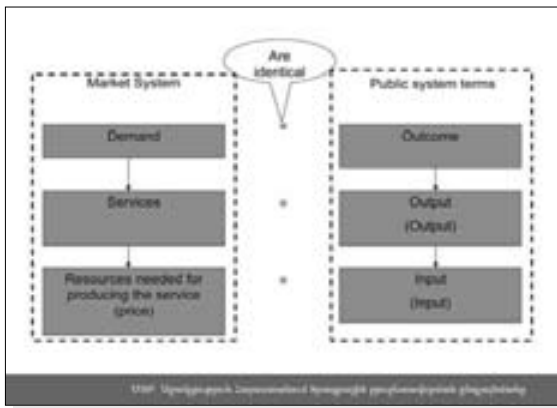
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Budgetary Systems in Armenia


- Are there significant changes in budgetary systems?
- Is it possible today to answer the following questions through studying publicly available budgetary documents?
 - What services has the public received?
 - What groups of the public have received those services?
 - What is the per unit cost of those services?
 - Objectively, how has the given minister worked?



- The need for development of systems for budget formation with public participation
- Active public participation
 - MTEF, formation of annual budget
 - Availability of result indicators for 4+10 pilot agencies
 - Monitoring of performance reports
 - Possibility for analysis of performance reports of 4+10 pilot agencies

Anna Hovhannisyan, USAID Armenia Social Protection Systems Strengthening (SPSS),
Legislative Outreach Liaison


Topic: Budget process-an example of NGO-media collaboration for the public good (see speech - page 330)

 **USAID**
Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project

**USAID Armenia
Social Protection Systems'
Strengthening Program**

Budget Process –
an example of NGO-media
collaboration for the public good


1

 **USAID**
Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project

"What brings us together . . . is our belief that people have a right to influence the public choices that shape our lives. Public budgets are the chief instruments by which governments make these decisions, and civil society the greatest tool to ensure that people are part of that process."

Jim Shultz
<http://www.internationalbudget.org/Papers/ISB>


2

 **USAID**
Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project

What kind of groups are involved in Budget Work in Armenia?

- Policy institutions
- Academic or research institutions that have added an applied budget component
- Activist organizations that have added a budget research component
- Those who operate at all levels of government: national, state, local/municipal


3

 **USAID**
Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project

General Nature of Budget Products

- Attempt to be accurate, accessible, and timely
- Strive for independent assessments
- Try to affect policies


4

 **USAID**
Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project

NGOs' Main Activities

- *Advancing budget literacy
- *Assessing the budget process and budget systems
- *Analyzing budget policies

5

 **USAID**
Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project

Target Audiences

- Policymakers, both the executive and legislative branches
- Media
- Other NGOs
- The broad population
- Researchers/academics

6

USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project

The budget cycle in Armenia has four stages:

- Budget formulation, when the budget plan is put together by the executive branch of government;
- Enactment, when the budget plan debated, altered, and approved by the National Assembly;
- Execution, when the policies of the budget are carried out by the government;
- Auditing and assessment, when the actual expenditures of the budget are accounted for and assessed for effectiveness.

7

USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project

1. Budget Formulation

- **NGO Role:**
- Because the budget is rarely constructed from scratch, major parts of the budget may be anticipated by stakeholders outside the executive. This creates an opportunity for analysis and advocacy at the formulation stage.
- During the development of the budget, non-governmental groups can release analyses on issues known to be under consideration via media, or that they believe ought to be priorities, with the hope of influencing the budget being formulated.
- There might also be opportunities for NGOs to establish informal lines of communication with executive branch officials via round tables and open discussions with sufficient coverage in media.

8

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2. Budget Enactment

NGO Role:

1. In Armenia, since public discussion of and interest in the budget are typically at their high point when the executive presents its budget to the NA, this creates opportunities for non-governmental groups to get media coverage for their budget analyses.
2. Furthermore, non-governmental groups are frequently asked to serve as expert witnesses at hearings and to comment on budget proposals in other ways as well. Their analyses and testimony can influence the debate and highlight important issues about the impact of budget proposals on the poor.

9

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3. Budget Execution — Implementation, Monitoring, and Control

NGO Role:

- In Armenia the implementation of the budget is the executive function. Unfortunately, NGOs have limited ability to monitor the flow of funds.
- However, non-governmental groups do have an interest in an effective and transparent monitoring system that promotes adherence to the budget and reduces mismanagement or corruption. Media can be the best tool in this case.
- Groups may advocate budget reforms to improve budgetary control. Similarly, they may engage in some monitoring activities.

10

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4. Outcome Assessment and Reporting — Audits and Performance Evaluations

NGO Role:

- This budget stage presents a valuable opportunity for budget groups to obtain information on the effectiveness of particular budget initiatives, as well as to advance accountability by assessing whether the legislature and executive branches respond appropriately to the findings of audit reports (control chamber, deputy request, interpellation question).
- When available in a timely manner, audit reports often document a litany of mis-expenditure, mal-expenditure, and procurement irregularities. NGOs should attempt to spread such information widely via media and use it to advance reforms.

11

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Factors Which Weaken the Budgetary Role of the National Assembly

Legislature's role is often undermined by several factors, including the following:

- The political system and practices in Armenia limit the impact the legislature can have on the budget.
- The legal framework and legislature rules constrain the role of the legislature.
- Legislature in Armenia is also hampered by lack of staff and budget expertise.

12

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Media and Dissemination Issues

1. Preparing a report should be considered only the first step of budget work.
2. The goal is not only to write a great analysis, but to get it into the hands of those who should read it and then to get them to read it.
3. This means that very close attention needs to be paid to how and when products are distributed.

13

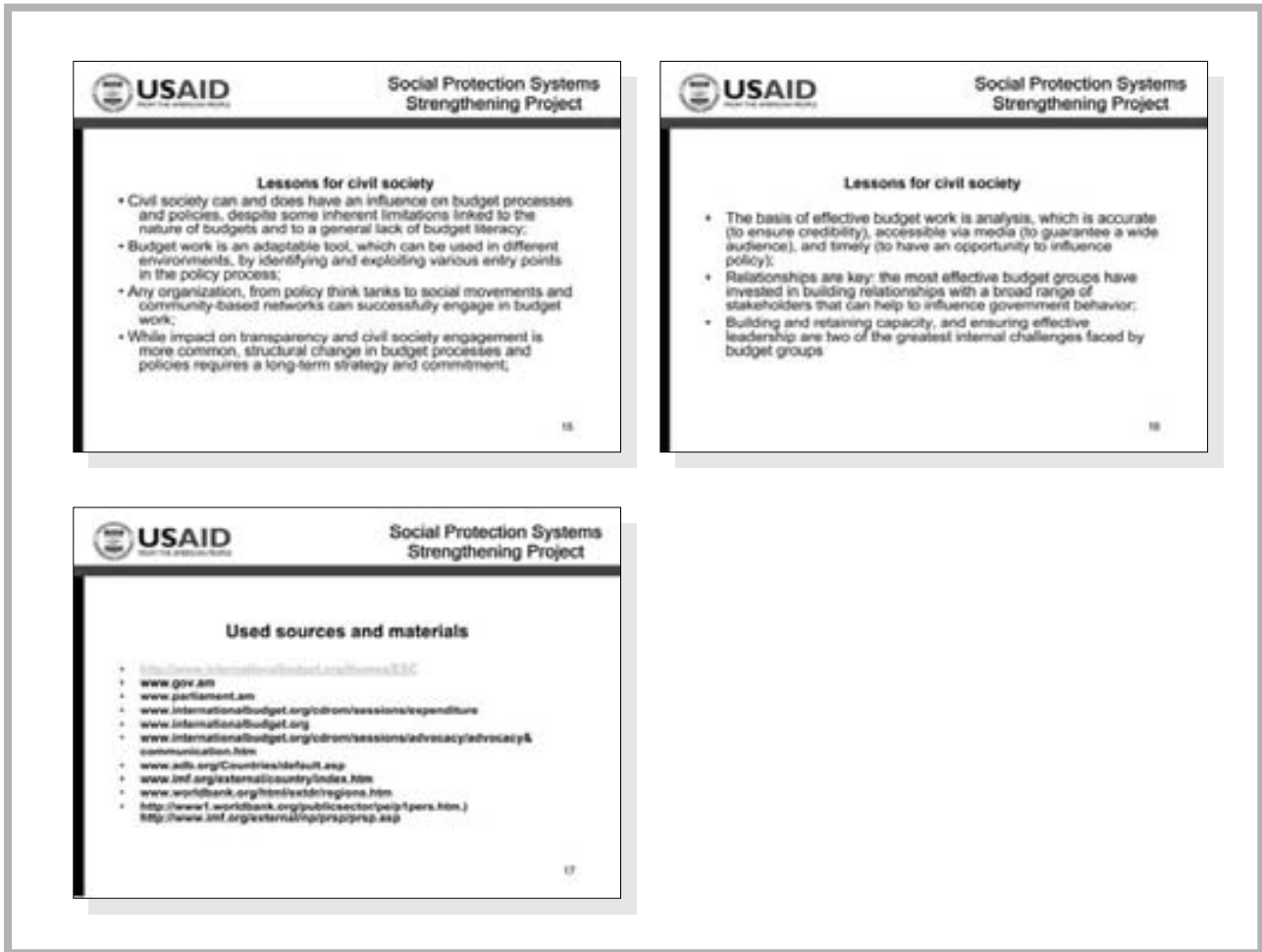
USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project

Working with Policymakers

Check List for Reports for Policymakers

- Identify key decision makers and key staff both in Government and NA
- Identify key points of entry
- Tailor materials appropriately
- Remember: Media attention spurs political response
- "No permanent friends, no permanent enemies."
- Work across party lines
- Share the limelight

14



Lusine Hovhannisyanyan, Head of National Assembly Web division

Topic: www.parliament.am (see speech - page 338)



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Ընտրողների հետ կապեր / Constituency Relations

ընտրողը ունի հնարավորություն ուղղակի կապ ստեղծելու պատգամավորի, հանձնաժողովների և խորհրդարանի նախագահի հետ

Citizens have the possibility to communicate with Deputies of the National Assembly and other NA representatives

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Սեռ	Ընդամենը
Իգական	100
Սրբական	100
Ընդամենը	200

Սեռ	Պորցենտ
Իգական	50%
Սրբական	50%
Ընդամենը	100%

Վիճակագրական տվյալներ

Խորհրդարանական վեբ կայքի վեբ-կայքի ցուցանիշները GOOGLE.COM-ի տվյալներով

Սեռ	04.01.2007	04.07.2007	04.13.2007	04.20.2007
Իգական	100	100	100	100
Սրբական	100	100	100	100
Ընդամենը	200	200	200	200

Վիճակագրական տվյալներ

«Ազգային ժողովի վեբ-կայքի վեբ-կայքի ցուցանիշները GOOGLE.COM-ի տվյալներով»

Սեռ	04.01.2007	04.07.2007
Իգական	100	100
Սրբական	100	100
Ընդամենը	200	200



Government-NGO Relations



The Role of NGOs in the Public Policy
Process Conference 2007

STATE – CIVIL SOCIETY

OBSTACLES

- Mutual mistrust
- Lack of knowledge, skills
- Approach of donor organizations
- Absence of unanimity and union in NGO sector
- Lack of NGOs transparency, profits collision
- Lack of information about NGO activities
- Lack of mutually beneficial approach

- Inequality of collaboration terms
- Non-effective use of existing legal field opportunities
- Lack of right use culture
- Incomplete use of the law
- Deviation of NGOs missions for the financial support

Suggestions


1. Form a non-governmental expert grouping National Assembly for presentation interests of NGO sector
2. Website creation for information (according to the fields), realizing programs, the best experience, donors' support

Suggestions


3. Use the existing opportunities of civil policy formation and realization control (PRSP, Anticorruption Program)
4. Improvement of National Program Coordination
5. Information active transmission to the National Assembly library by NGO sector

Suggestions

6. Create public dialogue club for NGOs and the representatives of State and local self-governing bodies
 - Publish brief reference-book about deputies and NGOs cooperation
 - Discussion of the State Support Program by NGOs

<p style="text-align: center;">Suggestions</p> <p>9. Use the results of National Assembly deputies' ballot</p> <p>10. Create Local self-governing body- NGO procedure for stimulation of more effective cooperation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Let us try</p> 
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Track **B** **Business-NGO Relations**

 <p style="text-align: center;">The Role of NGO's in Public Policy Process Conference 2007</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Business - NGO</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">OBSTACLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment • Knowledge insufficiency • Non-tolerance • Absence of transparency • Not having "weight" • Service absence to businesses
<p style="text-align: center;">OBSTACLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty • Information insufficiency • Non-printing of annual reports • Absence of belief • Legislative field incompleteness • Insufficiency of meetings and contacts 	<p style="text-align: center;">OBSTACLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak fight against corruption • Insufficient mutual understanding • Inconsistent public relations with businesses • Uncertainty in policies • Unclear projects

SOLUTIONS

- Good PR
- Strengthen inner abilities
- Invite businesses to NGO events
- Participate in acts that organize businesses
- Elaborate statement mechanism

SOLUTIONS

- Involve representatives from the business and public sector to NGO councils
- Develop policies to work with mass media
- Sequence and professionalism of speech and work
- Consolidate
- Communicate

POSSIBLE SERVICES TO BUSINESS

- Information
- Legal advice
- Researches
- Seminars
- Monitoring
- Business rights advocacy
- Making information for Mass Media as goods


WHERE TO START?

- Decide the purpose
- Establish the magazine
- Recognize the enterprising and know whom to apply
- Encourage participation of businesses in NGO conferences
- Undertake a report

WHERE TO START?

- Develop actions plan
- Create NGO coalitions
- Understand the business environment
- Establish a business collaboration circle
- Encourage businesses to cooperate (rating)
- Lobby
- Work through ethnic norms

Community/Citizen-NGO Relations

 <p>The Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process Conference 2007</p> <p><u>Community - NGO</u></p>	<p>Questions/Problems</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase cooperation within NGO sector 2. Increase trust between NGOs and society 3. Strengthen cooperation between NGOs and the community
<p>Suggestions</p> <p>Increase cooperation within NGO sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage partnerships and institutional development among NGOs • General analysis of NGO sector by marzes and cities • Periodically provide more informative (geographic or thematic) NGO conferences and advertise them in the mass media 	<p>Suggestions</p> <p>Increase cooperation within NGO sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop multifunctional NGO resource center (s), website, and reference books to highlight the activities of NGOs in different fields • Utilize State financed youth centers
<p>Suggestions</p> <p>Increase trust between NGOs and society</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve transparency within NGOs' activities and accountability to their beneficiaries 2. Develop informal educational opportunities for NGOs in the field of public relations 3. Organize advising events and meetings 4. Frequently promote NGO activities 5. Use the right to defend other people in the court (legislative changes) as a judicial mechanism for advocacy 6. Encourage donor organizations to review grant criteria and acquaint themselves with NGOs and their strategies prior to financing them 7. Develop an interest in NGOs by promoting a positive image 8. Develop vital capacity strategy with communities and co-thinkers 9. Utilize membership fee mechanisms 10. Organize community events 11. Develop educational opportunities in every stratum of society -work skills with beneficiaries for attitude change 	<p>Suggestions</p> <p>Increase trust between NGOs and society</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work jointly with society to ensure trust 2. Develop capacity of NGOs 3. Encourage organizational professionalism among NGO employees 4. Promote interest towards NGOs in society 5. Promote a culture of participation and volunteerism 6. Promote successes of NGOs and draw in beneficiaries 7. Encourage self-regulation among NGOs (black-list corrupt NGOs based on concrete facts)

Suggestions

Increase trust between NGOs and society

- Be frank with beneficiaries and present organization's steps
- Promote transparency among NGOs' activities
- Periodically inform beneficiaries via mass media or information meetings about both realized and not yet realized goals to keep society abreast of problems and difficulties for helping
- NGOs should have financial resources to continue their mission

Suggestions

Strengthen cooperation between NGOs and the community

- Comprehensive research of societal problems and organization of public events
- Involve beneficiaries in programs
- Guarantee accountability to achieve confidence in NGOs among society
- Awareness of society sections who need advocacy

Suggestions

Strengthen cooperation between NGOs and the community

- Permanent and backward connection with beneficiaries
- Direct contact with society

Media–NGO relations

 <p>The Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process Conference 2007</p> <p><u>Mass Media - NGO</u></p>	<p>Main purpose</p> <p>Mutually beneficial collaboration in favor of society</p>
<p>Conclusion</p> <p>NGO sector and Mass Media collaboration does not exist because of following reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mutual mistrust ■ Existence of mutual stereotypes ■ Lack of NGO capacity and vocational training to interest Mass Media and make it a co-thinker ■ Lack of Mass Media interest in NGOs and important topics for society 	<p>Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Print activities and contacts of Mass Media and NGOs ■ Media literacy courses (including practical courses and visits to Mass Media) ■ PR courses taught by professionals with by high international experience
<p>Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Processing and enforcement of NGO sector code of ethics, especially in the relations with Mass Media (e.g. not to pay agreement for news) ■ Mass Media-NGO joint forum (meetings, round tables, discussions, seminars) for improving and stabilizing the cooperation 	<p>Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Document success stories of NGO-Mass Media cooperation ■ Create and launch a telecast about public sector

Handouts

Track **A**

Eleanor Valentine, Project Director, USAID-Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project

Topic: Opportunities of parliament in working with NGOs in the policy making process

Challenges and Opportunities in Government-NGO Relations:

Opportunities of Parliaments in Working NGOs in the Policy-Making Process

Government-NGO Relations: Systems Approach to the Public Policy Process

*A presentation for the
National Conference on the Role of NGOs in the Public Policy Process
Yerevan, Armenia, April 13-15, 2007*

First of all, let me thank and congratulate USAID and Counterpart International's Civic Advocacy Support Program in Armenia for organizing this very important conference at a critical period in Armenia. The growth of civil society in Armenia in the past 15-20 years has been impressive, and civil society activists are a vibrant and indispensable part of society, contributing significantly to the accomplishments of the country. I am truly honored to be invited to this forum to share my views on the interaction between civil society and parliament in this august company, and delighted to be "back home" in Yerevan.

When we look at the opportunities of parliaments in working with NGOs, the first question from a parliamentarian is likely to be, "what's in it for me? Why should I listen? Why should I care what these people think? Is it worth my time and energy to consider their position and opinion on this issue?" If the answer to that last question is, "no," then my prediction is that the parliamentarian won't be around for very much longer and that the work that s/he does during his/her tenure won't be nearly as productive or effective as if the answer had been "yes."

Civil society is reflective of people's passions and interests. Individuals within civil society organizations represent an electorate. Even if it happens to be a small organization, those activists reach a broader public, who are potential voters at the next election. There is "value-added" when civil society organizations take up an issue, and it behooves the parliamentarian to listen and consider the positions of those organizations and individuals. What I intend to share with you today for discussion is, why this is so, and paths for NGO interaction with parliamentarians.

It is important to understand the entities and the parameters of their relationship.

So first, let us look briefly at the roles of NGOs, government and parliament. Secondly, we will look at some examples of opportunities for building effective relationships for policy making.

NGO ASSETS

In what way is the NGO sector an asset to a parliamentarian? There are some aspects of the NGO profile which will be discussed in greater depth in other sessions of this conference, but it is important to consider the "value" of an NGO from a parliamentarian's perspective.

First of all, the motivation for most NGO activists is, above all, interest and commitment to an issue or a cause. As opposed to businesses, most NGOs are not "growth industries." The reason for someone to work in an NGO is often dedication and passion. NGOs tend to have a specialized focus which helps them to develop expertise. Concentration on issues leads to staying abreast of the situation. Stronger NGOs may even guide a policy agenda by investigating various options and coming to a position on the issue, which they then promote through their memberships or through public advocacy campaigns. NGO activists have energy and vitality to dedicate themselves to an issue and to mobilize like-minded citizens to support that issue. NGOs often find an alliance with experts, practitioners, and academic. Finally, NGOs often have a broad base of support - with branch affiliations in regional centers, or individual support from those who receive their newsletters or participate in workshops conducted by those NGOs. There is often a "snowball effect" of learning initiated by NGOs. There is a process of sharing knowledge and expertise, and bringing others into the community of individuals who are knowledgeable and passionate about an issue, which continually contributes to the development of the policy position.

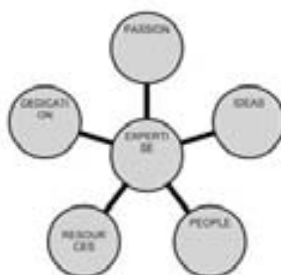


Figure 1. NGO Assets

The Government

The government has a responsibility to develop and then implement the policies it puts forth. There are times in the policy process when it is to the advantage of the government to work with civil society organizations, and in so doing effectively formulate policies. With civil society backing and support, the opportunities for successful policy implementation are greater. Once it is determined, then the government is responsible for policy implementation, while implementing the policies, governments are also self-monitoring or, at least, setting benchmarks so that they can assess whether they are meeting their policy goals.

NGOs can play an important role in all these stages of policy development - planning, implementation (often, service delivery can be contracted to NGOs) and monitoring.

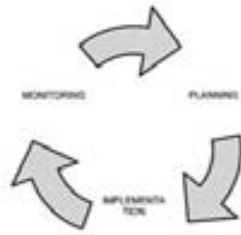


Figure 2. The Government Policy Cycle

The Parliament

Parliament, by its very nature, is a multifarious body, where various interests and positions reflected by government parties and the opposition are represented. There are different access points for NGOs both within the political bodies of parliament and within the bureaucracy which services the parliament.



Figure 3. The Parliament

Like the government, the parliament is called upon at different points in the policy process, but most significantly in the planning (including budgetary allocations) and monitoring stages (often the emphasis is on oversight of those budgetary allocations).

Opportunities do exist for NGOs to influence and inform the parliament at these stages with individual members, committees, and the leadership (and leadership includes leadership of the institution as well as individual bodies - e.g., committees and factions). At each of these levels, NGOs might target the political entities themselves or the corresponding support structures which serve them (for example, personal assistants of the members, staff of the committees, and secretariat offices which service the committees and members, such as research and analytical services).

An important consideration for NGOs is also the leadership and staff of political parties. A party may champion a particular issue in parliament through its faction. It may happen with one party or many. Often coalitions of many parties are most effective. Effective advocacy usually involves reaching out to parties of both the government and the opposition.

Working at the grass roots level, an NGO group might find it effective to reach out to an individual parliamentarian through the constituency or district office of the member. Often an issue can percolate up to the decision-making bodies within parliament through the lobbying of one or more individual members who might raise an issue on the floor of parliament during general debates or in a meeting of their respective committees.

PARLIAMENTARY MECHANISMS FOR TAKING ADVANTAGE OF NGO EXPERTISE/INPUT - SOME EXAMPLES

Committee Hearings in Parliament

Entering the 21st century, parliaments are increasingly recognizing the importance of parliamentary committees as an effective forum for examining policy issues and debating them before they go to the plenary for final deliberation. Strong legislatures are those which, not only empower their committees to make recommendations on policy issues, but also oversee the expenditures necessary to implement the policies, and then evaluate the effectiveness of their implementation.

Committees reflect the political representation in the parliament. If appropriately appointed, members of the committees have the necessary interest or expertise to effectively review the policies within the jurisdiction of their committees. However, not even the most knowledgeable member can be an expert on all issues. For this reason, members must actively seek out additional information through research provided by secretariat departments and civil society inclusive of academia, the NGO community, and those individuals or groups who are likely to be most affected by a policy.

An effective way to process information available from civil society is the organization of public hearings in parliamentary committees. This provides a concentrated forum for members to get a more in-depth understanding about policy implications, and to question those who have expertise in the policy area regarding how policy decisions might affect one or more constituent group. Opening hearings to public input provides a variety of perspectives on an issue and offers something beyond that which the members of the committee can draw on from their own personal experiences.

The results of committee hearings become part of the legislative record, which can later inform those who may be interpreting the intentions of the parliament during the implementation of that policy. This is why it is important that legislative committee meeting proceedings are published (or posted on a website) - either verbatim or as summary reports.

Committee hearings, if held regularly, become a normal part of the work routine of an elected member. By soliciting the opinions of civil society prior to the launch of a policy, and taking into consideration a variety of expertise on the issue, members can better understand how a law is likely to play out once it is in force. Hearings serve as a forum for understanding the concerns and reservations of various stake-holders and how they might best be addressed as the policy comes to its implementation phase. Additionally, from hearings often a framework emerges for monitoring the policy implementation.

Special Debates/Policy Forum

"Policy Dialogs," whether organized by parliament or by civil society, can provide an opportunity for different stake-holders to express their opinions on emerging policy issues in the presence of, and for the benefit of, members of parliament. In Australia and the U.S. Congress, for example, these are organized by the Research Services of the parliament. In other houses, a committee may organize a policy dialog either within the house or in an external location.

"Westminster Debates" - are an example of how members of the British parliament worked towards getting an alternative forum to provide backbenchers a voice. The Westminster debates were inaugurated in December, 1999 to foster a new kind of debate - one that is constructive rather than confrontational. Any member may submit topics for debates, usually one which has been brought to their attention by con-

stituents or constituency groups and activists. The meetings are presided over by a Deputy Speaker and there are no votes. The Westminster Debates are an excellent forum for members to raise awareness among the general population by championing a cause.

"Government Questions" - Members may also raise awareness of policy issues individually, during the Question Hour in the Westminster System or Government Day in some of the parliaments of the newly independent states. My colleagues in Pakistan consider the questions and answers brought forth during Question Hour, as one of the most important research resources available to Parliamentarians. The government is required to provide specific and timely answers to members' questions. This provides members information when they need it, without having to wait for the government to issue an official report on the topic.

Expert Studies and Analyses

Importantly, NGOs and other civil society representatives, (in particular academic centers and think tanks) can contribute expert studies and polls on specific issues which can be referred to during the legislative process. Surveys done by different constituent groups can provide members of parliament with arguments needed in debates to persuade their opponents of the merits or pitfalls of certain policy decisions. Public opinion polls and demographic surveys can be powerful tools in a political debate, and reference to these studies on the floor of the house recognizes the credentials of the organization providing that information to members.

Fiscal and budget analysis is an important and specialized analytical service that many NGOs are now undertaking to help members in carrying out their duties related to budget passage and oversight. Many of these initiatives have been captured by the International Budget Project which has been working to capture the initiatives of NGOs around the world working with local governments, provincial authorities, and national governments and legislatures on more analysis and greater citizen awareness of the budget process.

Training Programs

When an assembly is elected, most parliaments organize a "New Member Orientation Program." Often these programs are organized as mixed party groups for all new members. Think-tanks often will often organize special thematic presentations on upcoming policy issues as part of these New Member Orientation Programs. This is an important opportunity for NGOs to get to know new members of the legislature and for the members to gain an understanding of the potential of NGOs as a resource.

Specialized refresher courses and skills training conducted by NGOs can also serve members of parliament in performing their duties well. Recently in Pakistan a workshop on "Parliamentarians Role in Conflict Resolution" was conducted by the Speaker of the Azad Jammu Kashmir Legislative Assembly and the Washington, DC based Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy. One of the messages of this training program was that members of parliament can, and do, have a role to play in peace-making - and can turn conflict into a constructive process for problem solving rather than conquest. Providing members with real skills for constructive negotiation was something that this specialized NGO offered to the members.

Inter-party Groups

One of the most powerful forces in a parliament can be an inter-party group, which helps members rally behind a cause and transcend party loyalties or allegiances. An excellent example of an inter-party group in the United States is the Caucus. An example is the Armenian Caucus in the U.S. Congress, which includes more than 100 members from both parties. It provides support for issues raised by Armenian advocacy

groups, including sponsorship of legislative initiatives.

As groups become more adept at reaching parliament, and methods become more sophisticated, a need arises for rules and parameters to be set in order to ensure that influence is exerted in a fair and transparent manner. The United States has very specific rules for official lobbyists. In October 2006, the European parliament formulated a set of recommendations to govern lobbying practices for "unofficial inter-party groups."¹

International Networks

Parliamentarians are often active in international affairs organizations with members of other parliaments. Some examples of these include:

- Interparliamentary Union (IPU)
- Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA)
- Parliamentarians Network of the World Bank (PNoWB)
- Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC)

Often, in preparing for participation in these international meetings, parliamentarians draw on their partnerships with NGOs. Upon returning from these meetings, they often work through NGOs to implement and monitor activities to which commitments have been made. For example, in Pakistan the PGA has taken on the issue of HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. As such, the members work through UNAIDS and local NGOs to address the issue of HIV/AIDS and conduct educational campaigns to reduce at-risk groups in Pakistan, and to ensure funding for necessary on-going programs. It can also be the case that local NGOs are part of an international network which provides invaluable comparative experience for both the parliament and society at large.

GOPAC is another example of international initiatives and local partnerships. The mission statement: "Informed parliamentarians working with others to reduce corruption through improving legislation, engaging citizens, and active oversight of government" emphasizes the link that members of GOPAC have with citizens and citizen groups to achieve the common goals of improved legislation and oversight in the area of anti-corruption. GOPAC is also an excellent example of an organization that provides support to civil society groups - "The principles of transparency, independent media, and unencumbered civil society are all extra parliamentary tools to help curb corruption. In addition, they are all intrinsically related - a weakness in one will result in weakness in the others."²

Conclusion

And thus, we come full circle. Just as civil society can work to advocate among parliamentarians for support on various issues, so too, do parliamentarians find opportunities to advocate in support of a vibrant civil society. It is this mutual respect and cooperative relationship which builds a strong foundation for sustainable development and strong democratic principles. There is a vital role to be played by civil society, and parliaments have mechanisms and opportunities to use this resource to its fullest potential.

1. The Parliamentary Centre - <http://www.parlcent.ca/gopac/index-e.php>

2. Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption - <http://www.gopac-network.org/Programming/programming-ATI-en.htm>

Ashot Yesayan. "Social Dialogue and Social Support" NGO

Social Partnership as the Most Important Direction in Bringing Together the Interests of the Parties and Social Policy

All thinkers have agreed that society is a unity of individuals endowed with consciousness and will. In any country, individuals are united on the basis of a common interest. Without common interests, society is imperfect. In a single society there can be both concurring and conflicting interests. The question is, which of these two is prevalent? It is also true, that the common interest may conflict with a vast array of private interests. Social peace is conditioned by the combination of both common and private interests.

Any society develops on the basis of mutual interests pursued through mutual cooperation of its members. Any union of individuals has to understand that goals will only be attained through united efforts supporting the idea. This means that the members of the union must be motivated in order to actualize the union's interests. Thus, the society is the union of people sharing long term and objective interests. This is the mechanism behind the regular activities, reproduction, and development of individuals, small groups, communities and larger social groups, the self-renovation of the society, its capacity and real possibility to improve, its cooperation and mutual assistance.

Therefore, the question is whether we want and are able to transform the Armenian state into a country unconditionally serving society, and which are the ideas that are acceptable to specific layers of society? Consequently, in view of their significance, all interests can be broken into the following categories: strategic, public, regional, local private.

On the one hand, it is possible that the RA state authorities do not want to be conscious of existing problems, while on the other hand, it may well be that the government does not have the means to be aware of them, i.e. the government is not omnipresent to be able to see them in a timely manner, or to see them at all. This is the driving force behind individuals uniting together, to be able to make their voices heard by both higher authorities as well as local governments. However, unification alone does not guarantee that the authorities will listen. Therefore, it is necessary to seek a solution to the above the problem through legal principles. This is the best foundation for social partnership.

It is an excepted fact that a country's constitution is regarded as its basic legal instrument, a kind of social contract between the state and the people anchored in social agreement. In this light, the legislators responsible for drafting the RA Constitution incorporated both the idea of social state and the will of the people in the first article of the RA Constitution which declares Armenia not only a social, but also a rule of law country. When the constitution stipulates that the country is a rule of law country, it is implied that the basis for building relations is the law and legal acts.

I would like to particularly stress the significance of the contribution anticipated from NGOs in the fields of social monitoring, transparency in the operations of both the government and its ministries, fighting corruption, and raising the image of the bodies of public administration. The above will serve as a basis not only for smooth integration with European social structures but also for avoiding any artificiality in this kind of integration. On the contrary, it will assume flesh and blood and be imbued with

universal values and national traditions to give vitality to our aspirations towards social protection systems in line with the idea of human dignity.

Classical legal doctrine has been used to draw a line of division between the state and the civil society as fundamentally contentious categories. The state symbolized the public space, while the civil society represented de-politicized freedom based on a liberated market economy with the individual as the unit of social measurement.

However, in contemporary civilized countries, there are not clearly delineated classical boundaries between the state and the civil society. On the contrary, there is gradual over-lap, the result being the emergence of hybrid institutions whereby differences between the two are unnoticeable. This is how the balance between the state and the individual is maintained.

Key in such processes are the legal mechanisms which help restrict state power in order to prevent it from being used to the detriment of human and civil rights. The concept of the conflict between the state and civil society may crack if the former opts to conflict with its citizens.

Armenia's aspirations towards fostering the rule of law also implies strengthening the relationship between the state and the civil society. This notion will seem like nonsense if the true state of social life is suppressed and silenced. This will be nothing but the practice of an undemocratic country with state power abounding without accountability and anonymous faces of the bureaucracy; a future Armenia will face if this problem is not resolved as quickly as possible.

The RA laws on NGOs, charities, funds, mass media, and information have had a positive impact on restricting permissiveness and the power of state servants, and forcing their activities to be more transparent. On the other hand, the laws on civil (state) service, police, and prosecution were adopted to regulate the problems of the parties. However, in order to ensure reliability on both sides, it is critically important that the law on social partnership be adopted. This will contribute to achieving the agreement, will create relations free from conflict, and give new breath necessary for strengthening civil society.

This is also the requirement of our constitution. The path of consolidation of democracy is impossible to imagine without public participation in the governance of the country. The seeds of this cooperation have been sown spontaneously, starting towards the end of the 1980s. However, in order for it to become a reality, it is first necessary to define the concepts of social partnership and cooperation.

Social partnership is a condition for political stability and social reconciliation of the public, a means to resolve conflicting interests through negotiation and compromise, and a method for solving socio-economic problems and regulating disputes between employees and employers.

It is also necessary to analyze and assess the positive gains made by NGOs until now, and introduce a single system for the evaluation of their capacity. It is also important to define the principles of social partnership, bearing in mind the dangerous political, economic, and social consequences, instruments, and mechanisms of the weakest links in the field of social cooperation.

Any development, including social cooperation and partnership, starts from culture. Being a source of positive change culture identifies the paths for organization and development of social life as well as the image of the future, impacting the behavior, mentality, and perceptions of humans. This has yet to be ingrained in our minds. Consequently, the importance of the introduction of the above mechanism should be equally considered by both state and social structures.

In order for all this to be organized on a systematic basis, it is necessary to draft and enact:

1. the Strategy for Cooperation and Social Partnership with NGOs (charity funds);

2. the Law on Social Partnership and the relevant normative acts;
3. current, short-term, and long-term programs encompassing all levels, starting with local self-governance and ending with the centers to ensure better planning and predictability,
4. clear and transparent mechanisms for financial delegation in priority areas;
5. introduction of a three-tier system for the monitoring, analysis, and forecast of cooperation and partnership.

Where social partnership in the sphere of employment is concerned, this is a special system of relations established between employees and employers through the mediating role of the state, reconciliation of interests in the social-labor sphere, and regulation of social-labor conflicts. This system of social partnership is usually referred to as a tripartite system since it involves the following three parties in the regulation of social and labor relations:

- organizations representing employees' interests
- employers' associations
- the state

Different from these relations, the relations with NGOs and local self-government bodies are of a dual nature, where the central or regional levels of state power (i.e. different bodies of the executive), are entitled to act in the name of the state. Thus, two subjects whose interests in the social-labor sphere do not coincide, provide grounds for the development of reconciliation systems and procedures for the settlement of such conflicts of interest. In such conflicts, employees have less power and resources than employers. It is the state that supports the employers' arbitration in such areas as the extension of working hours, minimum salary, setting of "reasonable prices," and duration of compulsory working time.

If, in the course of making free market relationships, employees were unable to rely on state support, the power being completely in the hands of the newly born capital, then in a developed system of free market economy it is even more difficult for them to pin any hope with the state which now speaks of its neutrality much louder. Consequently, in order to protect themselves, the employees will have to unite not only to resist the capital, but also to force the government to adopt laws which will accommodate not only the interests of the capital but also those of employees. Thus, it is the development of the free market which renders the unification of employees possible. But it is at the same time the development of the free market which hinders this process since capital is scared of any unification.

The adoption of the above laws has basically delineated the legal framework of the field in question. Simultaneously, since November 1993 Armenia has been a member of the UN World Labour Organization and has ratified a number of its conventions. However, due to the disorganized nature of the labour force, weakness or lack of trade unions, and many other mechanisms, the system of collective agreements is non-functional in Armenia and does not support any progress in the process.

Many NGOs, trade unions, and local self-governments do not have the experience necessary for identifying the following elements of the issue:

1. types of conflicts
2. sources of conflicts
4. reasons for the emergence of conflicts
5. the model of the claimed conflict and its consequences

6. management of conflicts;
7. the techniques to settle the conflicts through the institute of independent mediators/

Therefore, it is necessary to:

1. Create the necessary conditions in Armenia that support the strengthening of all forms of social protection on the basis of international humanitarian law;
2. Cooperate and encourage the advancement of cultural and moral values; and
3. Ensure the legal, structural, and technological grounds for public participation which will make democracy possible for the sake of public solidarity, prevention of conflicts, and the creation of a prosperous society.

It is also important to:

- a) Develop viable forms of social monitoring which will ensure effectiveness and transparency in all social programs within the framework of the government's policy; and
- b) Develop and introduce mechanisms to achieve public impact on the implemented policy.

Theresa Khorozyan. Election Program Manager, Civic Advocacy Support Program, Counterpart International

Topic: NGO oversight of the public policy process

Few would dispute that civil society organizations in Armenia have grown significantly in number and influence over the past decade. But, have they reached a point where they play an indispensable role, alongside government, in public policy-making in Armenia?

CSOs' INFLUENCE ON POLICY-MAKING

I. The impact of civil society organizations in developing countries on policy-making

Civil society organizations (CSOs) can have a major impact on democratization processes and policy reforms in key areas directly affecting the daily life of citizens. However, various studies indicate that CSOs have a limited impact on state policies and often fail to influence policy processes in developing countries and countries in transition. For example, the CIVICUS Civil Society Index project¹ (CSI), a non-governmental organization based in Johannesburg, South Africa which carries out comprehensive assessments of civil society issues, found that the impact of CSOs remains low in many countries of Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Post-Soviet Europe and Eurasia.

In various countries of the Middle East, Mediterranean and Asia, where CSOs act in constrained political environments, it is not surprising to see that the influence of civil society on public policy is absent or marginal. Very often, the political environment is considered a major barrier in developing countries. However, CSI findings regarding Latin American countries show that other equally important obstacles exist. In countries such as Argentina, with an open political environment, the influence of CSOs on public policy is not significant, even though civil society - state dialogue is more advanced. The World Governance Survey of 2003, carried out by the Overseas Development Institute to conduct governance assessments in 16 developing and transitional countries accounting for 51 % of the world's population, indicates that despite open political environments, CSOs' input into policy making remains low in general². For example, India and the Philippines had the highest score for freedom of expression and assembly, near the top in the list, but scored 8th and 9th respectively on influencing policy. Similarly, Argentina, the fourth highest score for freedom of expression and assembly, had the second lowest policy score. According to the study, while high levels of expression and assembly lead to high level of CSO influence in policy change in some cases (Indonesia and Thailand), there many more instances where this is not the case. The study concluded that there is no direct connection between protection of relevant rights, such as freedom of expression and assembly, and impact of civil society organizations on policy changes.

II. Main barriers to CSO Policy Engagement in developing and transitional countries

Then, what are the main reasons for CSOs of developing and transitional countries having limited influence on policy, despite increasingly open political context? According to the publication of the Overseas Development Institute Research and Policy in Development Program, the most common obstacles for CSOs' engagement

1. See <http://www.civicus.org/new/CSI-0verview.asp>: The CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) is an action-research project that aims to assess the state of civil society in countries around the world. The CSI is a participatory needs assessment and action planning tool for civil society. The CSI is coordinated by the international network CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation and currently implemented in more than 50 countries.

2. *Civil Society and Governance in 16 Developing Countries*. Goran Hyden, Julius Court and Kenneth Mease (2003) World Governance Survey Discussion Paper 4; www.odi.org.uk/WGA-Governance/Publications.html

in policy processes are internal to CSOs, such as insufficient capacity and knowledge of their staff on policy processes and lack of enough funding.

As the CSI findings established, the influence of CSOs on policy making remains relatively limited in Post-Communist Europe and Eurasia. The CSI study argued that dependency of CSOs on foreign donors, and perception of citizens towards CSOs as representing only specific interests but not of society at large, inevitably affected their credibility as a voice of the people. Thus, the study concluded that the lack of representativeness and a strong base in communities had negative consequences for civil society impact on policy making. The study also argued that:

At the political level, the lack of advocacy and research skills further undermines CSOs' contributions to policy making and reduced their capacity to acquire expertise and collect evidence that could be utilized to influence policy."

III. The impact of Armenian CSOs on Policy-making

In the post-independence period, the new policies in various key areas adopted by the Armenian authorities have often been subject to criticism. In most cases, the criticism addresses the Armenian authorities. The question is whether it is really fair and just to solely blame parliamentarians/government officials for "bad" policies. When we apportion blame and recognition for political decisions, are we not overlooking the important role that civil society plays in the democratic political process? The ideal situation is one in which CSOs are involved in identifying what the needs of the people/constituency/beneficiaries are, set the agenda in establishing policy objectives, advocate for the policy adoption/change, and subsequently monitor and evaluate the policy. For the most part, the Armenian authorities set policy agendas on their own. The most common justification heard is that the Armenian authorities have no political will to consult with CSOs, and if the government comes to CSOs, it is only so that they can approve what has already been decided. Very rarely do I hear discussions about whether CSOs have the capacity and skills to compel the government to hear their voices.

In the past decade, the Armenian CSOs have made substantial progress in several aspects - overall, they have stronger organizational structures and better financial accounting and viability. At the same time, the CSOs have very modest contributions in lobbying and pressuring governments for reforms and policy changes - various studies as well as the experience of those who follow policy reforms/changes in various sectors indicate this trend. With regard to such key functions as adopting views from the public and transforming those into policy, the Armenian CSOs are still learning.

The findings of the "Armenia NGO Sector Assessment: A Comparative Study 2004," provide a very good analysis to support the above statement. A big section of civil society in Armenia does not relate with the policy changes, but primarily engaged in public education, direct service delivery, or socio-cultural pursuits. Public policy making remains, to some extent an unknown territory for a big part of civil society in Armenia. Advocacy for and influencing public decision making (32.9%) has been less of a focus in CSOs' mission statements than public education and awareness raising (57.6%) or service delivery (53.6 %). However, compared to 2001, more and more CSOs have gotten experience in policy dialogue and have demonstrated an understanding of the role of advocacy and how to conduct advocacy initiatives. Policies and regulations of mass media and issues of the disabled were mentioned as main areas where some influence on policy by CSOs was recorded.

Effectiveness of NGO Efforts in Influencing Policy-Makers

However, respondents of the 2004 study considered very few CSOs as moderately or highly effective in advocacy. Therefore, CSOs still have much to do to have

effective influence in public decision making. Advocacy has still been mainly based on personal access and influence of NGO leaders to policy makers. Among the most effective ways CSOs have been able to influence policies are such tools as networking with other organizations, commenting on draft policy documents, organizing policy seminars, publications on policy issues, closely working with the media, piloting alternative policy approaches, and using insider lobbying³.

In Western democracies, CSOs' direct field action through popular mobilization and innovative means, including protests, which are a commonly employed form of engagement for policy change. The 2004 study concluded that Armenian CSOs rely more on personal contacts rather than formal means such as preparing documentations and arguments supporting their policy efforts. CSOs use less data-based analysis in trying to influence policy formation and change. The study also indicated the lack of capacity of most Armenian CSOs to do policy research and analysis, and provide alternative solutions. Additionally, the 2004 study indicates that advocacy is mainly focused on laws and there is less capacity to regularly oversee policy implementation. CSOs around the world have engaged social analysts and other professionals who are capable of commenting on policies and/or giving policy alternatives, whereas Armenian CSOs do not do it often.

From my 6 years of experience in human rights and democratization with international organizations, I have observed a tendency of civil society organizations to be more reactive rather than proactive in policy-making. Civil society action begins when policy has actually been made and gets presented in the public domain. It is then that civil society organizations recognize that these policies may have negative impacts on their constituencies. It is then that direct engagement with the policy system occurs. It is well-known that international organizations working with government on various policy issues often invite CSOs to engage in policy change. Recently, I asked a colleague working in a Yerevan-based intergovernmental organization about the involvement of CSOs in a key policy area. Her answer was very honest, "some of them get involved, if we invite them."

Since 2000, Armenia has been going through reforms in key human rights areas, including reforms of the penitentiary system and administration of justice. Most of these policy reforms were pushed by international organizations, in particular the Council of Europe and OSCE. In the case of these reforms, the CSOs were more reactive rather than proactive. According to the 2006 Corruption Perception study in Armenia, the Armenian public considers the electoral system as the most corrupt among 35 sectors and services.

In 2005 -2006, the Armenian authorities were engaged in changes of electoral legislation. My colleagues working with international organizations could name only a few CSOs that worked with the authorities to improve the legislation. We witnessed much the same situation during the Constitutional Reforms process - the influence of the Armenian CSOs in the process and outcome of the 2006 Constitutional Amendments was marginal. A relatively active and constructive NGO initiative was led by international organizations. Recently, I read an article about CSOs' role in Constitutional Reforms in Kenya. According to the article, CSOs conducted an education campaign ahead of the referendum in which they called on citizens to vote against the proposed constitution. Ultimately, the constitution was rejected, even though it had been championed by the government. The document made a provision for a strong presidency, against the wishes of many Kenyans, who had wanted executive powers to be shared between the president and prime minister - apparently to prevent previous abuses of presidential authority from being repeated. What is most important is the preference for limited presidential powers which emerged during a national inquiry by the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission to find out what Kenyans wished to have included in their new constitution.

CSOs in Armenia do not base their advocacy campaigns on the broad interest and support of the Armenian public. CSOs have difficulty building broad-based support, which might be partially a result of a political culture and legacy of Soviet rule. CSOs

3. Page 14, *Policy Engagement: How Civil Society Can Be More Effective*, J. Court, E. Mendizabal, D. Osborne and J. Young; 2006
<http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/Policy-engagement.html>

lack the trust and support of communities (as the 2004 study concluded), but rather, the NGO sector shows more accountability to donors. Policy makers are aware of this. While interaction between CSOs and government at the national and local level and the National Assembly has increased as compared with 2001, at the same time, policy makers remain skeptical about CSOs influence. They doubt that CSOs have a real constituency and can demonstrate active support of their beneficiaries. They wonder whether CSOs represent any important power base - if this is the case, policy makers can not afford to pay attention to CSOs. Therefore, to be more successful in their advocacy efforts, CSOs need to strengthen their relationships with constituencies.

As successful experiences and various studies indicate networking is key in policy engagement. Networks, coalitions, and partnership provide an opportunity for greater weight and success than a single organization. However, the Armenian CSOs rarely work together - caused in part by a perception of competition for funding and influence. The 2004 study indicated a drop in cooperation between CSOs as compared to 2001, and when there is cooperation it is short term and superficial, meaning it is limited to exchange of information and participation in each others events. Cooperation is most often motivated by donor urgings and grant competitions. However, Armenian CSOs have several successful cases where cooperation led to great impact in pressuring the authorities and thus, illustrated the advantages of networking and cooperation. One example of such a success story relates to the efforts of the coalition of Armenian CSOs to block a controversial lobby law in 2005. The Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia on Lobbying was introduced through the efforts of the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Trade and Economic Development of Armenia. The law purported to foster public participation in government decision making processes and reduce corruption by requiring lobbying groups or individuals to register and provide reports on their activities to increase transparency. The law posed a threat to the ability of CSOs to advocate effectively, by requiring organizations to register to lobby, thus turning lobbying into an entrepreneurial activity. The coalition organized a mass letter writing campaign addressed to the Office of the President, the Anti-Corruption Council led by the Prime Minister, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) Working Groups. In addition, a large scale media campaign was kicked off with a press conference by the NGO coalition. Thanks to the efforts of numerous CSOs, the progression of the lobbying law through the legislative process was halted and the imminent threat to CSOs' lobbying capabilities was eliminated for the time being. The CSO coalition continues to monitor the situation.

Most of the time ONLY authorities are blamed for bad policies and their poor implementation in Armenia. When one mentions the low impact/influence of CSOs in public decision making, the authorities appear to be the main cause. We cannot continue treating CSOs and policy makers as if one is the "good guy" and the other the "bad guy." This is a simplified explanation of the situation. As already mentioned, there are various internal factors that create barriers for the Armenian CSOs to become an important agent in policy change/reform. Especially in the context of this conference, I think it would be constructive and effective if CSOs focus on reflecting on how to provide the right advise, to the right people, in the right way, at the right time. The civil society sector influences policy reform by dialogue and persuasion rather than by confrontation. What can be done to make CSOs better understand how policy processes work, choose more effective strategies and mechanisms to maximize their chances of policy influence, use and communicate evidence that is reliable, objective, credible, and practical, package and target generated evidence to key audiences through the use of clear and concise messages, and apply the language and terminology the policy-makers use.

By no means do I want not to discredit the success of several CSOs in having an impact on policy-making. There are success stories, and the CSOs in Armenia can learn a lot from the successful experiences of their colleagues in recent years.

Nune Pepanyan. Professionals for Civil Society NGO

Topic: *Practical tools for partnering with local government*

Social Partnership

Social partnership is the regulated cooperation between the three sectors of society (public institutions, commercial, and non-commercial organizations). Each representative of these sectors has different capacities and means, oftentimes also different ideas, to resolve social problems. Despite the differences, cooperation between the sectors is essential, since as experience shows, neither the public administration bodies and local self-government bodies, nor the commercial institutions and NGOs can resolve the public problems individually.

Studies of the work experience of the "third sector" indicate that efficiency of social partnership between governmental and non-governmental organizations often depends on the level of development of NGOs.

Level One

The organization has just started its activities in the "third sector," a task force has been created which is actively seeking information on work methods and directions/targets. The main task is to disseminate information about the perceived opportunities, projects, and the mission. The target social groups are being identified and validated.

Along with the method of leasing a premises under the basic privileged conditions/terms of partnership with the authorities, grants are a more wide-spread form of partnership on this level. They are aimed at support and the growth of the organization's activities. As a rule, on this level, we are not talking about a true partnership between the authorities and NGOs, the authorities treat the "third sector" with distrust.

Level Two

The NGO has gained a position in the area of provision of social services. The main goal is to engage in the systems of providing social services. Financial accountability systems have been established in the NGO. It is implementing grant projects, has qualified staff, and a clear timetable for working with the beneficiaries. The NGO has matured so that it now has a permanent source of funding as the grants "come and go," the priorities of grantors change, and yet the flow of beneficiary clients stays the same. At this stage of development, implementation of a social partnership system becomes necessary. On this level, only the NGO can speak about real social partnership when the organization has made itself indispensable in the system of social services, and a segment of the population cannot receive relevant services without it. In this case alone, the NGO can relate to the authorities as their equal.

Level Three

The NGO has a high degree of stability. The permanent work with the clients enables it to do situational analyses. The NGO not only provides services, but also comes up with legal initiatives for resolution of the problems of target social groups, in collaboration with the authorities.

Level Four

Two situations are possible on this level, first, the NGO grows strong and professional enough to influence the decision-making of the authorities. Second, the chair of

the NGO or part of the staff is recruited by the authorities. In the second case, the NGO may have dependence on, or subordination to, the authorities, which therefore compromises the interests of its beneficiaries.

A study of the social and inter-sector partnership experience (both international and local) indicates that if one party is unaware of the legal basis for the activities of the other party and the specificities of its challenges, building well-working mechanisms of partnership will not be possible. Additionally, if one party is unable to offer a clear, overall, and substantiated description of their organization as well as its advantages and performance results, no serious collaboration can be presumed. Collaboration is easier and more efficient to build when the parties are informed of the specific needs of the social target group of the population.

In view of these considerations, social partnership mechanisms between public administration bodies and local self-government bodies with NGOs should be built based on clear legal norms to guarantee an agreed partnership, while the process of development and implementation of social projects should be public and controllable by the public.

Application of Social Partnership Regulations in Vanadzor

Certain favorable conditions are created in Vanadzor for social partnership mechanisms between public administration bodies and local self-government bodies with NGOs. Both Lori Marzpetaran (Regional government) and Vanadzor City Hall and NGOs realize the necessity and effectiveness of social partnership.

Under the "NGO Sustainable Development" project, in May 2001 representatives of NGOs from Vanadzor and other cities made a study tour to a number of Russian cities to study new forms and ways of NGO - state institution partnership.

In November 2001, a group of representatives of the Lori Marzpetaran, the Ministry of Social Affairs, as well as representatives of a number of INGOs and NGOs of Vanadzor and Yerevan, with the support of USAID/Counterpart International, under the "Armenia Social Transition Program," visited Ukraine and studied new forms and methods of social partnership. Upon returning from the study tour, a Social Partnership Consulting Group was created in Vanadzor, comprising representatives of the Lori Marzpetaran, Vanadzor municipality, "Housatu" ("Raising Hope") Social and Charitable NGO, "Lusastgh" ("Morning Star"), and "Aran" NGOs, "World Learning," and the "Armenia Social Transition Program." The logo of the Social Partnership Consulting Group was designed. To discuss the directions/targets, forms, and methods of partnership, the Consulting Group convened a New Year event in December 2001 where the year 2002 was declared "A Year of NGO - Public Administration Bodies Partnership." The event was attended by 100 representatives from 50 NGOs, 60 representatives from public administration and local self-government bodies, as well as representatives from international organizations, including officials of the RA Ministry of Social Affairs, Lori Marzpetaran, and Vanadzor City Hall. Mr. H. Kochinyan, Governor of Lori Marz, noted in his speech: "This is a major step forward started in the Lori Marz and to be continued in the other marzes of the RA. Coordination of these activities commenced with the establishment of the Consulting Group and publication of the social and health sector NGO Newsletter. Further activities will be built on this good beginning". Mr. Darbinyan, mayor of Vanadzor, and all the other speakers welcomed the idea of partnership, and expressed willingness to assist with the partnership.

In early 2002, the staff of "Housatu" Social and Charitable NGO took up the development of "Local Self-Government Bodies - NGO Social Partnership Regulations."

In September 2002, "Housatu" Social and Charitable NGO implemented the "Development and Application of NGO - Public Institutions Social Partnership Regulations" project under the AAA NGO Training and Resource Center's "Grant Project on Improvement of Mechanisms of Legal Regulation of Primary Healthcare

and Social Security Sectors." They also completed the development of "NGO - Non-Commercial Organizations Social Partnership Regulations," as well as the social agreement and other documents required for implementation of the social partnership (the latter documents are included in the Handbook). Development of "Social Partnership Regulations" and the attached documents were also supported by the Armenia Social Transition Program, Counterpart International, and the International Center for Non-Commercial Law.

In November 2002, the draft "Social Partnership Regulations" was presented by "Housatu" Social and Charitable NGO to the 2002 Conference of Armenian NGOs, and received a positive response.

The presented regulations were discussed with the representatives from a number of organizations and the main idea of its application was approved. All the participants deemed important the application of the "Social Partnership Regulations" in Vanadzor and across the RA. The suggestions and comments made were considered, and appropriate amendments were made to the regulations.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUBSTANTIATION OF APPLICATION OF SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

1. Economic Advantages of Social Partnership

The economic advantages of social partnership are determined by the following factors:

- a) *Engaging additional resources in the area of implementation of social programs/projects.* The NGO that wins the competition/bid for partnership projects makes a financial, in-kind, physical, and intellectual, etc. contribution to the project implementation. This will relieve the budget tension, will help engage additional extra-budgetary resources for funding of the social sector, and maximum results will be achieved at minimum budget costs.
- b) *Competition as a crucial principal of social partnership:* As a selected party to social partnership, participation of NGOs in the competition implants the idea that financial resources are not automatically granted, even if the organization has a history of useful and interesting activities. To win a competition, an NGO will need to clearly plan its actions, make a reasonable cost estimate, and be able to demonstrate its advantages over its competitors. This approach enables the selection of the most credible NGO among the ones participating in the competition.

2. Organizational and Technological Advantages of Social Partnership

Social partnership system presented allows to be effectively resolved, a number of organizational and technological issues in the area of implementation of social policy including:

- a) *Ensuring publicity of all social partnership events.* In the course of development and implementation of social projects a bilateral exchange of information takes place between the public and state authorities, which allows the realistic formulation of the the problems which have matured in the society.
- b) *Setting norms and standards for evaluation of actions and quality control of provision of social services.* Establishment of a system of proj-

ect evaluation standards is considered the basis for effective project implementation.

- c) ***Contractual interdependence of parties.*** Social partnership projects are implemented on the basis of bilateral financial and legal agreement and responsibility.

3. Socio-Political Advantages of Social Partnership

- a) ***Application of the social partnership system will enhance the targeting and publicity of the resolution of problems of social consequence.*** Accessibility of information to the public will be ensured at every stage of implementation of social partnership projects. Not only is publication of the information on the competition and project implementation results planned, but information flow will also be ensured from the public to public employees and vice versa.
- b) ***Introduction of the social partnership system will enhance the social creativity of the populous.*** This will be accomplished by ensuring publicity of the competitions, which will reassure the authors of every project that their interesting ideas and suggestions will receive attention.
- c) ***Introduction of the social partnership system will ensure expansion of public control over the performance of state authorities.***
- d) ***The social partnership system in question will be one of the most effective forms of social partnership.*** NGOs appear as an actual societal force in the resolution of social problems in society that needs to be reckoned with, and partnership relations with equal rights are established with the state authorities.
- e) ***With the introduction of the social partnership system an adequate redistribution of social responsibility will be accomplished between the state and the society.*** The state should create a necessary legal framework for resolution of social problems and provision of services by NGOs. The public should take up the resolution of numerous social problems by organizations it has created itself.

PRIORITY TARGETS OF SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

1. The following are considered to be the priority targets of social partnership:

1. combating poverty
2. primary healthcare and disease control
3. social assistance to disabled and elderly persons, the unemployed, the vulnerable and the sick
4. support to motherhood and childhood
5. youth policy
6. development of local initiatives and self-government
7. education, culture and, science
8. recreation and sport
9. environmental protection
10. empowerment of NGOs

Local Social Service Agency

Apply to local social services agency, if you:

- want to receive a Social Security card
- intend to register with the poverty benefit system
- are applying for re-registration for family poverty benefits or one-time monetary assistance
- are a refugee in need of a dwelling
- would like to appeal the decision of the LSSA

Local social service agencies provide the following services:

- organize state humanitarian assistance programs
- provide information regarding services
- study the issue of provision of housing to children deprived of parental care
- support in provision of temporary shelters
- support in provision of prosthetic-orthopedic items, means of rehabilitation (technical and other)
- work together with NGOs to support beggars and vagrants

The LSSA is located on the second floor of the integrated social services center. First visit the common admittance room, which is on the first floor.

Local Employment Service Centery

Apply to the local employment service center (LESC) if you:

- want to receive a Social Security card
- want to apply for unemployment benefits or monetary assistance
- are unemployed and need re-qualification
- are unemployed and want to find a job
- are an employer and are looking for employees
- would like to appeal the decision of the LESCE

If you are unemployed, you can visit the LESCE, which provides the following services:

- provision of Social Security card
- provision of unemployment benefits or monetary assistance
- for the unemployed re-qualification
- assists the unemployed to find a job
- assistance to employers looking for employees
- training courses which will give you the opportunity to find a new job
- provision of benefits within the framework of the "benefit for work" program for certain jobs
- Provision of food within the framework of the "food for work" program for certain work and within the framework of the "food for training" program for specialization courses

Local State Social Insurance Fund Center

Apply to local state social insurance fund center (LSIC), if you:

- intend to receive:
 - pension or allowance for children up to two years of age
 - support for funeral expenses
 - one-time childbirth allowance
 - monetary support allocated to veterans, people with status equal to the latter, and families of soldiers killed in the second world war, military personnel who have become disabled, and families of soldiers killed in action
- would like to know the amount of pension or benefits you can receive
- would like to appeal the decision of the LSIC
- need to make social contributions or submit income declarations
- want to receive a Social Security card

The LSSA is located on the first floor of the integrated social services center.
First visit the common admittance room, which is on the first floor.

Medical-social assessment Committee

Medical-social assessment committee (MSAC):

- assesses the nature and level of limitations to normal functioning and possibilities for rehabilitation
- registers the existing disability and its possible duration
- assesses the level of disability and determines the group
- determines the level of loss of ability to work
- develops individual rehabilitation programs for the disabled
- defines the type and scope of medical-social measures
- participates in studies of the causes of disability and elaboration of disability prevention programs

The MSAC is located on the first floor of the integrated social services center.
First visit the common admittance room, which is on the first floor.

Representation of Vanadzor NGOs

You will have the opportunity to use the support provided by NGOs involved in the given field of activities and to receive the information and counseling you need.

The representation includes NGOs dealing with social, healthcare, and educational issues.

The representation provides the following services:

- provision of information on Lori marz NGOs who provide social, healthcare, and educational services, as well as all types of social, healthcare, and educational services provided in Lori marz
- support for the establishment of social partnership
- support residents in applying for social services provided by the integrated center

The representation is located on the fourth floor of the integrated social services center.

First visit the common admittance room, which is on the first floor.

Appeals Process

Dear resident,

One of the main objectives of bringing all social services under one roof was to provide a simplified appeals system for you.

You have the right to appeal the decision of the service you have applied to.

The general provisions for appealing decisions are defined in the law of the Republic of Armenia "On regulations for processing recommendations, requests, and appeals of citizens." You can obtain this law from the integrated library.

If the appeal or the request is rejected by the service, you should be notified in writing within 15 days.

Your requests or appeals will be taken in by the specialist at the common admittance room. He/she is obliged to inform you about the procedures for their processing.

Visit the integrated social services center and employ the support of our specialists.

There is no need to present numerous documents.

Recommendations and complaints

Dear resident,

With your support, we will be able to provide quality services directly to you and to your fellow residents.

If you have recommendations or complaints regarding services provided, please submit them to the common admittance room.

Also, please fill out the questionnaire provided to you at the common admittance room and place it in the recommendations box.

Integrated social services center, Vanadzor

You have children and you need support in order to take care of them...

You are of pension receiving age and want to apply for pension...

You are unemployed and want to find a job or receive unemployment benefits...

You want to receive a social security card...

You are disabled and would like to receive benefits....

Address: Vanadzor, Njdeh 14, Tel: 4-09-27

Artashes Torozyan. Goris Teachers Union NGO**Topic: *Overview of advocacy projects with local government bodies - tips and tools***

A survey of the nongovernmental sector of the Syunik and Vayotz Dzor marzes was conducted by the **Goris Teachers' Union NGO** in June-July 2005, aiming to identify the organizational development and advocacy capacities of NGOs in the Syunik and Vayotz Dzor marzes.

The survey was conducted among the NGOs in Syunik and Vayotz Dzor marzes, covering 41 NGOs (70%) from Syunik and 17 NGOs (29.3%) from Vayotz Dzor.

The analysis of the findings revealed that 30% of NGOs were engaged in educational and cultural issues, 20% in social, and 17% in legal issues.

The analysis of the NGO advocacy-related activities demonstrated that 38% of NGOs had not run advocacy campaigns, 33% had organized and run such campaigns, and 29% were not aware of how the advocacy process works.

Basically, 26% of NGOs covered by the survey had put into action advocacy initiatives, although some believed they had been engaged in advocacy initiatives. This means that most NGOs do not have the least idea of advocacy initiatives and their implementation characteristics.

12% of NGOs which have carried out advocacy have approached LSG bodies with suggestions, and 3% of NGOs succeeded in decision making.

It is remarkable that the majority of initiatives are advocacy campaigns, while additional steps constitute a very small percentage. This means that very few NGOs have advanced advocacy knowledge and skills. This small portion have acquired their knowledge and skills from the training sessions and grants provided by the World Learning Organization.

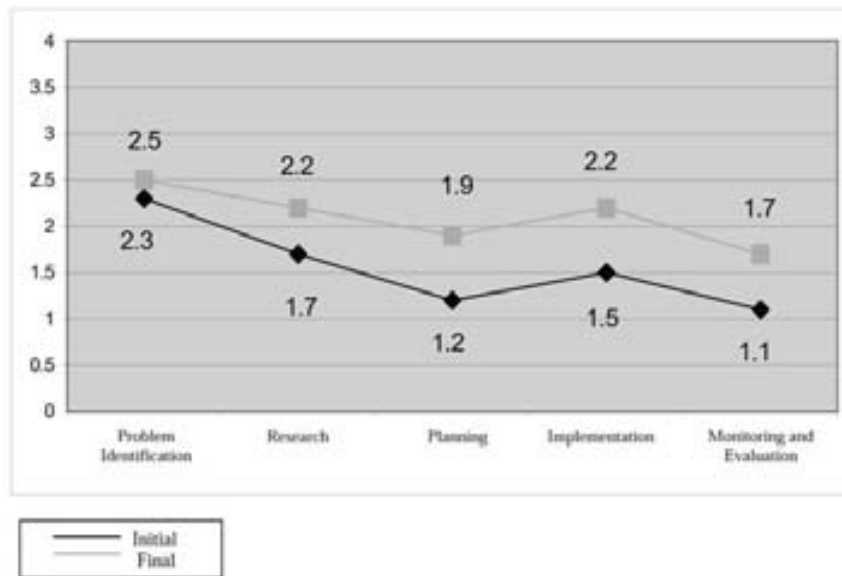
Local initiatives comprise a small number due to the weak advocacy capacity of the Syunik and Vayotz Dzor marzes.

Conclusions

1. Advocacy initiatives on the local level are few, due to the NGOs' indifference to, and low awareness level of, the LSG and Marzpetaran structures; and
2. NGOs in the Syunik and Vayotz Dzor marzes lack adequate knowledge and skills. Since 2005, GTU NGO has been under the CASP Program, supporting the local not-for-profit non-governmental organizations in the Syunik and Vayotz Dzor marzes through:

- providing grants for implementation of local advocacy initiatives and projects; and
- providing services for advocacy capacity development.

Seven organizations were funded under CASP Phase One. GTU NGO has implemented advocacy capacity assessment in the beginning and at the end of the project. The initial and final advocacy assessment results are given in comparison, in the chart below.



See below for the results of initiatives by organizations which have implemented grant projects.

Experience of Collaboration with Local Self-Government Bodies During Implementation of Advocacy Projects by Syunik and Vayotz Dzor Marz NGOs

1. "Goris-Boomerang" NGO, Goris

Project Title - Time for Introduction

Project Goal - Develop and endorse exemplary legal and working regulations for specialized community schools identified by the LSG bodies of Goris and 5 adjacent rural communities.

- development of a project in collaboration with the LSG on "Exemplary Charter of Extra-School Institutions"
- organizing, in collaboration with the LSG, public discussions of problems through talk shows, TV programs and roundtables
- involvement in decision making on the LSG level (discussions of Draft Exemplary Charter of Extra-School Institutions, adoption of the Draft by the Councilors of Goris and 5 adjacent rural communities)

2. Eco-Sis NGO, Sisian

Project Title - Advocacy Initiative in Sisian

Project Goal - Implement trade rules in Sisian city, pursuant to Article 17 of the RA Law on Trade and Services.

- organizing awareness-raising workshops for the LSG (on trade rules)
- issue-based discussions with the LSG (roundtables, meetings, TV programs)
- joint project development (on trade rules in Sisian)

- approval of the project, "Communal Rules for Trade, Catering and Services Sector in Sisian"
- collaboration with the LSGs aimed at implementation of trade rules (distribution of printed materials on trade rules at trade posts, and ongoing monitoring)

3. "Rights Information Center" Advocacy and Consultation NGO

Project Title - Democratic Self-Government

Project Goal - Promote active response to citizens' issues by Goris Councilors.

- preparing letters and messages for the LSG
- organizing workshops for LSG members
- conducting consultation on LSG Law for LSG members
- developing a joint project (Citizens Reception Regulations)
- organizing a joint publication ("Goris Three-Year Project" booklet)
- organizing a joint TV program series ("Dialogue")

4. Teachers of Kapan NGO, Kapan

Project Title - A Teacher Esteemed by the Community

Project Goal - Promote appreciation of teachers' activities in Kapan by the community (Kapan LSG, teachers, parents, students, and community members).

- joint design of award regulations on the community level ("Teacher of the Year")
- implementation of actions aimed at the approval of the draft award regulations for "Teacher of the Year" (discussions, meetings, roundtables, opinion polls, and suggestions)
- award granting, with the LSG on the community level finalizing the results (prizes, diplomas, joint events)

5. "Anchor" NGO of Syunik marz Disabled Persons

Project Title - Healthy Citizens in a Clean City

Project Goal - Promote the implementation of the solid waste removal mechanism in Sisian.

- studying the experience of waste removal in Sevan community
- discussions with the LSG on waste removal
- exercising public pressure on the LSG (signature collection, photo-monitoring, TV programs, and telephone surveys)
- developing a draft project for improvement of waste removal in Sisian
- printing the brochure, "Healthy Citizens in a Clean City"

6. Armenian Greens Union NGO's Vayotz Dzor Branch

Project Title - Support for the Enactment of the RoA Law on "Environmental Education of the Population" in Vayotz Dzor Marz.

Project Goal - Promote the protection of the rights of preschool age children in Vayotz Dzor to receive environmental education pursuant to the RA laws.

- publication of an "Environmental Education Handbook for Preschool Teachers"
- the Governor to pass a decision on piloting the "Environmental Education Handbook for Preschool Teachers" in Vayotz Dzor kindergartens
- the Handbook piloting in Vayotz Dzor preschool institutions (34 preschool teachers in Vayotz Dzor marz were trained in environmental education)

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7. "Young Families Support Center" NGO

Project Title - Community development participatory standard model

Project Goal - Promote the implementation of public monitoring and evaluation model for LSG activities in Yeghegnadzor.

- establishing co-operation between community groups and the LSG (Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Community Coordinating Council and the mayor)
- joint project development (19 projects on capital repair of community structures were developed)
- involvement in community budgeting (joint discussions, "Yeghegnadzor Community Draft Budget for 2006," "Yeghegnadzor Community Capital Investments Project for 2007-2009," and publication of booklets, "Guidelines for Citizens Services")
- preparing bill boards to ensure transparency of LSG activities and ongoing servicing of these (6 of them, displayed in busy sites around town)

Track B

Karen Baghdasaryan. Chief Marketing Officer, Broncoway

Topic: *The Business sector's view on corporate social responsibility in Armenia*

The business view on corporate social responsibility in today's Armenia

If we, humans, do not adapt ourselves, we will be adapted, either for better or for worse.

First of all we need descriptions of some terms in the field.

Generally, we are talking about one of the main questions of humankind, that is, where are we going? The answer is quite obvious now - our way to the future is peaceful. And the solution is **Sustainable Development (SD)** with its various components for governments, society, science, and business. SD means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. SD is essential for the long-term economic growth and future well-being of the people.

Government and NGOs purport it is the responsibility of business, claiming that 90% of materials and energy that go into the making of a product are never incorporated in the final product.

So, business responsibility in light of SD is called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The World Bank CSR Practice defines CSR as "the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community, and society at large to improve their quality of life in ways that are both good for business and good for development."

And our aim is to present the ways to have responsible business in Armenia.

Business presents its CSR approach in written Codes of Conduct wherein they cover various CSR issues, which can be divided into three main categories:

Internal Responsibility

Work, family issues, equity, health and well-being, worker participation, education and corporate governance (social, ethical, and environmental aspects of companies' management operations), working hours, nondiscrimination and the provision of opportunities for dialogue, verification of CSR practices in suppliers (corruption supply chain), benefit sharing, and formal training programs.

External Responsibility

Donations, volunteer work and philanthropy, cultural activities, health and well-being, education, poverty (assistance to low-income groups), community participation, responsible marketing and consumer protection, accountability and transparency

Environmental Responsibility

Impact monitoring, energy and water efficiency, waste reduction, recycling or treatment, taking advantage of byproducts

Drivers for CSR for business

Identification of the drivers for CSR helps to identify appropriate actions for government, NGOs, and business as well. There are two groups of drivers: internal and external.

1. CSR brings benefits to companies / Efficiency Gains - Internal

- ➔ productive Employees
 - ➔ cost Reduction on production, energy, human resources
 - ➔ enhanced brand image and loyalty from both customers and business clients
2. the rise in power of the well informed consumer
 3. access to financial and intellectual resources of MNCs
 4. supply Chain Responsibility
 5. access to Markets
 6. public Sector Procurements

Barriers for CSR for business

1. unawareness of what CSR is and for what or how it can be employed
2. dearth of local experts to assist businesses with implementing CSR measures
3. lack of requirements from governments or shareholders to disclose information to the public
4. the perception that being responsible is expensive, takes time and money
5. wrong association of CSR with philanthropy
6. lack of resources, the limited time that owners or managers can devote to CSR activities

Incorporating CSR-related instruments

Codes of conduct / Management standards / Accounting and reporting standards

CSR IN ARMENIA**RESPONSIBLE NGOs**

1. identification of current initiatives by business
2. understanding of current business-owner behavior
3. presenting the difference between philanthropy and CSR
4. creation of network of NGOs
5. strong Consumer Organizations
6. close interactions with employees of businesses
7. close Interaction with Business Sector Unions
8. focus on SMEs - large portion of GDP and employment
9. mechanisms for press coverage / stakeholder recognition -Indexes, Awards
10. educate business - expensive standards / specialists - new standards - guidelines
11. CEOs need learning lessons
12. fair Trade Certification - Fairtrade / Rainforest Alliance / Utz Kapeh

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

1. bringing MNCs into Armenia
2. raise the issue among international organizations
3. make community responsible as a whole - responsible consumer
4. make large corporations and monopolies responsible
5. general Regulations - strong laws, strongly enforcement
6. regulations for financial sector - environmental and responsible investment funds
7. engage MNCs as key players in peace making actions
8. the absence of local supply of CSR-related services
9. the informal sector as a barrier for CSR
10. government procurements

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

1. business should initiate CSR activities on a long-term basis with local authorities, so that an apolitical stance is adopted, decoupled from the electoral interests involved
2. business should initiate social and educational advertising
3. business should initiate on-line blogs presenting their approach on several issues
4. greener Marketing - leadership at sector

RESPONSIBLE MEDIA

- Media plays an important part in publicizing issues having to do with CSR by providing the means to shape public opinion and having global reach. Companies need to come up with CSR stories that attract readers /viewers.
- Media should pick up on differences by contrasting what companies say through their programs, and what they do as a consequence of business decisions.
- Media should identify those different actors who influence the way opinion is formed, and who shape the sort of relationships that society would like to have with businesses operating in its midst.
- Media should be aware that on numerous occasions, commercial directors see CSR as an opportunity for public relations, something that editors should reject.
- Media should not be satisfied by simply informing and providing an arena for public debate, rather, they should be committed to resolving social problems and promoting values such as solidarity and social justice, giving coverage to such matters beyond the bounds of journalistic output.
- Media should devote a separate panel for CSR in the news serving as an information sharing institute, as not many NGOs' web sites are visited, and many don't even have web sites.

RESPONSIBLE EDUCATION

As a responsible business, educational institutions should initiate learning courses on CSR. Academic institutions have the responsibility to use their unique position of influence to develop the sense of responsibility in their students, particularly those preparing to exercise positions of leadership in the corporate world. They can support

the profit orientation of companies and show how a well-executed sustainable development strategy can be a large contributor to savings, revenue, productivity, competitiveness, lower risk, and new markets.

BUSINESS AND NGOs PARTNERSHIP ISSUES

Fact Sheet

The main challenge in forming NGO-business partnerships is the "trust issue." NGOs in Armenia are seen as representatives of an "unelected few."

Business should be attacked for the way it makes a profit but not for wanting to make a profit.

NGOs and business bureaucrats move at different speeds.

Business needs to cooperate with NGOs as:

- NGOs have thorough knowledge of the local circumstances, are experts in community building, and can count on ample social acceptance.
- Branding - may pay for itself in terms of "below-the-line" public promotion.
- Media relations - improving reputation with the media, may lead to flattering stories
- Financial benefits - for example, with ethical investing community, or mainstream funds
- Communicating values to employees - help recruit staff, build loyalty.

Business hesitates to cooperate with NGOs as:

A partnership may be costly in itself

NGOs need to cooperate with business as:

- Business has easy access to high-level government officials.
- Through partnership, business can be more responsible.
- Funding - partnerships provide NGOs with ongoing monetary resources; a relationship with one company may lead to funding from another.
- Business has management and technical expertise
- Inside knowledge - having criticized companies from outside, working with partnerships can give NGOs a more granular idea of how companies really operate.
- Chance to change an industry - changing one company's behaviour may precipitate change across the board.
- Credibility - partnerships have the potential to improve NGO credibility with governments, business, and the public. It is better to be seen trying to find solutions, than always pointing out problems.

NGOs hesitate to co-operate with business as:

Extra work/costs - partnerships may be a drain on resources that could be more effectively used for traditional campaigning.

Credibility - NGOs may lose credibility among peers, public - and most crucially - funders.

Partnership Issues

Once established, who is responsible for the partnership? Someone needs to be

accountable on both sides, and there need to be clear lines of responsibility for each task undertaken. Who gets to communicate the partnership to the outside world? What are the lines of accountability for putting out press releases, for example?

The relationship types of NGO and business:

- corporate philanthropy, which is ad hoc and non-systemic
- strategic, targeted contributions to specific NGOs and causes
- mainstream involvement, engaging corporate staff in operational details
- accountability and inclusion, which is a longer term engagement with all stakeholders

Actions

The challenge ahead lies in creating a body of knowledge that stakeholders can easily reference before embarking on the path to partnership.

INTERESTING FACTS

Under certain circumstances, e-mail carries a higher environmental burden than hard-copy mail, while the reverse can also be true in certain circumstances.

New technologies often create societies' need for them, rather than the other way around. Invention can sometimes be the mother of necessity.

Knarik Arabyan. NGO Center

Topic: Experience of charity by for-profit organizations in Armenia-presentation of research findings

"Private For-Profit Sector Involvement in Institutionalization of Social Partnership in Armenia" Project

"Experience of Charity By For-Profit Organizations in Armenia"

Results of Research

The research was conducted by "NGO Center" Civil Society Development NGO.

Problem Description

Social partnership is not demonstrating itself as a means of encouraging philanthropy in Armenia.

Over 15 years of independence, the Republic of Armenia has accomplished, in principal, the democratization processes. Certain infrastructure already in place, guides us to the development of a social, rule of law state.

Philanthropy has traditionally been essential in practicing social justice, through engagement of diverse actors. Nowadays, much emphasis in Armenia is placed on partnership between the state and non-commercial sectors, viewing the latter as a principal vehicle for extending services to vulnerable groups somehow out of reach of government structures. Considerable efforts have been invested to promote the institutionalization of social partnership between the NGO sector and government. Yet, social partnership, according to its definition, assumes the involvement of the for-profit sector as well: "social partnership is a form of collaboration of state, local government, for-profit, and civil society organizations towards the solution of social problems through leveraging of additional resources into the social sphere." ("Handbook on Social Partnership", NGO Center).

Historically, charity (the term is often used interchangeably with philanthropy) and philanthropic giving have been key to the Armenian culture. Democratic Armenia offers a contemporary framework to mainstream philanthropic activities and institutions aimed at promoting the welfare of its citizens. The "Law of the Republic of Armenia on Charity" defines charity as follows: "charity is the voluntary, disinterested, and permitted by the law, provision (gratuitously or on preferential terms) of material and spiritual assistance (hereof charitable assistance) to physical persons and non-commercial organizations by physical and legal persons, for the accomplishment of goals specified in Article 2 of this law. Monetary and other material means provided to political parties and commercial organizations shall not be considered Charity."(Article 3, Concept of Charity).

Provisions in Article 23 of the "Republic of Armenia Profit Tax Law" are incentives to encourage philanthropists.

It is worth bringing in another definition of philanthropy: "philanthropy is the virtue that ennobles the person, makes him more cultured" (Dictionary of Social Terms, author Ashot Yesayan, "Bridge of Hope" NGO, 2005).

It is obvious that respective legislation is providing background for exercising philanthropy. We are witness to diverse benevolent initiatives, activities by civil society organizations. Still, charity performed by the business sector has been scarcely researched, and questions arise when attempts are made to generalize and make assumptions of what the main attributes of the current culture of giving are.

Through this research project, the NGO Center tried to reveal the answers to the following questions: what constitutes charity performed by for-profits, and why and how it manifests, in the anticipation that solicited information would facilitate a clear vision of the current status of the philanthropic experience of for-profits and would highlight the prospects and feasibility of the institution's development through social partnership.

Program of Research

Goal: study the experience of corporate philanthropy among Yerevan-based for-profits

Research object: Yerevan-based for-profits

Research subject: Yerevan-based for-profits' experience in charity

Hypothesis: Social partnership mechanisms are not being exercised by for-profits as a vehicle for corporate philanthropy

Research objectives:

1. identify goals for charity by for-profits
2. identify mechanisms that for-profits exercise for charity
3. identify the role and application of social partnership mechanisms within charity by for-profits
4. study the mechanisms and principles of beneficiary selection for charity by for-profits
5. study the nature of charity by for-profits
6. survey for-profits' approaches to regulate charitable activities

Research Methodology and Target Group Selection: Information on for-profits registered with the "Armenian Business Directory and Yellow Pages 2006" database was used to select participants. Selection was done based on the following criteria: place/venue of operation and publicly known. Random systematic selection was employed.

The research was conducted anonymously among 50 selected for-profits between April-July 2006, via a formal questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions.

The composition of the selected group according to their legal status and sphere of activity appears in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1

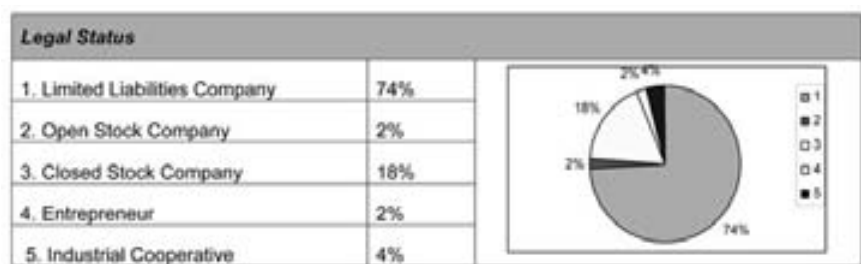
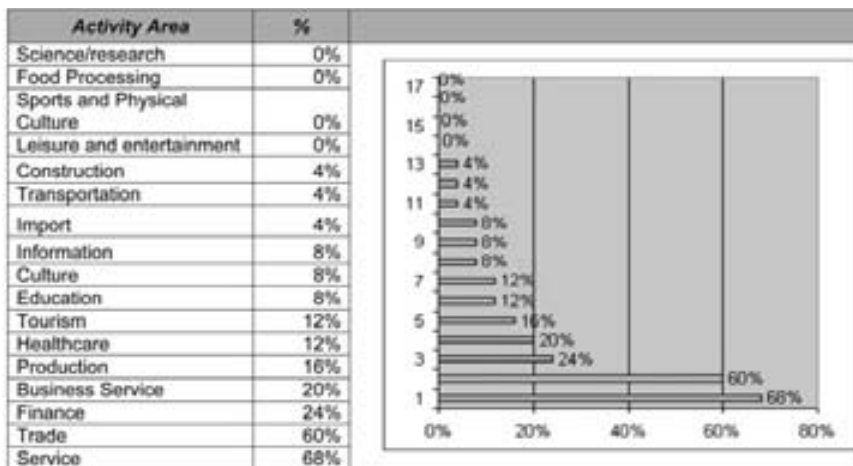


Table 2



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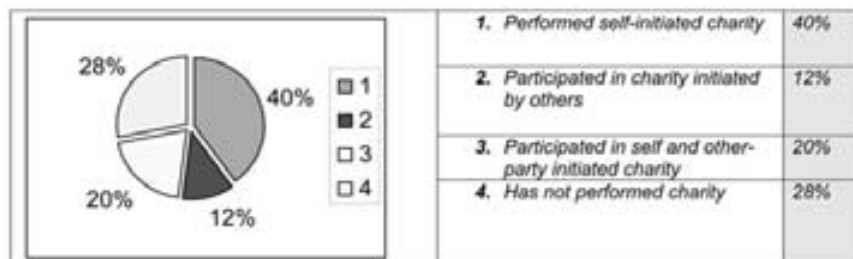
I. For-profits Experience in Charity

36 organizations, 72% of those 50 surveyed, provided a positive response to the question whether they'd ever done charity. Moreover:

- 20 organizations were involved in self-initiated charitable activities
- 6 organizations participated in charitable activities initiated by others
- 10 initiated their own charitable actions, and participated in those initiated by other organizations

28% of surveyed organizations have never performed charity throughout the time of their existence. Responses to this question are reflected in Table 3.

Table 3



It is noteworthy that the majority of organizations (40%) stating, "performed self-initiated charity," meant absence of cooperation with other structures. Data reflected in Table 9 proves this - 44% of the respondents state that they had never cooperated with other structures within the framework of charitable undertakings.

Still, the other two indicators: "participated in charity initiated by others" (12%) and "participated in self and other party initiated charity" (20%), come to prove that, in principle, partnership could be an acceptable mechanism for charity.

Others not involved in any type of charity tried to support their statement with justifications, though the surveyors never vocalized the question "why?"

Justifications would:

- "We are a small organization not yet able to do charity."
- "We are developing ourselves and cannot allocate resources for charity, though it is in our plans."

We think that this attitude is evidence of for-profits being viewed by the public as potential charity doers. The sense of moral responsibility by a for-profit or

its leader is not excluded either.

The above mentioned provides grounds to conclude that in the majority of cases, for-profits have positive disposition towards charity, even though some have not taken action.

II. Goals of Charity

Responses of the surveyed for-profits to the questions "what is the goal of doing charity" are summarized in Table 4. Formulations of the "goals" are those specified in the "Republic of Armenia Charity Law." The table below contains the summarized and shortened versions of those, depending on what the respondents stressed in their answers in terms of social group and/or area of activity. The respondents had the option of selecting more than one answer from the multiple choices in the questionnaire.

Table 4

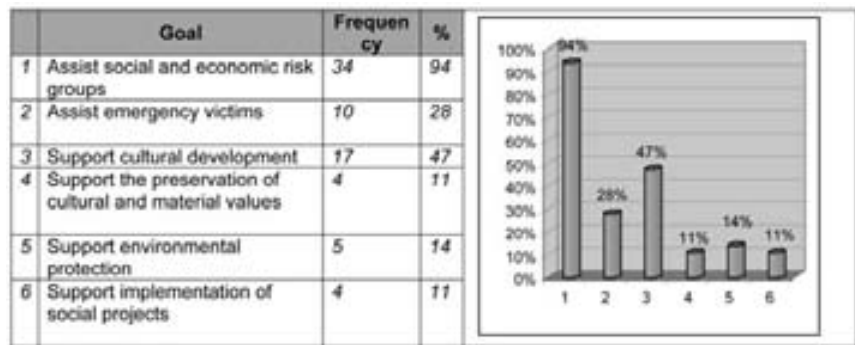


Table 4 above indicates that the largest portion of resources (94%) is invested to meet the needs of social and economic at-risk groups. This draws us to the conclusion that for-profits are interested in solving social problems. Assistance is provided to especially meet the needs of orphaned children, persons with special needs, victims of armed conflicts, and/or vulnerable families. Types of assistance provided are both monetary and material. Substantial amounts of resources go into cultural development (47%) as well.

III. Approaches to Regulating Charity

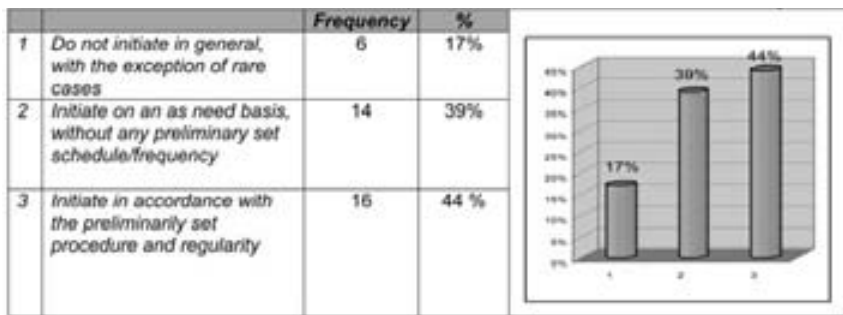
To identify whether for-profits' involvement in charitable activities is of episodic nature or constitutes part of their organizational policy, and is regular and organized, the NGO Center surveyed:

- a) the frequency of benevolent undertakings (Table 5)
- b) the regularity of benevolent undertakings (Table 6)
- c) beneficiary selection procedures (Table 7 Diagram 1)
- d) cooperation with other parties/structures (Tables 8; 9)
- e) ways of doing charity (Table 10)

The table below depicts the results:

a) Frequency of Charitable Initiatives

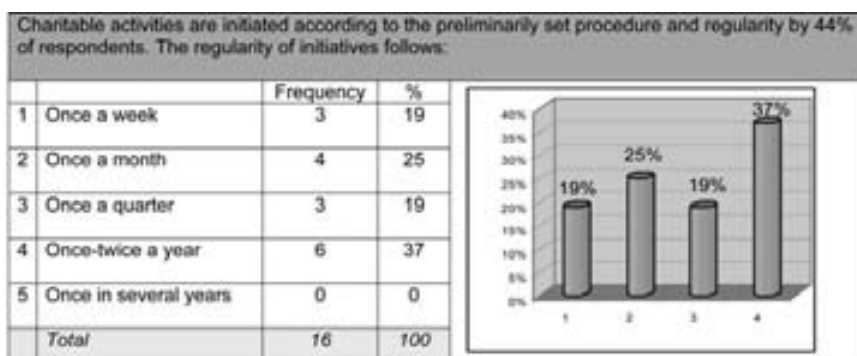
Table 5
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In terms of institutional comprehension of charity, it is rather promising that item endorsed the most was "charity is implemented in accordance with set procedure and regularity" (44%) . This means that for-profits have a planned approach charity. To some extent, these organizations have undertaken social responsibility and, as a rule, work with one target group. As stated by one of the respondents, their company has been regularly supporting two non-governmental organizations for years.

b) Regularity of Charitable Initiatives

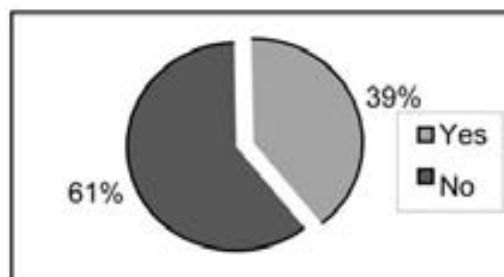
Table 6



It is interesting to note that 44% of respondents reported conducted charity "according to set procedure and regularity" (Table 5). 37% of them (Table 6) indicate charitable activities once-twice a year. This means that charity is an established practice among these for-profits and is performed regularly - at least once a year.

c) Beneficiary Selection Procedures

Diagram 1



1. Beneficiary selection criteria exist. (39%)
2. Beneficiary selection criteria do not exist. (61%)

Responses provided bare evidence that only 14 of 36 for-profits (39%) involved in charity select beneficiaries in accordance with criteria adopted by their companies. Most often, the criteria are limited to the definition of the beneficiary's social status and do not reflect fixed mechanisms and steps.

Moreover, none of the respondents demonstrate proactiveness with respect to identification of beneficiaries. Data on types of cooperation reflected in Table 9 supports this statement. Only 6 companies mentioned that while cooperating, they had used other organizations' databases, and only in those cases when the fixed list of beneficiaries had been enclosed to the request for assistance.

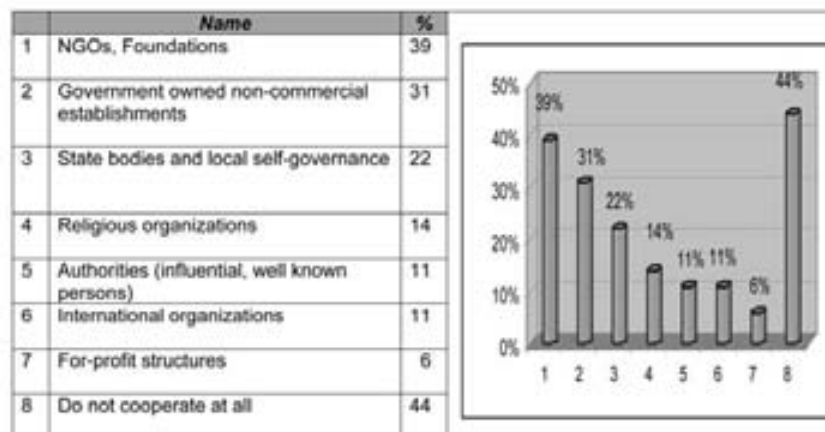
It has already been mentioned that the beneficiary group is very specific. From the institutional viewpoint this a positive indicator.

Table 7

Beneficiary Selection Criteria	Frequency	Set Criteria of Beneficiary Selection		
		Legal Entities	Directly Applying Beneficiaries	Vulnerable Groups
Exist	14 39	0	36 %	64 %
Do not exist	22 61			

d) Cooperation with Other Structures

Table 8



A comparison of the definition of social partnership with the results of this survey provides grounds to state that for-profit representatives are not exercising social partnership mechanisms as a vehicle for corporate philanthropy, even though 39% of the respondents reported cooperation with non-commercial entities and 22% with state structures & local self-government entities. The problem is that cooperation reported by the respondents has never been three-partite and coordinated.

The conclusion drawn is that there is a lack of recognition of the necessity in social partnership by for-profits, since the prevailing majority of respondents prefer to work with those who are directly affected by social problems, without any intermediaries.

Note 1: Non-commercial entities are NGOs, Foundations, Unions of Legal Entities

Note 2: Government owned non-commercial establishments are schools, kindergartens, medical institutions, libraries, etc.

Note 3: State structures and local self-governance are ministries, National Assembly, regional centers for social protection, marzpetarans, community governors, and avaganis.

Table 9 comprehensively presents information on forms of cooperation, cooperating parties and frequency of charitable initiatives.

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Table 9

Name	Types of cooperation		Frequency		%	
	State bodies and local self-governance, government owned non-commercial establishments	Foundations, NGOs, Religious organizations	Authorities (influential, well known persons)	Other for-profit structures	International organizations	Do not cooperate
1	Use databases of the latter for beneficiary selection	8	15	4	4	0
2	Partially share costs of event organization	2	6	1	2	0
3	Provide the required financial, material or moral support to organize the action	5	6	3	1	0
		22 %	39 %	11 %	6 %	11 %
		11	15	4	2	16
		31 %	14 %	11 %	6 %	44 %

e) Ways of Doing Charity

Table 10

		Frequency	%
1	Competitive	0	0
2	Select and fund project proposals	4	11
3	Make contributions to NGOs and Foundations	10	28
4	Make contributions to government owned non-commercial establishments	10	28
5	Directly assist beneficiaries	20	56

Table 10 clearly indicates that the for-profit sector's preference is to provide charitable support directly to the beneficiary: 56% feel sure that this is how the assistance gets to the target.

Substantial giving goes to government owned non-commercial establishments, NGOs and Foundations - 28% equally.

None of the surveyed for-profits implement charity through competition, which is one of the social partnership mechanisms. This provides room to think that regulating and managing charity, from the perspective of social partnership, is not yet within the priorities of for-profits.

IV. Types of Charitable Giving

Table 11

Type	Frequency	%
1 Financial aid	28	78
2 Other material assistance	18	50
3 Moral support	11	30

According to the highest indicator (78%), most of charity by for-profits is of a financial nature, for-profits are factually investing into the solution of problems of particular social groups. Moreover, some companies plan their giving on an annual basis.

V. Regulation of Charity: Procedures, Documentation

Table 12

Frequency of documenting charity	Frequency	%
1 Always	12	34
2 Often	8	22
3 Sometimes	8	22
4 Never	8	22

The first two indicators regarding the frequency of documenting charity: "always," 34% and "often," 22%" bear evidence that benevolent initiatives by most of the for-profits constitute part of their companies' policy.

VI. Estimating the Effectiveness of Exercised Mechanisms

It is noteworthy that the majority of respondents consider exercised mechanisms "effective" and only 4 companies reported them to be "totally effective."

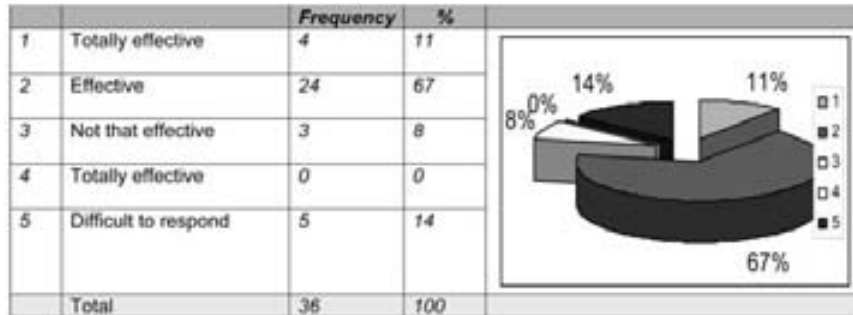
It is important to mention, that none of the surveyed companies stated anything about a system to evaluate the effectiveness of charitable initiatives. This means, it is

underdeveloped and/or is of no importance. In fact, question was unexpected for most of the respondents. Positive impact on beneficiaries was the only criteria to judge the effectiveness of the initiative. The mechanism proves effective if the beneficiary is satisfied.

None of the respondents who graded their benevolent activities as "effective" (67%) raised the issue of what potential changes they see to the existing mechanisms to make those totally effective.

None of the respondents reported its mechanisms as ineffective. (*See table 13 for summary results:*)

Table 13



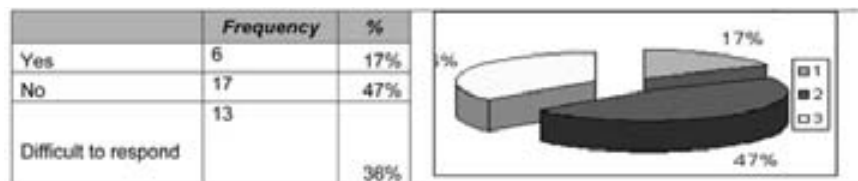
VII. Legislative Incentives for Charity Doers

Tax benefits to charity doers are spelled out in Chapter 23 of the Republic of Armenia Profit Tax Law.

However, only 6 respondents out of 36 charity doers (17%) were aware of the tax benefit. All 6 companies mentioned that the legislative provision is not enacted and that they have never benefited from it. The reasons mentioned were: "extremely complicated bureaucracy," "futile tax benefit, not even worth our efforts."

17 of 36 organizations (47%) are sure there are no legislative tax benefits, the remaining 13 organizations found it difficult to respond to the question. See Table 14 below.

Table 14

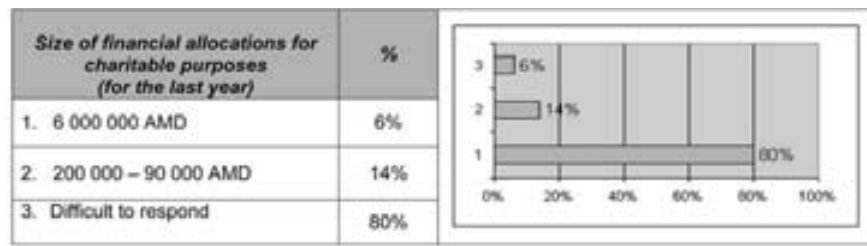


The majority of respondents (47%) are not only unaware of tax benefits, but are sure that they do not exist. Still, according to research results, charitable activities are being regulated (always by 33% of respondents, often by 22%) (Table 12). The estimation is that at least 20 organizations had to be aware of the tax benefits stipulated by RA legislation and had to have benefited from those.

In particular, the respondents felt it difficult to respond to how much they give for charitable purposes. This could be due to the wide assortment of types of giving (financial assistance, furniture, food, etc.) and non-systematic regulation of those allocations.

Responses to this question are summarized in Table 15, though, they do not clearly reflect the real situation, as they are quotations and estimations without any supporting documentation.

Table 15

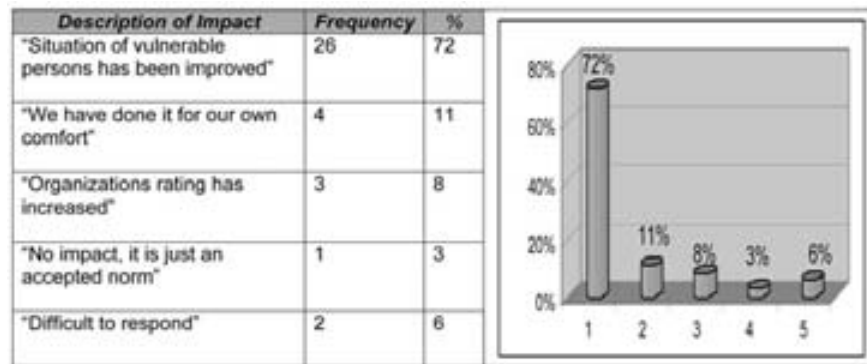


Thus, only 20% of the companies having charitable undertakings mentioned the amounts given, even though 33% mentioned that they have regulating mechanisms.

VIII. Impact of Charity on Beneficiaries Lives

The question "what was the impact of your organization's charity?" was brought up to identify the impact of charity on the lives of beneficiaries. See Table 16 for results.

Table 16



The majority of respondents emphasized the philanthropic purpose of charity. Only 3 respondents viewed it as a means to increase their company's profile.

It was often not easy for respondents to describe the impact of charity, since the question has never been brought up before. The first reaction was "positive." Then they tried to comment, bring examples, etc. It is noteworthy, that charity recipients' satisfaction and joy are the only quality standard for the majority of respondents.

Some responses voiced were, "we do not have any expectations from charity except for helping people and easing their sufferings."

Conclusion

What constitutes benevolence performed by for - profits?

1. More often than not, for-profits are of a positive disposition towards benevolence.
2. More often than not, for-profits practice philanthropy driven by moral incentives.
3. A major portion of philanthropic giving is directed towards the solution of cultural and social problems.
4. For-profits' preference is to work directly with beneficiaries, rather than through and with the support of intermediary structures.
5. On the whole, charitable actions are regular and constitute part of an organization's policy.

How is it manifested?

- 1.1 The majority of for-profits exercise corporate philanthropy, and do it either through making a philanthropic donation or through funding project proposals.
- 1.2 On the whole, assistance is provided in the form of financial resources.
- 2.1 Humane goals are the drive for corporate philanthropy, rather than an attempt to increase the rating/public profile of the organization.
- 2.2 Currently, tax incentives are not a stimulus for corporate philanthropy.
- 3.1 For-profits work with specific social and economic risk groups. More often, aid recipients are orphaned children, the disabled, victims of armed conflicts, and vulnerable families.
- 3.2 Benevolence in the cultural sphere is directed towards preservation of spiritual and material values.
- 4.1 For-profits are not pro-active in search of partners for their benevolent activities.
- 4.2 Though cooperation between for- and non-profits is a fact, the role of for-profits in this partnership context is reactive. The latter do charity only in the case of receiving a request or proposal for assistance.
- 4.3 For-profits' partnership with state structures and local self - governance is of a fragmented character.
- 4.4 For-profits are not proactive in terms of establishing social partnership relations, though they obviously contribute to the solution of social problems.
- 4.5 For-profits do not evaluate the effectiveness of their charitable endeavor.
- 5.1 A majority of for-profits plan benevolent actions at least on an annual basis, as they view it as part of their organization's policy.
- 5.2 The majority of for-profits regulate their benevolent activities.

Why is it so?

- Benevolence is culturally rooted in Armenia. Throughout the centuries, numerous social, educational, and cultural problems have been solved thanks to charity doers and philanthropists.
- Though steps are being taken in the Republic of Armenia to re-vitalize traditions of benevolence, the efforts of the three sectors of society (state, private market, and civil society) to solve one and the same problems are dispersed. According to one of the for-profits, "why should we consider working with non-profit organizations if assistance could be directly provided to the beneficiary?"
- In general, for-profits are unaware of the activities by and the roles of non-profits in solving diverse problems. One representative of a for-profit organization thinks that non-profit organizations should be proactive and interested in presenting their structure and activities for the businesses to become aware and able to make decisions to establish partnerships with non-profits.
- The majority of for-profits refrain from spreading information on their company's benevolent actions/projects. A representative of a for-profit company stated that the public at large does not trust the benevolence by profit making structures. Public perception is that businesses do charity to pursue either financial interests or are just interested in advertising their companies. Moral interests are not taken into consideration at all.

Suggestions/Recommendations

- information provision to for-profits on the concept and mechanisms of social partnership
- information provision to for-profits on the activities by non-commercial organizations
- information provision to for-profits on local and international experience of social partnership mechanisms between state and non-commercial structures
- promotion of dialogue between commercial, non-commercial entities, state structures, and local self governance to identify expectations from the social partnership perspective and outline possible ways for partnership
- cultivation of positive disposition and stimulation of targeted benevolence of for-profits in the moral and legal platforms
- provision of information to public at large on for-profits' benevolent projects and the social significance of those activities

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Topic: *Business associations as a way to improve public policy*

Business Associations as a Way to Improve Public Policy

Business associations (BAs, Associations) play a critical role in the formation of public economic policy, because they represent the interests of private companies whom the economic policy directly affects. It is, however, true that many developing countries do not have organized private industry. In other words, companies have not yet joined each other to form associations. This means that the voice of private industry is not heard, or it is heard from individual companies which are too weak to affect the policy making process. How can business associations affect the policy making process, and what are the challenges in Armenia?

In general, business associations:

- are formed by private business representatives in specific industry or sub-industry sectors
- represent one, and are a stronger voice to protect their interests when a common problem is faced
- bAs better represent industry needs because they are governed by industry representatives themselves
- they are more rational in their recommendations because they are represented by practical business people
- they do not always represent all industry or sub-industry needs, because of limited membership (by size, by structure, by ownership, etc.)

Companies get together specifically to better struggle for more favorable environments in which to do business: in Armenia, they want simpler and predictable taxation policies and regulations, and they want to pay less taxes; startup businesses demand tax determent for the initial period of operations, all businesses in the regions demand that the government improve the physical infrastructure (telecommunication, roads, water supply) and improve business financing opportunities.

Not only do associations demand better environments, they can also serve as regulatory bodies to improve the business environment, if they develop expertise. They organize their own training courses, provide certification that may gain recognition and acceptance in the industry, (Armenian Hotel Association and Armenian Restaurants Association started hospitality and customer care trainings, Guild of Armenian Tourist Guides launched professional development courses for tour guides, Union of Incoming Tour Operators plans to launch Tourist Friendly Certification) and may serve as a basis for licensing (e.g., licensing of tourist guides) by the government, if it recognizes the value of certification given by business associations. This certification may also serve as recognition among potential business partners through certifying existing competencies. In some cases, associations effectively qualify companies to conduct international trade, which helps to gain trust among potential international partners. The regulatory function of associations works if:

1. associations have expertise in the area that they want to regulate
2. if the services and competences of the association are recognized by the government

3. the services and competencies of the association are recognized by the industry cluster

The struggle of business associations to change economic policies does not always match the short term ambitions of the government. For example, lower taxation leads to less income paid to the state budget. Less complicated taxation and licensing procedures lead to less controlling power and less corruption opportunities. Thus, government does not always like to deal with organized group of companies especially when they are strong and can win battles.

On the other hand, when government follows what business associations demand, it creates more attractive environments for businesses to invest and to grow, which eventually increases the amount of taxes paid to the state budget, decreases unemployment, and improves competitiveness of the economy. This creates a win-win situation for both sides: businesses make higher profit and government gets more taxes.

Challenges:

One of the challenges that BAs face during the start up stage is lack of competency in conducting analyses to prove that the changes proposed will lead to better performance of the industry, and that more taxes will be paid to the state budget after the new policy is adopted. Not only do associations not have the capacities to conduct economic research and analysis, they also undervalue this effort and tend not to pay for analytical work.

Associations lack legal expertise as well. In order to be successful, the changes that the associations propose should be coherent with overall the legislation of the country or suggest where the changes in other laws and regulations should be made. Professionally made proposals help to gain government's trust, plus, government does not spend much time or resources on integration of the proposals into the national legislative structure.

Of course, higher corruption creates significant constraints for reforms. If government representatives are connected to individual businesses, then they tend to create special, more favorable environments for their own businesses," and not for the whole industry. However, associations if they are big and strong, serve as an effective tool to struggle against this kind of unfair practice.

As already mentioned, business associations are weak if they have limited membership. Membership can be limited by size, type, or ownership of the companies. This significantly decreases the lobbying power of the associations because government does not want to work on issues relevant to only small groups of businesses (unless the government is corrupt). Additionally, the association is weaker if it is smaller. On the other hand, the remaining part of the industry resists the proposals of small associations because it feels ignored.

The other challenge is that businesses in Armenia do not have association management experience. Thus, they are weak at mobilizing the companies into one group to struggle against common problems. They also avoid any lobbying actions because they are afraid of "punishment" in the form of regular visits from tax inspectors.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Business associations play a critical role in improving the business policy environment of the country because they represent the aggregated voice of the industry.
- However, they do need help to build their economic and legal research capacities and presentation skills.
- They also need to learn the techniques of effective lobbying.
- Government should encourage BAs to participate in economic policy development discussions and follow recommendations from the associ-

ations, because it saves resources for the government and the output is more practical and rational. Plus, government gets political credits in the form of gaining the trust of the business community if it involves them and listens to business associations.

- Government should recognize the value of BA services for the private business industry (qualification of private businesses, training, and certification), and if they are granted a mandate from the government and the industry cluster, associations may take on functions of a regulatory body as well.
- Government should spend more resources to build the capacities of BAs through financial and technical assistance interventions.

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Anna Kurdova. lawyer, "NGO Center"

Topic: *Comparative perspectives on legislation enabling business-NGO Collaboration*

Dear reader,

With this Manual, the "NGO Center" non-governmental organization, presents to you the possible mechanisms for implementation of social partnership. Social partnership is a form of cooperation between the state or local authorities and commercial and civil society organizations; and through attracting additional resources into the social sphere, aims to resolve social problems. The concept of social partnership is not yet widespread in the Republic of Armenia, although in the last decade, it has taken root in developed countries and has been acknowledged as the best means of cooperation between authorities and the public.

And thus, it is only natural that we decided to further elaborate issues relating to the institution of social partnership in general and its implementation mechanisms in particular. In this manual, we attempt to present the importance and necessity of social partnership for central and local authorities, as well as civil society organizations, since each of them aims to find ways to resolve various problems of society.

We hope that this manual will become a guide for all parties and participants in social partnership.

"NGO Center"

Non-governmental organization

The concept of social partnership

There are problems in each community with regard to city transport, the environment, social issues, combating crime, healthcare, and other areas. The major part of the burden of resolving community problems lays on the shoulders of local self-governing bodies, but local authorities do not always have the necessary means for resolving the aforementioned issues.

Solutions to community problems are often predicated on the capacities of local, self-governing bodies in finding areas of cooperation with commercial and civil society organizations¹.

International experience shows that the state system in many countries has difficulties giving up its functions related to provision of various types of services to private entities. American scientist Claire Ulmann, comparing the viewpoints of American and French societies on the role of the state, mentions that the American people have always demonstrated mistrust of their government, and moreover, believe that citizen activism contributes to public good. However, the French believe that only the public sector has the capacity and duty to serve the public good, and therefore demonstrates suspicion towards private activities, even those of charitable nature².

At the same time, the author mentions that many European countries have been confronted, these past decades, with rising social tensions, for which the existing government structures did not seem adapted to fight. In this situation, it is appropriate to use the 'services of organizations with more flexibility to solve individual problems. The French State today has adopted the concept of using NGOs to provide new types of services, and closely works with those organizations in drafting domestic social policies.

The cooperation of local authorities with non-governmental organizations can be explained by the following objective factors:

1. According to the legislation of the Republic of Armenia, not for profit organizations are called non-commercial, which include also non-governmental organizations. There is no universal term for defining those organizations. This paper refers to those organizations by using different terms, such as non-governmental, non-commercial, civil society, public.

2. Claire Ulmann - "The welfare state's other crisis, explaining the new partnership between nonprofit organizations and the state in France," Indiana university press, Indianapolis, 1998, pp. 1-4

- The decentralization of governance leads to a wider sphere of authorities for local self-governing bodies, which creates the need for additional human and budgetary resources. In such conditions, support can be provided by non-governmental organizations, which can receive grants in accordance with the legislation, to resolve community problems and thus lighten the burden of local authorities.
- The level of trust of residents in local authorities often depends on activists who are members of non-governmental organizations operating in the given community.
- Local authorities often provide services to the groups of community residents, whose interests are presented by certain non-governmental organization. As a result, provision of those services through non-governmental organizations would be more targeted and effective, with regard to both quality and price.

The cooperation between central or local authorities, commercial and non-governmental organizations is often called social partnership. In theory, it is considered to be a form of cooperation through attracting additional resources into the sphere of influence, and aims to resolve social problems, increase access to social services by the really vulnerable groups, properly redistribute social responsibilities between the states and the society, and increase public trust in the authorities. The specific feature of social partnership is that the ultimate goal of cooperation is to resolve social problems of the population, primarily through civil society organizations.

Regulatory framework of social partnership

Social programs can be financed through investments from budgetary and extra-budgetary resources of central and local authorities, charity investments made by grantees, resources of non-governmental organizations, and other sources. Grantees of social programs can be natural or legal entities, who participate in the implementation of social programs on a charity basis and provide the necessary resources for the implementation of those programs.

As in every legal relationship, social partnerships and biddings of social programs, (conducted within the framework of social partnership) should be based on the following principles:

- priority of social issues,
- the competitive nature of the process for selecting program implementers,
- transparency, openness, and competition,
- provision of information related to social programs to be implemented,
- guarantees for more effective implementation of social programs using the capacities of civil society organizations.

For that partnership to be mutually beneficial for each party, the laws on non-commercial organizations, local authorities, taxation, and biddings for social programs regulating the mentioned partnership should be harmonized.

The legislation on non-governmental organizations defines the regulations for their registration and operation. The law of the Republic of Armenia "On non-governmental organizations" stipulates that organizations, based on their own initiatives or those of central governmental structures and local self-governing bodies, through contractual or any other form of mutual agreement, can partially or fully implement social, healthcare, educational, cultural, sports, and other public programs or measures of central and local self-governing bodies.

The legislation on local, self-governance defines the framework of authorities of local self-governing bodies, regulations for financing their operations, etc. According to the law of the Republic of Armenia "On local self governance," within the limits of

their voluntary jurisdictions, have the right to implement programs in areas stipulated by the law through cooperation with any legal person, including non-governmental organizations. That list of voluntary jurisdictions is not final. This means that based on the needs of the community, local self-governing bodies can implement their programs in any way not forbidden by the law, including the use of social partnerships.

The tax legislation should contribute to the development of social partnership through allocation of tax privileges. The budget law, as well as community budgets, can incorporate the possibility for allocating financial resources to individual programs of non-governmental organizations.

Biddings for social programs require special regulations, which will define the concept of social partnership, the status of participants, regulations for financing social programs submitted by them, etc. The "regulation for allocating subsidies and grants from the state budget of the Republic of Armenia to legal persons" approved by the government of the Republic of Armenia, for the first time, defined the concepts of subsidy and grant, as well as the possibilities for receiving those. Although the above-mentioned normative act does not state, in particular, that civil society organizations can also receive subsidies and grants, it neither limits their rights to receive state budget financing within the framework of the mentioned regulation.

Mechanisms for implementation of social partnership

Biddings are one of the mechanisms for implementation of social partnership programs, they represent legal-organizational measures aimed at resolving social problems by civil society organizations at the expense of budgetary and extra-budgetary or other financial resources. Social problems are resolved through social programs, and implementers of those programs are determined on a competitive basis. A social program can be characterized as a set of social measures aimed at targeted groups, for resolving any problem relating to healthcare, education, culture, science, physical education, youth policy, support to motherhood and childhood, patients, the disabled, elderly, the environment, maintaining social order, etc.

According to the definitions stated in the regulation for provision of subsidies and grants from the state budget of the Republic of Armenia to legal entities, the grant is a monetary allocation, provided to the organization from the state budget, not subject to compensation or return, for the implementation of its statutory objectives, with the final aim of promoting the specific economic sector activity. The amounts of grants are defined in the state budget.

Unlike subsidies, grants can be allocated only through biddings. The bidding committee should have at least three members and one secretary. The committee conducts its work through sessions, based on the collegiality principle. The bidding committee has the authority to approve the text of invitation to the bidding and the announcement for the bidding, which is published in a newspaper with a distribution of at least 3,000.

A participant of the bidding has the right to ask the committee about clarifications to the invitation to bid. Participants should submit the bid in a sealed, stamped and signed envelope. Bids are submitted to the secretary by the deadline stated in the announcement of the bid. Bids are only opened at a session dedicated to this purpose, at which time, each member of the committee receives two copies of bid evaluation forms stamped with the official seal of the governmental body. Members of the committee evaluate the bids by completing the evaluation forms, providing a conclusion, and submitting one copy of the evaluation form to the secretary.

Results of the bidding are summarized at the final session of the committee, after which the decisions of the committee are submitted for the approval of the director of the government agency. The director of the governmental agency has the power to approve or reject the decision of the committee.

Within five working days of the approval by the director of the government agency, the grant agreement is signed with the organization.

The subsidy is full or partial compensation provided to the organization for losses resulting from the production of goods, export, import, works, and provision of services with prices lower than the minimum profitable price. The purpose of the subsidy is not to increase the capital assets of the organization, but rather to add to the revenue of the company, generated from its current operations. Subsidies are allocated to the organization based on the agreement regarding provision of subsidies signed between the relevant government regulatory body and the organization.

As an example, the law of the Republic of Armenia "On state budget of 2004" approved budgetary allocations, in the form of subsidies, amounting to more than 14 million AMD.

Although the regulation on provision of subsidies and grants from the state budget of the Republic of Armenia to legal entities regulates only allocations from the state budget, it also serves as a model, which can be used by local self-governing bodies for allocations from community budgets to civil society organizations.

The next mechanism for implementation of social partnership is public participation. This is a process during which, cooperation between local self-governing bodies and civil society organizations takes place in order to identify and discuss problems at the community level. Public participation is ensured through the corresponding committees formed by local authorities, whose membership consists of nongovernmental organizations, foundations, trade unions operating in the given community, community residents, etc. Public participation improves the targeting of activities for resolving social problems and ensures the control of community residents over the activities of local authorities.

Specific features of mechanisms for implementation of social partnership

Readers of this manual might ask the question: why can't the cooperation between local self-governing bodies and non-governmental organizations be regulated by a contract on provision of services, where local self-governing bodies will be the party commissioning the work and non-governmental organizations will be the implementers? In this case, the entire process will be subjected to the law of the Republic of Armenia on procurement, according to which, procurements are defined as commercial activities. Civil society organizations, as non-commercial organizations, are not-for-profit, and undertake entrepreneurial activities only in cases where it serves their statutory objectives. Non-governmental organizations can undertake entrepreneurial activities only through establishing commercial organizations or participating in them. This means that non-governmental organizations can never be part of the process of procurement.

Programs implemented as a result of procurement biddings by foundations, which upon fulfilling certain conditions, are allowed to undertake entrepreneurial activities. These activities are considered paid services and are mandatorily taxed, in this case under the profit tax. The scheme is acceptable neither to local authorities, nor the organization implementing the program. This is because firstly, as a result of taxation, the amount allocated from the community budget will not be used fully for resolving community's problems, and secondly, non-governmental organizations will be totally left out of the list of entities providing services. In addition, since social partnership mechanisms are of a non-commercial nature, an opportunity arises for attracting additional resources for resolving community's problems, which is impossible in the case of procurement. It must be noted that there are essential differences between procurement and grant processes. The table below presents those differences more clearly:

	Grant	Procurement
Objective	Project implementation to the benefit of beneficiaries	Acquisition of goods, works, services
The role of the governmental body	Financing	Purchasing
Participants	Civil society organizations	Legal persons, as entities conducting entrepreneurial activities and natural persons
Proposal format	Project proposal/form of initiative or response to requests for proposals	Offer/ response to announcements
Type of activity	Activity is conducted for the benefit of beneficiaries, not the financing entity	Provision of goods, works, services to the purchaser
Condition for winning	Factors not related to price	Price related factors
Type of payment	Total or partial financing	Determined price
Payment timetables	Partially or totally until the end of the program	Agreements on trade, contracting, lease, etc.
Risk	Financing party	Party providing goods, works, service
Legal classification	Grant (donation) agreement	Agreements on trade, contracting, lease, etc.
Unused amounts	Return to the financing party	Not returned since the price is fixed by the agreement.

Thus, we can conclude that two conditions need to be met for social partnership mechanisms to be established: adopt the package of documents regulating the grant process and allocate the corresponding resources in community budgets for provision to non-governmental organizations on a competitive basis. The package of documents regulating the grant process consists of the following:

- the annual list of themes of priority programs in the given community, which determines the directions of programs
- request for proposals (including the conditions for provision of grants)
- regulation on implementation of social partnership
- regulation for establishment and operations (including program assessment) of bidding and control committees
- the draft of grant conditions
- other documents (including standards for qualifications, financial documents, etc. required from participants in the bidding)

Raffi Niziblian. Director, Deem Communications

Topic: *Marketing non-profit projects to the business community-social marketing*

AMD 40 million to fight measles and rubella

The press conference, held at Yerevan's Golden Tulip Hotel, carried the theme "Protect Children from Measles - Join Our Call." The event brought together representatives of a number of health institutions including UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Armenian Ministry of Health, as well as international organizations and local NGOs, to celebrate a groundbreaking initiative pioneered by MACVF and VivaCell. With a contract signed during the event, VivaCell pledged AMD 40 mln to the MACVF-supported Measles Elimination Campaign in Armenia.

"The greatness of a company should be measured not by its size or revenues, but its long-term positive impact on the life of the public it serves," said Ralph Yirikian, General Manager of VivaCell. "Our operations are based on this very principle, and today we are proud to have a role in the extraordinary work of MACVF."

To be launched in 2007, the Measles and Rubella Supplementary Immunization Campaign is part of the Measles Elimination Strategy to be submitted to the Armenian government, which will act in response to the WHO strategy for Eliminating Measles and Rubella from the European Region. Despite its routine measles-immunization efforts in recent decades, Armenia remains on the list of countries susceptible to measles outbreaks, which strike between 30 and 40 million children every year and result in some 9 million deaths internationally.

VivaCell is the first corporation in Armenia to join and contribute to a cause of national magnitude. "Our partnership with VivaCell will help save children's lives and safeguard the future well-being of several generations of Armenians," Hayrapetyan noted during the press conference. "VivaCell's generous contribution will enable us to obtain critically-needed supplies of the measles-mumps (MR) vaccine for the children of Armenia."

During the press conference, the notion of corporate social responsibility was further elaborated by MACVF Philanthropic Advisor Sona Hamalian, who stated in her remarks, "I wish with all my heart to see the wonderful example set by VivaCell replicated throughout Armenia, where we hope visionary corporate leaders will increasingly realize that to give back to the community means to be rewarded with the singular gift of collective welfare and national progress."

30/01/2007

VivaCell supports "Dutazn" sport complex

"Dutazn" sports and health complex in Armavir city - center of Armavir Marz - has been operating since 1991. The complex is the only establishment in the region, providing karate, body-building, gymnastics, aerobics, and computer classes. The sports complex has nurtured 3 world champions of karate and body-building.

Due to the absence of a heating system, the complex was working only partly during the winter. Thanks to VivaCell support, the heating system was installed which enabled the 150 visitors and children in need to keep training and doing their favorite activity during winter months.

Loyal to its commitment and adopted principle of serving the entire population of the republic and be reachable to it, by the own network of regional SC's providing diversity of services. In the mean time, VivaCell is giving high importance to its role in the development of the country's socio-economic and cultural life.

20/11/2006

The Coca-Cola Company and USAID to Expand Water Partnership in Africa

(CSRwire) ATLANTA--(BUSINESS WIRE)--March 22, 2007--Today, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and The Coca-Cola Company announce a \$7 million joint investment in nine new water projects in Africa. The projects will be located in Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Ghana/Ivory Coast. Working together since November 2005, USAID and The Coca-Cola Company have supported water partnership activities in Bolivia, Mali, Indonesia, Malawi, Egypt, Thailand, Uganda, and South Africa. The new projects in Africa provide locally-driven solutions to address the global water crisis, growing the global partnership's investments from \$3 million to \$10 million.

Issues of water scarcity, degraded water quality, and lack of basic water and sanitation services present huge global challenges, especially to the world's poor. More than one billion people lack access to safe drinking water, and 2.6 billion people have no access to basic sanitation. There are growing shortages of water to meet human needs for food and economic activity and to ensure the sustainability of critical ecosystems. In an effort to tackle these enormous challenges, the partnership between USAID and The Coca-Cola Company was established in 2005.

Dr. Sharon Murray, Freshwater Program Manager with the USAID Water Team said of the partnership, "Our alliance with Coca-Cola is an excellent example of how a development agency can effectively join forces with a private sector partner to address our common concern about the global water crisis, bringing tangible benefits to communities in the developing world. We are excited about the launch of the second year of activities and our involvement in this successful water partnership with The Coca-Cola Company."

In its first group of projects, the USAID/Coca-Cola water partnership has improved water supply services, hygiene, household water disinfection, and watershed management among 25,000 underserved residents near Jakarta, Indonesia; in Mali, 21,000 people have seen an increase in access to clean water, improved sanitation and hygiene, and 1,000 people have been able to carry out small-scale garden irrigation to increase nutrition and incomes. Around Malawi's spectacular Mt. Mulanje, residents are benefiting from clean water and soil conservation efforts. In cooperation with implementing partners in 16 countries, USAID and The Coca-Cola Company are helping more than 300,000 people who struggle for daily access to safe and sustainable sources of water. Planning is underway to expand and deepen the impact of the USAID/Coca-Cola partnership in future years throughout the countries where both organizations work.

"We are focused on water because it is fundamental to sustainable communities," said Dr. Dan Vermeer, Director of Global Water Partnerships at The Coca-Cola Company. "While water is a key ingredient in all of our beverages, we recognize it is a shared resource that we must protect and preserve in all the communities where we operate." He added, "Our relationship with USAID is a positive example of how public-private partnerships can provide localized support to those with the greatest needs for water and sanitation services while ensuring water resources are managed to serve future generations."

A multi-year effort, the partnership capitalizes on the strengths and experience of its partner institutions, which include USAID, The Coca-Cola Company and the Global Environment & Technology Foundation (GETF). These three partners work

together on the collaborative development and implementation of water activities. The relationship demonstrates how government, business, and the NGO community can engage to solve global water problems in innovative ways.

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Novartis Foundation Partners with Tanzanian Government With Innovative Public Awareness Campaign to Fight Spread of Tuberculosis

- Tuberculosis the target of campaign in partnership between Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development and Tanzanian Ministry of Health
- Actors in "street theater" convey message of early TB detection and free treatments

(CSRwire) - Tuberculosis, striking about 1 in 10 people worldwide, still a growing threat in Africa

Basel, March 23, 2007 - Treatments for disease commonly take the form of pills, but the treatment for tuberculosis begins with a message: TB is curable. In eastern Africa, the Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development (NFSD) is helping take that message to the public in collaboration with the Tanzanian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

The Foundation is funding a campaign of street theater, posters, booklets, radio, and TV ads to teach people about the need for early detection of TB and to motivate patients to take advantage of medicines that offer a cure. Novartis supplies TB medicines free of charge.

"Patients need to know that tuberculosis is a curable disease, drug therapy has become easier to complete, and finishing a course of TB medications will make a life-or-death difference for patients and those around them," said Dr. Gilbert Mliga, Director of Human Resources and Development of the Tanzanian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

"We are using nontraditional approaches to reach and motivate patients with TB and their families to engage our healthcare resources and defeat this disease," Dr. Mliga said.

A form of social marketing, the street theater effort takes a troupe of Tanzanian actors into places and occasions where people gather and dramatizes how a patient can identify symptoms, get to a clinic and ultimately be cured of tuberculosis. Supplementing traditional media, street theater has proven successful in previous campaigns against malaria and leprosy in other parts of the world.

The campaign in Tanzania, launched just ahead of World Tuberculosis Day on March 24, focuses on patient centered treatment (PCT). This approach lets patients decide whether to be treated at home or at a health facility, a freedom made possible by new fixed dose combination products. These tablets, combining the active substances required for each of the two treatment phases for TB, reduce the number of pills to be swallowed each day and shorten the total duration of treatment to six months.

An estimated 1 in 10 people worldwide develop active tuberculosis at some time in their lives. The disease kills an estimated 1.7 million persons a year, mostly in developing countries. In Africa, the spread of tuberculosis has been aggravated both by the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the development of drug-resistant strains of TB as some patients fail to complete treatment

In Tanzania, about 70,000 new TB cases are recorded annually, and at least that many go undetected. About 50% of patients with TB are also carriers of HIV, and earlier successes of the anti-TB program have been reversed due to the contribution of HIV to new TB cases.

Novartis is actively involved in the fight against TB. Novartis supplies tuberculo-

sis medicines free of charge to the Tanzanian effort, and the Ministry makes them available through the Global Drug Facility of the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition to TB programs led by the NFSD, the Novartis Institute for Tropical Diseases (NITD) in Singapore is researching options for further shortening and simplifying TB therapy.

About the Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development

The Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development plans and supports projects designed to strengthen and secure essential healthcare provision for the poor in developing countries. Through its events and publications, it seeks to promote dialogue on development policy between public and private-sector institutions. By means of scientific analyses, it helps to define the nature and limits of corporate social responsibility, particularly for pharmaceutical companies. For further information, please visit: www.novartisstiftung.org

About Novartis

Novartis AG (NYSE: NVS) is a world leader in offering medicines to protect health, cure disease, and improve well-being. Our goal is to discover, develop and successfully market innovative products to treat patients, ease suffering and enhance the quality of life. We are strengthening our medicine-based portfolio, which is focused on strategic growth platforms in innovation-driven pharmaceuticals, high-quality and low-cost generics, human vaccines, and leading self-medication OTC brands. Novartis is the only company with leadership positions in these areas. In 2006, the Group's businesses achieved net sales of USD 37.0 billion and net income of USD 7.2 billion. Approximately USD 5.4 billion was invested in R&D. Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Novartis Group companies employ approximately 101,000 associates and operate in over 140 countries around the world. For more information, please visit <http://www.novartis.com>.

Narine Mailyan. Foundation for Small and Medium Business

Topic: *From philanthropy to corporate social responsibility*

From spontaneous benevolence to social partnership

The concept of corporate social responsibility

1. Do you know about, have you heard the term, or is this the first time you are hearing about "corporate social responsibility"?
 - Know about Heard of This is the first time Don't know
2. In your opinion, what does the term "corporate social responsibility" mean, how do you interpret it?
 - Concern for people (assistance to the population, charity, Maecenas-like benevolence, social guarantees, benefits for workers)
 - Diligent payment of taxes
 - Support to the state (state social programs)
 - Honesty, diligence, responsibility
 - Abiding by the law
 - Ensuring economic growth for the country
 - Willingness to share with the poor
 - Guarantee of the quality of products
 - Participation in community and marz development
 - Participation in environmental protection
 - Protection of employers rights
 - Businesses do not have any responsibility
 - Other

.....

 - Don't know
3. What group of the society do you represent?
 - Businessmen NGO Government Political Other

Participation of businesses in state social programs: Assessments and expectations

The development of charity and business ethics principles in western countries was based on standards of work conditions provided by the state and society, as well as the need for supporting business activities directed towards the workers and communities. The private sector, in turn, understands that it can have additional benefits from its activities in the social sphere, thus contributing to a more favorable and sustainable environment for business. Finally, to the benefit of businesses and the public, the theory of corporate social responsibility was formed and spread all around the world, which included the concept of elaborating business development programs with

a social orientation. Today, corporate social responsibility is considered a mechanism for involvement of the business community in national and international development. More is required from companies today: being financially accountable to shareholders, while taking into consideration the interests of all beneficiaries, as well as social and environmental issues in the policy and day-to-day activities of the company; in other words "to be socially responsible."

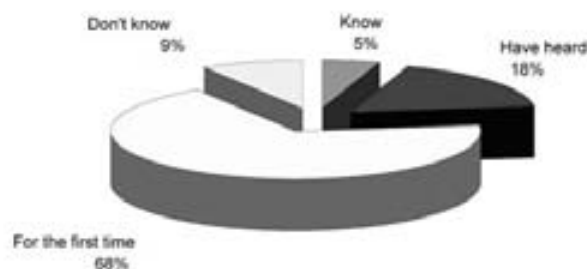
It must be noted that the perception of social responsibility is different from country to country, and depends on the history, culture, other specific features of the given country, the main social groups carrying the concept of corporate social responsibility, and national, social, and economic preferences. The concept of corporate social responsibility is quite flexible and capable of incorporating various needs of the country with regard to priorities of various issues.

In Armenia, at all levels of society, debates on the role of corporate social responsibility are not subsiding. Debates are focused on the term itself, as well as methods for practical application of the concept. Positions of the various sides of the debate, as a rule, are polarized directly proportional to their material capabilities. This paper deals with the current situation formed around this issue. Recently, a lot is being said about social partnership on social investments. The public is changing its perception of charity, and is moving from a passive care-taking position to the active and collaborative participation of all stakeholders - citizens, authorities, and businesses.

Currently, when there are numerous unresolved social issues, and businesses themselves need to be recognized by the society and the state as a partner, their social initiatives can be very timely and positive. This is especially true since, according to social surveys, the population group with a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and businesses have not yet been formed in Armenia. At the same time, the application of corporate social responsibility principles is most beneficial and important for transitional countries like Armenia, since it can contribute to poverty reduction, social coherence, and the establishment of sustainability, which is necessary for the successful process of socio-economic reforms. Such reforms need time, and are often perceived as "shock therapy." Relevant social programs of corporate social responsibility can mitigate the situation.

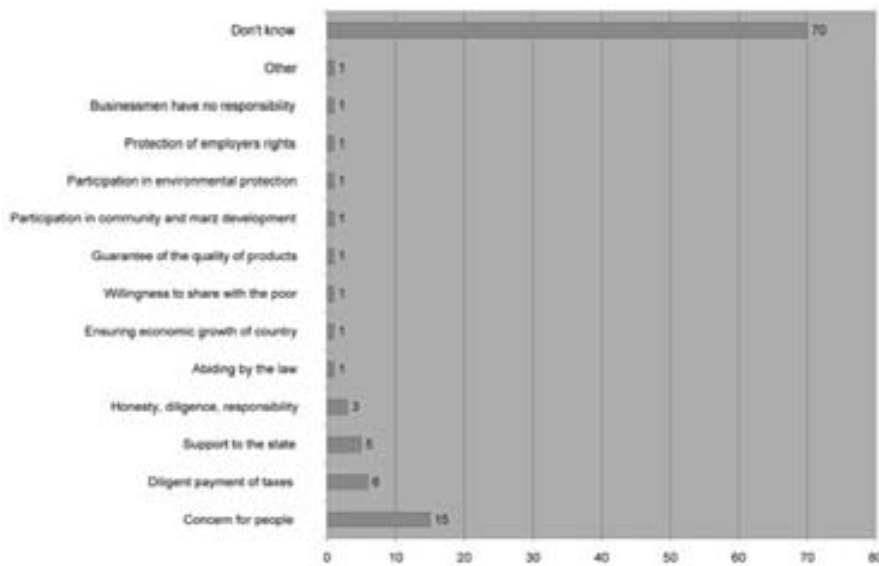
Let us try to understand the public's assessment of the concept of corporate social responsibility. Unfortunately, we are not aware of the results of any such survey conducted in Armenia. Thus, we suggest looking at the results of VCIOM in Russia as an example and compare them to the results of the blitz survey in order to determine the level of their applicability in Armenia.

1. Do you know about, have you heard the term, or is this the first time you are hearing about "corporate social responsibility"?



In your opinion, what does the term "corporate social responsibility" mean, how do you interpret it?

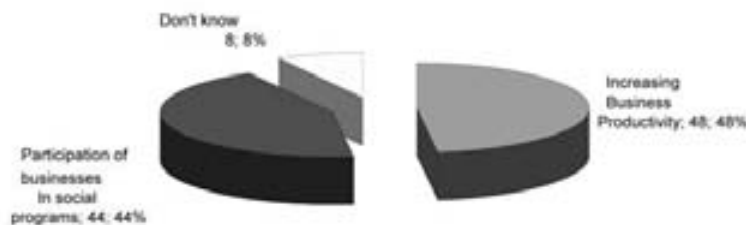
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The survey was conducted in 100 settlements all around Russia in April 2004, among 1,500 respondents.

The attitude of the public toward businesses and its social responsibility towards society is not unequivocal and is extremely contradictory. Firstly, this refers to the understanding of the active participation of businesses in social programs. Almost half of the respondents (48%) were convinced that businesses today should primarily think about the productivity of their economic activities and diligent payment of taxes, whereas social problems should be the concern of the state. Approximately the same number of respondents (44%) is of the opposite opinion, in that businesses should have active participation in national social programs, even at the expense of their economic activities (figure 1).

Figure 1. What is important today: increasing the productivity of businesses, or their participation in social programs?



These results show that respondents feel that the role of businesses, in resolving social issues, comes second to that of the state. One can assume that the participation of businesses in resolving social issues is a sort of compensation for the widespread perception among the public that businessmen avoid legal payments and obligations. Consequently, taking something additional from them is justified.

But there are groups of the population who support the prioritization of economic productivity of businesses over their social responsibility. These are mainly young, well-off individuals who are in direct contact with businesses. For example, 74% of respondents who were individual entrepreneurs with detailed knowledge of financial and organizational problems of entrepreneurial activities consider improved productivity of economic activities the first priority.

Such diverse attitudes of some respondents toward the participation of businesses in social programs is due to the fact that those programs, as a rule, assume certain allocations from financial resources, which not every company can afford. Respondents take that into account when expressing their opinions on expectations from businesses. As a result, the public opinion is also divided into two equal parts on this issue. Around half of the respondents (48%) are of the opinion that the burden of social programs should be put only on large companies. Nearly the same number of respondents (44%) thinks that social responsibility should be equally distributed among for-profit companies, regardless of the level of their profitability. Naturally, the majority of those in favor of putting the burden of social responsibility mainly on large companies are individual entrepreneurs (82%).

Similarly, positions of respondents were not identical with regard to the leading role of the state in involving businesses in social processes. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) were of the opinion that social partnership should be exclusively on a voluntary basis and compulsion is unacceptable. A somewhat smaller percentage (45%) recognizes the right of the state to mandatorily involve businesses in resolving social issues as necessary. In other words, the state has the right to confiscate additional resources from businesses not stipulated by the law (figure 2). This position is held mainly by senior residents and representatives of low income groups of the population. And vice versa, representatives of well-off groups of the population and young people are in favor of exclusively voluntary participation of businesses in social activities. At the same time, the mentioned groups of respondents underline another circumstance related to the involvement of businesses in social activities mandated by the state: incentives for socially responsible representatives of the business community and provision of special privileges for them.

Figure 2. Participation of businesses in social programs

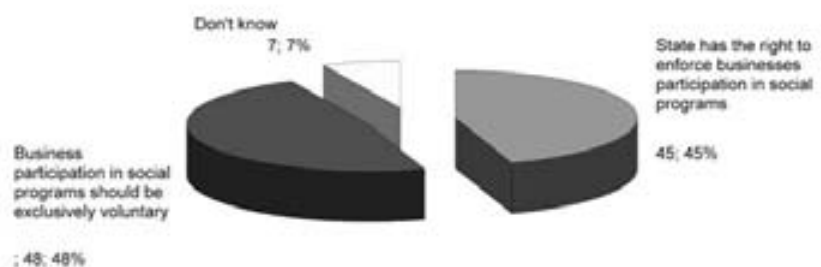
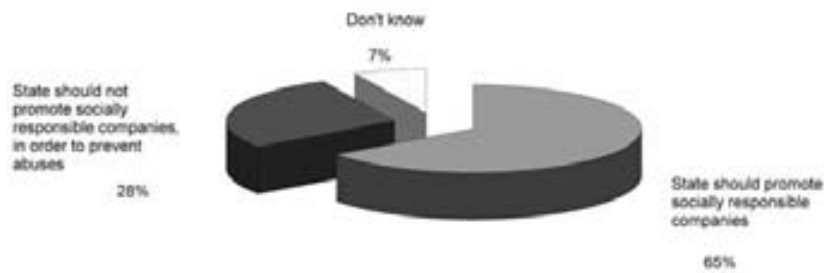


Figure 3. Should the state promote socially responsible companies?

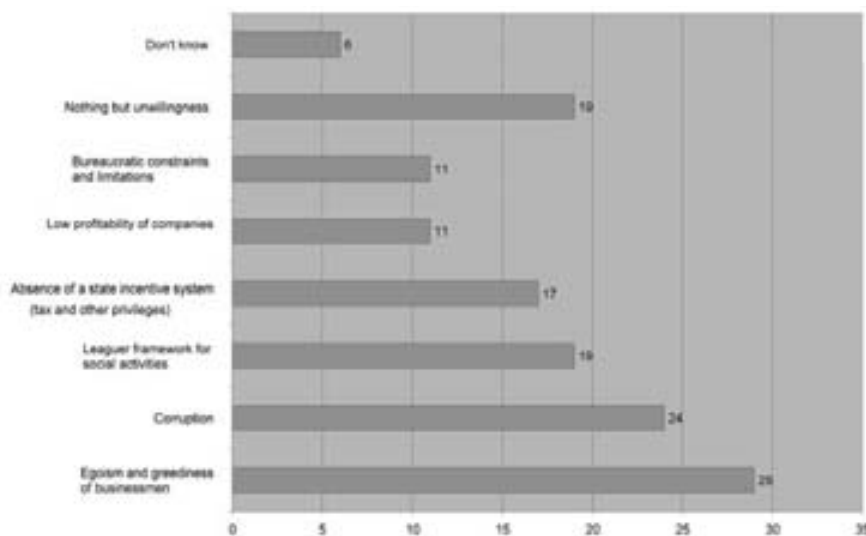


Representatives of different age groups and levels of prosperity support the state incentive system, with the exception of the groups whose living standards are below the poverty line. Arguably, that group is the only one who believes the risk of abuse is higher than the appropriateness of a system of state incentives for social initiatives of businesses.

According to the results of the survey, the expectations of the public on corporate social responsibility have already been formed and are well justified. However, the application of that responsibility is considered to be inadequate. What are the causes of this situation according to respondents, what hinders businesses from becoming socially responsible, and what can stimulate businesses to become more socially responsible?

Linking corporate social responsibility issues to the state results in a situation, where the state, together with its bureaucratic approach, acts as a constraint to the social activity of businesses. Regarding the question of what the most important obstacles to the development of corporate social responsibility are, the majority of respondents (35%) mentioned corruption and government red tape. The second important factor mentioned (29%) was the egoism and greediness among businessmen. Barriers of an institutional nature (state incentive system, legal regulation of corporate social responsibility, inadequate profitability of companies) were rarely mentioned (figure 4).

Figure 4. What are the barriers to development of social responsibility?



Thus, based on the results of the survey, it can be surmised that relationships between businesses, authorities, and the public are generally perceived as interactions requiring mutual responsibility from all three parties. The demands of the state

and the public presented to businesses should be accompanied by the creation of a favorable social and economic environment for businesses in the society.

Relationships of businesses with the non-commercial sector:

NGOs have a serious role to play in the establishment of civil society and democracy, identification of social problems, and active participation in resolving those problems. Obviously, businesses cannot exist outside the society and cannot flourish in an environment where serious social problems are ignored. Many companies acknowledge that corporate social responsibility is an instrument for creating a stable society. Consequently, companies are interested in becoming involved in the corporate social responsibility process through supporting NGOs directly dealing with social issues. An appropriately formulated corporate social responsibility policy, by attracting allocations from the private sector, can guarantee the sustainable socio-economic development of local communities, workers, and vulnerable groups of population, protect human rights, fight corruption, and promote effective governance.

In western countries, the involvement of private capital in solving important social issues is promoted by governments, and not only through tax privileges. In many European countries and the U.S., the endowment mechanism is widely used, which assumes the formation of protected capital for non-commercial organizations, the proceeds of which are used for the operation and implementation of those programs.

Developing countries however, have serious difficulties in introducing corporate social responsibility principles; there is a lack of coordinated cooperation between the private, public, and civil society sectors. Social programs of businesses are usually spontaneous, short term, without prior needs assessment, without planning, and without coordination with state programs and policy. The state and organizations do not demand corporate social responsibility on the side of businesses. Relationships between businesses and the NGO sector in Armenia develop with huge difficulties. The reasons are numerous. There is a concern that resources transferred to non-commercial organizations will be used for undeclared purposes, there are no mechanisms for provision of tax privileges, and finally a system of relationships between businesses and NGOs have not been formed yet and the latter are always the "pleasers."

An incentive for corporative investments in the third sector can be the formation and use of a Trust Capital for non-commercial organizations, or the introduction of an endowment system. This will radically change the relationships between donors and the NGO sector, and NGOs will not be forced to wait with their hands stretched out.

The purpose of this innovation is as follows: if an NGO collects a minimum amount of targeted capital throughout the year, then it is entitled to establish an endowment fund, i.e., to deposit amounts received from benefactors and implement its social programs at the expense of the interest earned. If the capital is formed, then the NGO should select a company and put the entire amount under its management. The profit received from the money invested is exempted from taxation.

This system will radically change the attitude of businesses toward investments in the social sector. It will free companies from the need for continuous, spontaneous, and short-term investments. For successful charity activities, it would be adequate to make a one-time large investment in the endowment fund and consequently only check that the money received by the recipient is used for the declared purposes. Whereas, donors have the right to dictate the purpose the profit is going to be used for. In the grant, contract donors can stipulate the area of activity for which their part of the investment in the fund should be used. In general, the list of purposes is limited.

One of the problems of the NGO sector is the lack of transparency in its operations. This often holds back companies from making investments in the third sector. According to experts, it is easy to monitor investments in the social sector through the endowment system. It suffices to describe in detail the mechanisms for ensuring the transparency of operations of the NGO as the owner of the Trust Capital. The donor can always receive information on the expenditure of its resources. Thus the endowment mechanism is transparent and practical, which is always expected by businesses.

The main factor contributing to the spread of endowment systems in the west is the provision of tax privileges to businesses. The taxation base is reduced by the amount used for charity purposes and tax is not levied on that amount.

The system also sets serious requirements for the NGO sector. A similar constraint is the absence of local, expert consultation services for matters related to corporate social responsibility issues. Professional analysis is a precondition for success, and is necessary for adapting corporate social responsibility principles to the specific situation in the country and to the specific program.

In these new conditions, the professionalism of NGO leaders and staff becomes important. The third sector is currently in need of personnel with special education.

In the west, education in the NGO sector is as developed as business education, and training is available at any university. Meanwhile, in Armenia, training is provided through seminars and short-term training courses. Capacities of the representatives of the third sector for using tools such as the endowment mechanism will elevate the relationships of the non-commercial sector with businesses to a new level. As a result, mechanisms of corporate social responsibility, which have already proven to be effective, can be introduced in Armenia as well.

Mane Mamyan. "Yerevan Water" Company

Topic: *Interest of business in long-term development of non-profit organizations*

Generalities - Approaches**➤ Presentation of the Contract:**

Since the 1st of June 2006, Yerevan Djur, the enterprise of VEOLIA Environnement group, has assured the management of the water supply and sewage services of Yerevan a 10 year Lease Contract signed with the Armenian government for the water system in the Yerevan Water & Sewage CJSC Service Area.

This contract was signed as a result of international bidding under the aegis of the World Bank.

➤ VEOLIA resolutely registers itself in a partnership with the associations of Clients', Consumers', Users' representatives, and this is in the framework of its 4 focal areas:

- Water - Sewage
- Energy
- Transportation
- Waste Management

➤ I, personally, have extensive experience with the Consumers' defenses Associations in France, as well as in Bucharest:

- The consumers' rights associations are extremely numerous in France and are sometimes politicized.
- Associations of multi-apartment buildings, condominiums in Romania...

➤ One of my priorities, since my arrival to Yerevan, was to build healthy and clever relationships with the principal NGOs, as well as with the mass media.**➤ A rule:**

- Everybody has his/her prerogatives and responsibilities, but only one common objective:
- The interest of the Client - Consumer in the framework of "win - win" partnership.

➤ FIRST, learn about each other, and validate the notion that each of the two parties will not use the other for serving for its personal interests. That necessitates:

- creating a climate of confidence,
- convincing each other that even in the case of disagreement, it is possible to discuss the existing problem together, and resolve the situation.
- ...

➤ In a practical manner**➤ Since July 2006, Yerevan Djur and 3 principal NGOs of Yerevan systematically meet once every two months (1st Thursday).****➤ The first three meetings were mainly dedicated to discussions of certain problems, but especially the ones regarding mutual recognition and gaining minimal mutual confidence.**

- ↘ **During the meeting in January 2007, I proposed to 3 NGOs to independently create a hypothetical problem, a theme that would concern each party:**
 - ☉ First, the problem of technical control of the continuing supply of drinking water,
 - ☉ Second, the problem of the management and maintenance of the internal networks of condominiums,
 - ☉ Third, how to favor the installation of water meters on not yet equipped connections.

- ↘ **Withing this framework, the NGOs and Yerevan Djur regularly meet to discuss these problems and develop a common solution. The designated staff members of the NGO responsible for these issues, and one of the directors of Yerevan Djur Headquarter related to the specific subject regular participate in these meetings.**

- ↘ **At the moment, we are about to finalize the recommendations and make a common decision with respect to the latter 3 problems.**

- ↘ **At the upcoming meeting in May, we will jointly define 2 or 3 common subjects/problems for a case study.**

For the future

- ↘ **I think it is essential to develop the "win- win" partnership between commercial enterprises and NGOs, under the condition that both entities thrive to improve services rendered to the client/customer, above other objectives.**
 - ☉ In fact, we may call this a strategic partnership. As for me, I am ready to engage Yerevan Djur in the partnership with NGOs.

- ↘ **Each party should include in their individual responsibilities and prerogatives to avoid collision/fusion of roles.**

- ↘ **Obviously, certain actors from the private sector should present their perceptions regarding the NGOs, and the same is applicable to some NGOs.**

- ↘ **One of the important directions of this partnership, amongst others, is the development of the social strategy with NGOs' contribution.**

- ↘ **Once again, Yerevan Djur is ready to work with certain NGOs to advance on this subject.**

Conclusion

I am convinced that commercial enterprises, in particular the enterprises rendering public services such as Yerevan Djur, must develop productive partnerships with the NGOs in order to globally improve the relationship between Enterprise - Client - Consumer.

In the framework of transparent partnership, I do not exclude providing funding to certain NGOs on the basis of strategic and targeted contributions. This issue is subject to discussion.

After all, improved Client - Consumer relationship and higher quality services rendered to the Client - Consumer, significantly contribute to the commercial interests of the Enterprise.

Track **D**

Kyla Springer. Counterpart International, Communicate Associate

Topic: *Media toolkit for NGOs*

Press Kit

The Press Kit shares the nuts and bolts of your organization with a media outlet. It may be your first impression with a media outlet and should be packaged as such - sleek, well-branded, and concise.

The Press Kit is a packaged set of promotional materials that gives 'at-a-glance' information about your organization and the specific issue you would like the media outlet to cover. Send it to media outlets, keep copies on-hand, and bring it to all events. Always make sure the Press Kit is on letterhead and packaged in a folder.

What is Included in a Press Kit?

1. Cover Memo

- ☞ This should have your organization's contact information as well as the main press contact's information (phone, address, website)

2. Background piece about organization

- ☞ In one page, describe your organization. Even if the media outlet is familiar with your organization, this will allow you to portray your organization how you want to, not how they remember it.

3. Fact Sheet on specific issue

- ☞ What is the issue you are tackling? What relevant information would the media outlet need to produce a quality story? In 2 pages or less, provide quick facts including numbers (with sources to show credibility), short illustrative examples, the recent history of the issue, trends, etc.

4. Quotes or Comments from your experts

- ☞ Ideally the media outlet will call for an interview. However, the media outlet will usually be pleased if you provide already written quotes from your organization's leader or expert. The outlet may reprint them exactly, or it may pique their interest and spark them to make the call and get more information directly from you.

5. Speakers Bureau List

- ☞ For whomever you choose to provide the socially "expert analysis" or quotes from your organization, provide a brief bio, title, role with your organization, experience with the issue and photo (see "Speakers' Bureau" for more information). Provide a short list of your other speakers to pique the journalists' interest in other topics about which your organization has expertise.

6. Charts, Graphs

- ☞ Bring the story to life by offering graphic visuals. Too many numbers are often difficult for outsiders to understand so a clear graph or chart of the issue may avoid confusion.

7. Multimedia

- Media outlets love photos, video and sound. If you have it, provide a CD or DVD of photos, video or audio to accompany your packet. By providing such multimedia, the outlet will not have to spend money on sending its own photographer or videographer to the site and may be more likely to run your story. (See "Video" for more information)

Media Toolkit for NGOs

What's Inside?

- **Success Story**
The "paint brush" of your toolkit; this is one of the best ways to draw a reader in to your story
- **Press Release**
The most common way to reach media outlets on your newsworthy events
- **Press Kit**
A handy tool that gives a 'snapshot' of your organization to have available at all events, and to distribute to media as you create new relationships
- **Photos**
The most powerful tool your organization has to link your work with its impact
- **Speakers' Bureau**
This list of your organization's experts can help the media know exactly who to talk to when writing a story
- **Press Conference**
If a press release can't cover all the breaking news you have to offer, invite the media to come hear it directly from you
- **Stylebook**
Using a standard stylebook such as the Associated Press' can bring consistency to your writing and help you think about your style compared to the large media outlets
- **Quotes**
When your beneficiaries speak your praise, people listen
- **Press list**
By doing a "Media Audit," you can find out which journalists might be most likely to run your stories - hone in and create relationships with them
- **Media advisory**
Invite the media to your event well ahead of time
- **Opinion and Editorial Pieces**
Make your opinion heard by writing to the editor of your local paper, but do it right lest you make a very public mistake
- **Website**
The gateway to your organization, this should not only hold all the information you want to share with your audiences, but also be sleek, visually pleasing and easy to use

Media Advisory

A "Media Advisory" functions as an alert of an upcoming event. It allows you to let media outlets know, in advance, that you are planning a news-worthy event and invite them to attend. Media outlets can put it on their news calendars and can assign someone to "cover" your event.

How to Write a Media Advisory

1. A media advisory functions as an FYI that alerts journalists to an upcoming event. It gives the basic information: who, what, when and where.
2. A media advisory "what" is much like a news release headline. Clearly state the news here with a short description of the event and the issue.
3. List the speakers at your event. Explain who will speak and what they will discuss.
4. Tell when the event will take place. Include the date and time.
5. A media advisory "where" provides the location name and address. Directions may be necessary if the event is held in an obscure location.
6. The contact should be the person who will speak to the media or facilitate interviews. This person must be easily accessible. Place the contact information in the top right corner of your media advisory.
7. In the top left corner, type "Media Advisory." Beneath that, type the date the advisory is sent out.
8. Mention "Photo Opportunity" if one exists and be sure to send the advisory to the photo editors of media outlets as well as to reporters - they don't always share information with each other!
9. Include a short summary of your organization as the last paragraph.
10. Type "####" at the end of your advisory. A media advisory should NEVER be more than one page.
11. A media advisory should arrive 3 to 5 working days before the event. Fax or mail (if time permits) your advisory to the appropriate reporter, editor, or producer at each news outlet on your press list.
12. ALWAYS make follow up calls the day before your event and have the advisory ready to be faxed or emailed again.

Photos

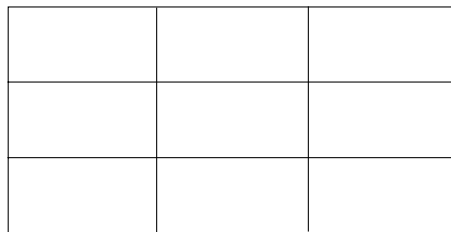
"Photos are worth a thousand words," goes the saying. Photos are an extremely powerful tool for nonprofits. They can instantly show the impact of a program and grab your audience's attention, begging them to read on and learn more.

Though digital technology allows everyone to take photos cheaply and easily, a truly beautiful photo is quite difficult to take and surprisingly rare - but it can create a deep emotional response, changing perceptions and inciting people to act.

➡ Common Photo Mistakes

- Do not leave the automatic date stamp on - this can ruin an excellent shot because it's unseemly and difficult to take off later
- People connect with people - the most engaging photos are close-ups of people's faces, don't take the shot from too far away

- Too few shots - as long as you have a digital camera, take multiple photos of the same scene to ensure you get the best shot. You can throw away poor ones later, but you can't go back to the same moment if you miss the shot.
 - Use the largest memory stick you can afford so you don't run out of space, bring a second one and plenty of extra batteries if you can
- **Use the largest memory stick you can afford so you don't run out of space, bring a second one and plenty of extra batteries if you can**
- **Tips to Take a Photo**
- **Take 3** - if you see a great shot, take 3 photos of the same scene: one far away showing all the action, one closer up showing the action or person in more detail, and one very close-up (such as of a person's face).
 - **Rule of Thirds** - when you look through the lens, think about the scene in thirds. Your subject need not always be right in the center and sometimes it makes for a more interesting shot if it's not. Do think about what else is in each third of the shot - a tree branch or pole can ruin or enhance a photo depending on how well you think about each shot.

Rule of Thirds Box

Press List / Media Audit

Your Press List, created by doing a Media Audit, is the glue that can hold your media outreach together. Creating relationships with media, well in advance of your events, will increase the chances that media will attend because they WANT to, because they know you have good news for them, and because they trust you as a source.

What is a Media Audit?

A Media Audit means tallying the number of stories written about a particular topic by various media outlets. It also includes qualitative information to give context.

Why do a Media Audit?

A Media Audit allows your organization to keep track of what areas media outlets are spending their time and resources writing about. It helps you decide which outlets, and specifically which journalists, may be interested in covering topics relevant to your organization.

Your Press List

Once you have determined which journalists may be interested in your topics,

include them on your list. Sending out mass releases to large numbers of uninterested journalists will not only not get your story covered, but you will also lose respect with the journalists and they may be more likely to trash your future releases, even if they are relevant.

Information in Your Media List

1. Media Outlet Name
2. Contact Name, Title
3. Type of contact (calendar, society, columnist)
4. Address
5. Phone
6. Fax
7. Email
8. Website
9. Contact Preference (email/fax)
10. Media Category
11. Language
12. Distribution Reach (Local, City, State, Regional, National)
13. Focus (general, business, youth, etc)
14. Audience (age, gender, etc)

Press Conference

A Press Conference is useful when an organization has something newsworthy to tell the media, but when more in-depth discussion is needed than a press release on its own can provide. It can "hammer in" your message through a more engaging dialogue and create relationships with media representatives.

Turning the Press Conference into a "Media Event" by holding it on-site can be even more compelling, and may result in better photo opportunities and a better chance of getting your story heard.

- Press conferences give reporters the possibility to ask questions, get explanations, quotes, and photo opportunities.
- An invitation to the conference should be sent to reporters and desk editors a week ahead. Closer to the date, a day or two before it, a phone call can be made to remind the reporters about the event.
- Press conferences should be held between 9 - 11 in the morning. If later, reporters will not have time to file the story for the next day's newspaper issue. However, if the media outlet is weekly or monthly, other times of the day may be acceptable.
- Media Event - The press conference can be held at an office or neutral location, such as a hotel conference room, but making the press conference into a "media event" and holding it at the site of the news can be more compelling - consider a ribbon-cutting, a signing, the unveiling of a new set of graphic materials (posters, banners around the city).
- Ideally, the organization's press officer will open and facilitate the press conference. One or two prominent persons from the organization should be present, who might each give a 10-min (or shorter) statement on the issue (project,

release, donation, opening, etc), after which the facilitator will give floor to the reporters to ask questions. Ideally it will be finished in 45 minutes. After, individual interviews can be given.

- A "press kit" is usually distributed at a conference, containing a press release, backgrounders, related report if appropriate, research results, fact sheets, list of experts, etc. Sometimes even filmed material or photo material is distributed. (See "Press Kit")
- Reporters like to say that "A press conference should scream for a headline" - meaning there should be breaking news released to them. If a conference is called and there is no such news, journalists will not forget it - there is a chance that next time, even if you have breaking news, nobody will show up. Because of the proliferation of press conferences, media outlets often send beginners to cover them.

Press Conference Checklist

One week before your press conference:

1. **Arrange for a room** that is not so large that it will look empty if attendance is light.
2. **Check on:**
 - Podium - stand alone?
 - Speaker system - if needed
 - Microphone stand - on podium?
 - Backdrop - neutral color and PLAIN if possible (white is too bright, patterns make it too "busy")
 - Chairs - theatre style, large center aisle
 - Easels - if needed
 - Electricity - outlets for video cameras, laptops
 - Table - for media sign-up and hand-outs
 - Water - for participants
3. **Pick a convenient date and time.** Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday is best, as is 9am-11am.
4. **Send out written announcements by fax, email, mail or hand deliver to:**
 - Editors
 - Assignment desks
 - Reporters
 - Weekly calendars
 - Wire service daybooks (Associated Press and Reuters sometimes have calendars of events)
5. **Prepare written materials, including written statements (pre-made quotes) and press kits.**

The day before:

- Formalize the order of speakers and who will say what
- Call all prospective media and urge their attendance
- Double check the wire service daybooks
- Collate materials and make extras for follow-up

- Walk through the site and review details
- Type up names and titles of spokespeople for media hand-out

That morning:

- Make last-minute calls to assignment desks and desk editors
- Double check the room several hours before
- Walk through the press conference with principal speakers

During the press conference:

- Have a sign-in sheet for reporters' names and addresses
- Give out press kits
- Hand out a written list of participants
- Make opening introductions
- Arrange one-on-one interviews if requested
- Take notes on what is said, gather your own quotes, or tape record the event

If you choose to do a "Media Event," the steps are similar

- Arrange the location a week ahead of time, send out a media advisory, and give directions.
- Always have a "Plan B" location nearby if it rains.
- Make sure to position the speakers so the best visual backdrop is behind them. You can find a secondary place for more photo opportunities - be sure to let media know ahead of time where this location is so they can set up cameras. Bring extra extension cords if electricity is available.
- Be careful not to hold your event under trees. It should be all sun or all shade - the light/shade combination can ruin photo opportunities.

COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL**PRESS RELEASE**www.counterpart.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Telephone:

Fax:

Email:

Expert Available for Further Information:

HEADLINE

City, Country (Date) - Short Opening Paragraph

Quote

Paragraph

Paragraph

Closing/Summary

Boilerplate: For 41 years, Counterpart International has given people a voice in their own future through smart partnerships, offering options and access to tools for sustained social, economic, and environmental development. (or similar)

-END-

Speakers Bureau

A Speakers Bureau is a list of in-house experts who are available to speak about various topics with media outlets - they can tweak your story and add depth. They can share quotes, opinions, research, and "third party commentary." Reporters will use this information to fill out and balance a story with more angles and perspectives.

Each expert should be posted to a "Press" section on your website. A shortened list can be included in your "press kit" for events - many reporters cover diverse areas and may be interested in your other topics, especially if you have built a relationship of trust and credibility. Each Speaker should have a separate page and it should always be well-branded with the same format, fonts, and logo.

Designate a main press person (or receptionist) to facilitate media inquiries. While not only a more professional gateway to your experts, it is also safer since this will be made available to the public.

What should be included in the Speakers Bureau?

- Expert's full name
- Title
- Areas of Expertise
- Countries of Experience
- Languages Spoken
- Small Headshot - if it's not professional, it should be taken with a plain background and only show head and shoulders. It's best to smile and wear clothing with no patterns.
- Professional Biography - (no more than 300 words) include universities attended, degrees attained, studies of focus, years of experience, past relevant employment and skills that enhance current position, and outside hobbies or personal endeavors (optional).
- Contact information for the main press person

Who should be included in the Speakers Bureau?

- President, Vice Presidents, Directors
- Even the largest organizations do not have lists of more than 10 people, so choose a few top staff members who can "represent" your organization's areas of expertise and speak eloquently. If a reporter needs more technical information, you can always pass them on to another person later.

Success Story

A success story is your organizations' paint brush. This is the tool that can bring your work to life. While your reports, studies, summaries, and numbers are essential, the impact it has on your constituents is what will grab your audiences' attention.

People connect with people. One of the most compelling success story formats is sharing the story of one individual person, and showing how your program impacted that person. While an entire community may be affected by your work, finding one person who can represent that success is key.

Success Story Ideas:

- ☞ **Narrative** - Interview a community leader, mother, teacher, partner-organization leader, anyone who is relevant to your work and may have been impacted by it. Write a story from it using the template attached.
- ☞ **"Q & A"** - Do a "Question and Answer" session and publish it directly. Readers like to see the back and forth discussion between you and the interviewee. Try to think of questions your reader might ask if they were doing the interview.
- ☞ **"A Day in the Life"** - Follow the person throughout a typical day and document first hand how the person lives, how their neighbors live, how your program has changed their life, and their interactions with family members, other community members, etc.
- ☞ **"Photo & Caption"** - Take a photo of a "beneficiary/partner" in a setting that shows the impact of your program. The caption should concisely link their specific action with your program - showing impact.
- ☞ **"Quote Sheet"** - Interview many "beneficiaries" and gather quotes that describe the wonderful impact of your program. With a very short program description paragraph and title at the top and fill the rest of the page with quotes from various perspectives (look at the back of a best-selling novel as an example of the use of such "praise quotes"). Get permission to include attributes; if permission is not granted, you can say "Woman, age 32, XXX Province," for example. While you may know your program is working and hear it from beneficiaries all the time, it adds legitimacy to hear it directly from them.
- ☞ **"Paint a Picture"** - When writing a narrative success story, it helps to paint a picture of the situation. Take notes about what you hear, smell, see, colors, what people are wearing or the weather on the day you speak with the interviewee to draw the reader in to your story and make them feel like they are actually there. You can also add in tidbits of cultural and historical information about the province, region, community, or country your beneficiary lives in. Depending on who your audience is, they may have never visited the location and will appreciate the details you provide (as long as they are concise and well-thought out).
- ☞ **"Story Telling"** - People love to hear stories, from children's bedtime stories to movies with excellent plots. Think about your program in terms of a "problem," a "main character," and a "solution." Write it like you are telling a story, showing how the main character lived during the problem, what actions s/he took to solve it (perhaps by working with your organization), any plot twists or additional problems that arose, the solution and how the character lives now that the problem is solved.

Success Story Template**Headline**

Good headlines or titles are simple and have impact. They summarize the story in a nutshell and include action verbs that bring the story to life. Short and snappy!

Subhead

Use the subhead to expand on the headline, humanize the story, or highlight a key fact.

One sentence - again, short and snappy!

Story Lead

The story lead (1st paragraph) grabs the readers' attention while presenting the

case and setting up the need for a solution.

- 1-2 sentences max!
- Use a unique way to describe the story, such as:
 - Present the conflict
 - Share a first person account
- Introduce other important information (the character, place, conflict, opportunity, etc) in the 2nd paragraph.
- The first two paragraphs should showcase the challenge which the person/group encountered and the context for the Counterpart program.
- "Counterpart" need not be in the first paragraph.

Main Body Copy

The main body continues the story by describing how Counterpart's program took action to improve the situation.

- Highlight details and describe the end result or benefit
- What changed in the person's life? What was learned? What was received? What was the impact?
- Use concrete results and measures of improvement. Numbers are good, but not too many
- How did this make a difference in the community or country overall? Show the wider context of why this is important
- Use this section to tie the story elements together
- 2-3 paragraphs

Quote

It is essential to include at least one quote. The most powerful quotes are from beneficiaries themselves, showing how the program impacted their lives. Another quote could come from a government official or Counterpart director, for example. This also ensures that if a media outlet picks up the story, you are less likely to be misquoted, since one is already prepared.

Summary

The final paragraph should end the story with a powerful close

- 1 paragraph, 2-4 sentences.
- Use general information from the divisional brochures to tie the story into the larger picture of what the division or what Counterpart does.

Pullout Quote

Provide one sentence that represents and summarizes the story. This sentence should capture the success of the program and will be highlighted on the page in larger, italic text. This helps draw the reader's eyes into the story.

Photograph

Your photographs will bring the story to life. The photos should be colorful, depict action, capture people's attention, and feature a main character prominently. Faces and eyes are the first thing to draw attention.

Photograph's caption

Your caption or quote should briefly summarize what is occurring in the photograph. Including a name, what, when, and where in 15-20 words. Short and snappy!

Anna Hovhannisyan. USAID Armenia Social Protection Systems Strengthening (SPSS),
Legislative Outreach Liaison

Topic: *Budget process-an example of NGO-media collaboration for the public good*

Budget Process -

An example of NGO-media collaboration for the public good

"What brings us together ... is our belief that people have a right to influence the public choices that shape our lives. Public budgets are the chief instruments by which governments make these decisions, and civil society the greatest tool to ensure that people are part of that process."

Jim Shultz, Democracy Center in Bolivia

"How do we strengthen our ability to assess and improve our government's budget?" This is a common question increasingly being asked by members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The NGOs have realized that their ability to advance their goals - whether these are to combat poverty or to strengthen democratic practices - will be enhanced if they develop a capacity to undertake budget analysis.

Here are a number of websites where NGOs can get tools, best practices, publications and links to relevant sources. Actually, while working on this article I widely used the experience from other countries, as their experience adapted to Armenian realities give Armenian NGOs and media probated windows of opportunity.

- <http://www.adb.org/Countries/default.asp>
- <http://www.imf.org/external/country/index.htm>
- <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/regions.htm>
- IMF Reports on Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC)
- <http://www.imf.org/external/np/rosc/rosc.asp>, including reports for developing countries like

A well-functioning budget system is vital to the formulation of sustainable fiscal policy and facilitates economic growth. In many countries, economic problems are exacerbated by weak budget systems and faulty budget choices.

What kinds of groups are involved in Budget Work?

- Policy institutions
- Academic or research institutions that have added an applied budget component
- Activist organizations that have added a budget research component
- Operate at all levels of government: national, state, local/municipal

General Nature of Budget Products

- Attempt to be accurate, accessible, and timely
- Strive for independent assessments
- Try to affect policies

Main Activities

- Advancing budget literacy
- Assessing the budget process and budget systems
- Analyzing budget policies

Target Audiences

- Policymakers, both the executive and legislative branches
- Media
- Other NGOs
- The broad population
- Researchers/academics

Constructive participation by civil society can raise the quality of the budget debate and improve budgetary outcomes through a variety of means.

- Civil society budget groups often have substantial capacity to analyze the budget from the perspective of the poor. They are able to be in close, regular contact with different sectors of society and interest groups and feed these perspectives into the budget decision-making process. They can highlight important information and policy issues that might not otherwise receive enough attention.
- Identifying best practices: independent analysis can help identify local and international best practices that assist government departments and legislatures in making better budget policy.
- Building accountability: Through their analyses, civil society organizations can reinforce channels of accountability. This may occur, for example, when groups provide accessible information to citizens and the legislature on the findings of the Auditor General.

Overall, civil society groups have the potential to make the budget more accessible and understandable to a wider range of stakeholders outside the executive - from the legislature to interest groups - that might otherwise view the budget as too arcane and confusing to warrant their attention. Applied budget work can help to "demystify" the budget for these stakeholders and bring them into the important debate on how to allocate a country's resources to meet its most pressing needs.

BUDGET BASICS

The budget cycle usually has four stages:

- Budget formulation: When the budget plan is put together by the executive branch of government;
- Enactment: When the budget plan may be debated, altered, and approved by the legislative branch;
- Execution: When the policies of the budget are carried out by the government; and
- Auditing and assessment: When the actual expenditures of the budget are accounted for and assessed for effectiveness.

Each of these stages creates different opportunities for NGO participation. A brief description of these opportunities is presented below.

Budget Formulation

The initial formulation of the budget occurs almost exclusively within the executive branch of government, though it can include a number of actors within the branch. Typically one office - usually the budget office in the Ministry of Finance - coordinates and manages the formulation of the budget, requesting information from individual departments and proposing the trade-offs necessary to fit competing government priorities into the budget's expenditure totals. This process can take a few weeks to several months, largely depending on the extent to which departments are involved and their views are taken into account.

In general, budgets are not built from the ground up every year. Instead, new budgets tend to use the budget most recently adopted into law as a starting point (or baseline), with changes measured from that. This is not to say that all budget changes are purely incremental. The budget can be altered considerably from year to year in response to changes in the economic situation or in government priorities.

The NGO Role: The executive branch normally formulates the annual budget behind closed doors. In some cases, the executive may release a discussion document or an overview of the budget in advance, but generally the legislature and civil society have little direct access to this stage of the process. Nevertheless, because the budget is rarely constructed from scratch, major parts of the budget may be anticipated by stakeholders outside the executive. This creates an opportunity for analysis and advocacy at the formulation stage. During the development of the budget, non-governmental groups can release analyses on issues known to be under consideration, or that they believe ought to be priorities, with the hope of influencing the budget being formulated. There might also be opportunities for NGOs to establish informal lines of communication with executive branch officials. In countries where the legislative process has little impact on the budget, NGOs may have to concentrate on the formulation stage, as that is when the key decisions are made.

Budget Enactment

The second stage of the budget cycle occurs when the executive's budget is discussed in the legislature and consequently enacted into law. This stage begins when the executive formally proposes the budget to the legislature. The legislature then discusses the budget, which can include public hearings and votes by legislative committees. The process ends when the budget is adopted by the legislature, either intact or with amendments. The budget also can be rejected by the legislature and, in some countries, replaced by the legislature's own proposal.

The budget enactment stage typically is when public attention on the budget is the greatest and information about the budget is made most broadly available. Ideally, the legislature has the resources and time to review the executive's proposal and make amendments. In practice, the legal framework for the budget process or the political system in a country may limit the impact the legislature can have on the budget. Many legislatures also are hampered by their lack of staff and budget expertise. Nevertheless, these constraints do not close off all options to the legislature. Legislators can engage in budget issues by holding hearings, establishing special committees, requesting information from the executive branch, or having public debates.

NGO Role: It is during this phase of the budget cycle that non-governmental groups often have the most potential for input. Since public discussion of and interest in the budget are typically at their high point when the executive presents its budget to the legislature, this creates opportunities for non-governmental groups to get media coverage for their budget analyses. Further, in countries where the legislature plays a more active role in the budget process, non-governmental groups are frequently asked to serve as expert witnesses at hearings and to comment on budget proposals in other ways as well. Their analyses and testimony can influence the debate and highlight

important issues about the impact of budget proposals on the poor.

Budget Execution - Implementation, Monitoring, and Control

The next stage of the process occurs once the budget has been enacted. Governments differ widely in how they regulate and monitor spending to ensure adherence to budgets. In some cases, the Treasury (or Finance Ministry) exercises strong central control over spending, reviewing allocations to departments and approving major expenditures. Where departments are more independent, treasuries will monitor expenditures by requiring, for instance, regular reporting by each department of its spending.

In practice, budgets are not always implemented in the exact form in which they were approved; funding levels in the budget are not adhered to and authorized funds are not spent for the intended purposes. Deviations can result from conscious policy decisions or in reaction to changing economic conditions, but concerns arise when there are dramatic differences between the allocated and actual budgets that cannot be justified as reflecting sound policy. While these cases can result from outright abuse by the executive, they may also reflect the effects of a poor budget system and technical problems that make it difficult for the executive to implement the budget in line with what was enacted into law. For instance, the budget may not be clear about the intended purposes of particular funds, while weak reporting systems can limit the availability of information that the executive needs to monitor the flow of expenditures.

NGO Role: Implementation of the budget is, of course, an executive function. Unless the executive issues public reports regularly on the status of expenditure during the year, non-governmental groups have limited ability to monitor the flow of funds. But non-governmental groups do have an interest in an effective and transparent monitoring system that promotes adherence to the budget and reduces mismanagement or corruption. Groups may advocate budget reforms to improve budgetary control. Similarly, they may engage in some monitoring activities. For instance, NGOs can focus on whether amounts for specific projects, such as a school or a road, have been used for the intended purpose. They also can assess the quality of the spending to see if the policy goals associated with the budget allocation are being met, and if government funds are being used effectively.

Outcome Assessment and Reporting - Audits and Performance Evaluations

The last stage in the budget cycle includes a number of activities that aim to measure whether there is an effective use of public resources. Ideally, the executive branch should report extensively on its fiscal activities to the legislature and the public. These fiscal activities should also be subject to regular review by an established independent and professional body, such as audit institutions or an Auditor General. The audit office should have the capacity to produce accurate reports in a timely manner.

Evaluation and auditing are not only necessary for the legislature to exercise its oversight function, they are an integral part of the overall public expenditure management system; reports on performance are necessary to secure the best possible use of public resources. A strong emphasis of modern budgeting reforms is to provide public entities and agencies with information on performance in order to improve their operations.

NGO Role: This budget stage presents a valuable opportunity for budget groups to obtain information on the effectiveness of particular budget initiatives, as well as to advance accountability by assessing whether the legislature and executive branches respond appropriately to the findings of audit reports. This may be one area where applied budget organizations have not sufficiently exploited the potential opportunities. When available in a timely manner, audit reports often document a litany of mis-expenditure, mal-expenditure, and procurement irregularities. NGOs should attempt to spread such information widely and use it to advance reforms.

Probably the most widespread problem facing developing countries and emerging

democracies is the lack of accurate budget data and socio-economic statistics. While some crucial data are simply non-existent, problems of timeliness, accessibility, and frequency plague those data that are available. These data deficiencies complicate all facets of the budget cycle - from budget preparation to execution and oversight - as well as hinder efforts to improve transparency and accountability. Alongside these shortcomings in needed information is the general problem that these countries face regarding limited capacity, in terms of both skilled personnel and modern equipment.

Many Factors Can Weaken the Budgetary Role of the Legislature

Given the legislature's role as the representative of citizens, it is often considered the most appropriate point for civil society budget influence. The effectiveness of this type of civil society involvement depends, however, on the strength of the legislature's power.

In theory, legislatures have significant power over the budget. Constitutions usually prevent public funds from being spent without legislative authorization. Debate by the legislature can be complemented with powers to summon expert witnesses and members of the government to give evidence. These powers are augmented significantly where the legislature has the capacity to amend the budget.

In practice, legislatures are often undermined by several factors, including the following:

- The political system and practices in a country may limit the impact the legislature can have on the budget. In parliamentary systems, for example, where the political power base controls the legislative and executive branches, there is strong pressure on the majority in the legislature to adopt the budget without significant amendments.
- The legal framework and legislature rules frequently constrain the role of the legislature. The legislature may, for instance, have a very short time to review the budget or may be permitted to make only minor amendments (or none at all).
- Most developing countries' legislatures are also hampered by their lack of staff and budget expertise. Without adequate capacity, legislatures are unable to assess budget proposals and recommend changes.

Legislators can engage in budget issues by holding hearings, establishing special committees, requesting information from the executive branch, or having public debates. Moreover, despite the obstacles above, there is pressure in several countries to increase the legislature's involvement by enhancing its research capacity and legal powers.

Legislatures and civil society budget groups can combine to establish a potentially powerful oversight partnership, with civil society augmenting the limited outreach and analysis capacity of legislatures. As the opportunities for greater legislature engagement with the budget expand, so too will the opportunities for deeper civil society engagement with the budget.

The list of problems can be overwhelming, and the implied solutions are frequently systemic rather than piecemeal. Consequently, many developing countries are attempting to address these problems through comprehensive budget reform, introducing the principles and practices discussed in the next section. NGOs have a strong interest in promoting such reforms to the budget system because usually it is the poor and powerless who are most adversely affected by a weak or corrupt budget system. A system that fails to promote a strong link between what is decided and what is executed is unlikely to deliver a poverty-focused development policy. Under these circumstances, even when government resources are directed by legislation toward social spending or investments in infrastructure that benefit the poor and have widespread

popular support, entrenched interests can wield disproportionate influence over the allocation of scarce public-sector funds. A sound budgeting system - one that is transparent and accountable - is far more likely to yield results that reflect the will of the people.

Media and Dissemination Issues

Preparing a report should be considered only the first step of applied budget work. The goal is not only to write a great analysis but to get it into the hands of those who should read it and then to get them to read it. This means that very close attention needs to be paid to how and when products are distributed.

It is therefore essential to develop a release strategy well before a report is finished. Determine which audiences - and which specific people within these target groups - would be most interested in the information, as well as those you would like to convince to read your report. Then determine how best to get the information to them. Sometimes the target list may only be 10 people, other times it may number in the hundreds.

A media strategy is especially important. The media is hungry for timely information and can raise the profile of budget work by providing free publicity for a group's analyses and conclusions. Among other things, a media strategy should identify which parts of the media to prioritize. The print media (especially daily and weekly newspapers) is the best target. In other countries, where literacy is lower, the focus may need to be on radio and/or television. Often a strategy calls for using a combination of different types of media. Thus groups will find that learning to use press releases and briefings effectively, offering opinion pieces to editors, and developing radio and television presentation skills are all important for implementing a successful media strategy.

Establishing a positive working relationship with the media requires repeated effort. It will take time for reporters to trust an organization as a source of information. The more that reporters regularly review an organization's reports, the more comfortable they will become with its work. The communication should be both proactive and reactive. A group should make itself accessible and be prepared to provide background information and answer questions from the media on short notice. Similarly, groups must be sensitive to the specific needs and interests of the media. For instance, reporters on a tight deadline might not be able to read a long report, and might prefer a short executive summary. If groups learn to work well with the media, they are more likely to get desirable media exposure.

Knowing when to issue a report - and what issues to highlight - to receive the most media attention is a skill that develops over time. Part of this skill involves not only getting media coverage, but also getting the right kind of coverage. In its search for newsworthy angles, the media will not always report on an analysis in the way a budget group would expect. The media prefers a provocative story, which often means they are looking for conflict instead of reasoned discussion. It is likely to present issues in simple and stark terms, ignoring the nuances that can be important in a public debate. The media, in addition, is not always independent. To reduce the gap between your analysis and the media's reporting of it, it is important when speaking to the media, for example, to establish the nature of the conversation, how it will be used, how the article will be attributed, and what is on and off the record. Given the potential problems, some groups assign responsibility for media liaison to a specific staff member skilled in these matters. But it is also important that analysts, who are most familiar with the technical details, develop at least the basic skills necessary to interact with the media.

Many groups have come to realize that one of their primary roles is to educate the media about budget issues. These issues can be intimidating to reporters who lack quantitative or economics training. If reporters do not understand the issues, they are less likely to write about them, or will write weaker stories. There are many ways to educate the media, such as setting up one-on-one briefing sessions to go over particu-

lar issues. Sometimes it is helpful to conduct background briefings for the media on budget issues of particular significance or complexity; these briefings might not directly lead to stories about these issues, but will improve the knowledge of reporters about the issues, so that when they do write about them the stories will be better informed.

Another approach that many groups have used successfully is to run budget training courses specifically for the media. Not only can this approach be a valuable way to discuss current policy issues, but it also can create confidence and help establish working relationships.

Working with Policymakers

Check List for reports for policymakers

- Identify key decision makers, key staff, and key points of entry.
- Tailor materials appropriately
- Media attention spurs political response
- "No permanent friends, no permanent enemies." Work across party lines
- Share the limelight

Policymakers are a key audience for applied budget work. With the goal of informing and influencing policy, the products of applied budget work naturally should be accessible to policymakers that are participating in policy debates and making key decisions.

Where to Find Information on Budget Issues in a Country

1. Ministry of Finance
2. The local budget office
3. The President's Office
4. Individual ministries
5. Central Bank
6. Central Statistical Office
7. Research institutions
8. Chamber of Commerce
9. Private auditors
10. Universities
11. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

Country Reports by International Institutions

Lessons for civil society

- Civil society can and does have an influence on budget processes and policies, despite some inherent limitations linked to the nature of budgets and to a general lack of budget literacy;
- Budget work is an adaptable tool, which can be used in different environments, by identifying and exploiting various entry points in the policy process;
- Any organization, from policy think tanks to social movements and community-based networks can successfully engage in budget work;

- While impact on transparency and civil society engagement is more common, structural change in budget processes and policies requires a longterm strategy and commitment;
- The basis of effective budget work is analysis which is accurate (to ensure credibility), accessible (to guarantee a wide audience), and timely (to have an opportunity to influence policy);
- Relationships are key: the most effective budget groups have invested in building relationships with a broad range of stakeholders that can help to influence government behavior;
- Building and retaining capacity, and ensuring effective leadership are two of the greatest internal challenges faced by budget groups.

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Lusine Hovhannisyan. Head of National Assembly Web division

Topic: www.parliament.am

Legal Resources of RoA in Internet (15.02.2007)						
N	Title (Name)	Address (URL)	Rating		N	
			Google	Yandex	Google	Yandex
1	National Assembly	www.parliament.am	295000	450	1	1
2	Constitutional Court	www.concourt.am	35100	110	1	1
3	Ministry of Justice	www.justice.am	173	20	8	7
	State Registry	www.stateregistry.am	24	<10	15	13
	Department on Compulsory Execution of Court Decisions- DCECD	www.harkadir.am	3	<10	17	15
	Armenian Legal Information System (ARLIS) «Official handbook» LTD	www.arlis.am, www.laws.am	32	10	13	10
4	Ombudsman	www.ombuds.am	1150	20	2	4
5	Court System					
	Court of Cassation	www.court.am	3	10	18	16
	Court of Appeal					
	Economic Court	www.economic-court.am	189	20	7	6
	Court of First Instance					
	Yerevan City					
1	Kenbron and Norq-Marash Community					
2	Erebuni and Nubarashen Community					
3	Avan and Nor Norq Community					
4	Ajapnjak and Davtashen Community					
5	Shengavit Community					
6	Malatia Sebastia Community					
7	Arabkir and Qanaqer-Zeitun Community					
	Marzes					
1	Aragatsotn Marz					
2	Ararat Marz					
3	Armavir Marz					
4	Gegharkunik Marz					
5	Lori Marz					
6	Kotayq Marz					
7	Shirak Marz					
8	Syuniq Marz					
9	Vayots Dzor Marz					
10	Tavush Marz					
1	Council of Justice					
2	Council of Court Chairs					
3	RA Advocates Chamber	www.pastaban.am	155	<10	9	21
4	Notarial Chamber					
6	Other resources					
1	Armenian Young Lawyers Association	www.ayla.am	354	20	5	5
2	Lawyers Union	www.iravaban.am	224	10	6	9
3	Human Rights in Armenia	www.hra.am	941	100	3	2
4	Venice Commission Information Office in Armenia	www.coe.am	597	30	4	3
5	Armenian Constitutional Right Protection Center	www.acrpc.am	100	20	11	8
6	International Union of Advocates	www.advocate.am	6	<10	16	14
7	Armenian Bar Association (ABA)	www.armenianbar.org	82	<10	12	11
8	Consumer Rights Protection Union	www.consumer.am	30	<10	14	12
9	Center of Constitutional Right	www.concourt.am/hr/cccl/index.ht	1	<10	21	19
10	Armenian Law Network	www.lanp.am/law/index.html	1	<10	22	20
11	Legal Guide	www.legalguide.am	3	<10	19	17
13	«My Rights» TV program, «Azd» agency	www.imiravunq.com	3	<10	20	18
14	Armenian Law Review (ALIA)	armlawreview.org	106	<10	10	22

No URL

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Description of the web page of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia

The web page of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia (www.parliament.am) was reconstructed based on the main recommendations of studies conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Association and the "Guidelines for the content and structure of parliamentary web pages" approved by the Association.

The web site is in three languages, has a high level of technical-software and informational provisions, and has a comprehensive search engine.

The site incorporates the following title-pages:

1. Parliament

Here the visitor can find the welcoming words of the chairman of the National Assembly, the history of the Armenian parliament, and information on previous sessions of the National Assembly, deputies of the Supreme Council, standing committees, groups-factions, as well as the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia and the charter of the National Assembly.

2. Chairman of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia

On this page, one can get acquainted with the biography of the chairman of the National Assembly, his official meetings, press-conferences, speeches, interviews and statements.

3. Deputies

The full list of deputies of the third session of the National Assembly, in alphabetical order, by electoral district, groups-factions and committees is presented on this page. Photos of deputies, information on deputies (electoral district, group-faction, political affiliation, membership in committees, brief biography, contact information, etc.) are also presented.

The numbers of majoritarian electoral districts also have hyperlinks to pages describing the given electoral district (information on Marzes, cities, villages included in the electoral district). For the proportional districts, the hyperlinks are linked to the relevant political party or coalition of political parties.

The "My deputy" subtitle-page allows any citizen to enter his address, and consequently determine the number of his electoral district as well as find out the name of the deputy elected from that district (this refers to deputies elected through the majoritarian scheme), obtain the deputy's e-mail address, and contact him/her.

4. Committees

The list of all standing and temporary committees is published here, with hyperlinks to the corresponding committee's page. On each committee's page, the reader can find out about the areas of activities of the committee, the list of its members, its e-mail address, as well as articles covering the activities of the committee.

5. Staff

This title page presents the structure of the staff of the National Assembly, and the contact information of the chief of staff, his deputies, and heads of departments (phone numbers, e-mail addresses).

6. Legislation

On this page, the visitor will find a list of the laws of the Republic of Armenia (alphabetical list, classifications (areas)) with hyperlinks to the actual text of the laws. The page includes the main laws, as well as laws on changes and amendments. The laws are published on the page within seven days after being signed by the President of the Republic of Armenia.

7. Draft laws

Includes the lists of legislative initiatives included on the agenda of the upcoming session, as well as those officially in circulation but not yet included on the agenda of the session. It additionally includes the texts of the legislative initiatives throughout the

1. The code used for legislative initiatives is explained on the website. The first letter of the code denotes the author or presenter of the legislative initiative (D for deputy, G for government, P for President). That is followed by the order number of circulation, its date, the committee or committees responsible for discussions of the draft (FR for standing committee on foreign relations, ES for standing committee on science, education, culture and youth affairs, DS for standing committee on defense, national security and internal affairs, SL for standing committee on state-legal affairs, SH for standing committee on social, healthcare and environmental issues, FC for standing committee on finance-credit, budget and economic issues). The next three-digit number reflects the type of the legislative initiative (010 for draft of the law of the RoA, 011 for draft resolution or agreement, treaty, convention, protocol of the National Assembly). The last digit shows the status of the draft law with regard to readings (0 for no readings, 1 for passed first reading, 2 for passed second reading, 3 for passed the third reading and final approval).

entire process of discussions (readings) and their codes¹.

The texts of legislative initiatives are published on the page within two days after the start of their official circulation, and the texts of the first and second readings within seven days after their approval.

The texts of legislative initiatives receiving final approval are also published on the page within seven days after being signed by the President of the Republic of Armenia.

8. Sessions

Includes the timetable (annual) for regular sessions of the National Assembly, agendas of regular and midterm sessions (within 24 hours after their approval), protocols (within 24 hours after voting), the results of individual votes of deputies on each issue (within 24 hours after the end of each session), as well as proceedings of sessions (within 12 days after the end of the session).

9. News

Includes the coverage of the work of the National Assembly (official meetings, today in the parliament, briefings, press-conferences, interviews, news from committees).

10. International relations

Includes Inter-Parliamentary treaties, the membership of Inter-Parliamentary committees, international organizations, and friendship parliamentary groups.

11. Library

Includes news from the library as well as its electronic database.

12. Contact with voters

This section allows for contact between voters and deputies.

13. References

14. Search

a) the entire website

b) the laws, which allows the user (searching by one or more parameters simultaneously) to find the relevant law through a text search, as well as the order number of the law, and dates of adoption by the national assembly and (or) signature of the President of the Republic of Armenia.

Topic: *Blogging for mass consumption*

Election Blogging Guide

Since its birth in the mid-nineties and its popularization at the turn of the millennium, blogging has been an intriguing platform for personal expression made public. While blogs (first called weblogs) began as online diaries, their uses, and the topics they cover, have been increasing ever since. Blogs have been forums for political speech almost since their inception, yet the full political potential of blogging has yet to be achieved. Election blogging is the next step in the realization of blogs as a tool for political activism. The 2004 American presidential election was the first election closely covered by bloggers. Now, bloggers around the world practice "election blogging" by writing about and commenting on election news.

What is the possible impact of election blogging? Election blogs are important media tools in all countries. However, it is in countries where political speech and press freedoms are limited that blogs have the most important role to play. Blogs, because they exist virtually, can afford to push the boundaries of speech further than broadcast and print journalists, which are more easily regulated by the government. Thus, blogs can act as alternative sources of information in an environment where officially-sanctioned media coverage is biased or incomplete. They can also act as free speech zones. Through comment threads, readers can anonymously discuss political topics they might not be willing to discuss in a non-digital setting. In this way, election blogs can become potent forces for journalistic independence, freedom of speech, government accountability, and active citizenship.

This guide does not presume to dictate election blogging methods. It is the hope of the authors that the suggestions herein will inspire bloggers to find their own solutions and to create their own unique formats for expressing their ideas. This guide is not meant to be the last word on election blogging, but rather the beginning of a discussion of how this form of citizen journalism can be carried out more efficiently and effectively. There are no rules to elections blogging, just be honest and speak your mind. It is your right as a citizen and your privilege as a blogger.

Blogging Strategies

Clarify Your Goal

Before you start an election blog - either alone or with a group - it is crucial to have a clear idea of what it is you wish to accomplish. Who is your audience? What do you hope to contribute to the political debate? How will you interact with your readers? It's important to communicate this clearly, especially if you are siding with a particular party or candidate.

Motivations: Why Start an Election Blog?

"I live in a country where there is little freedom of the press. I want to report on the things that are left out of national media reports."

"I work for a democracy and human rights organization. We want to create a blog that highlights the work we're doing and the injustices we see."

"I already have a blog. I wish to focus on the election to help campaign for/against a specific candidate, and convince others to be politically active."

"I feel I can support the public debate by providing an overview of election news from different perspectives."

"I want to blog in English to help inform foreigners and the international media about what is going on."

"I want to make it easier for people to locate good blogs about the elections. I am going to create a website that aggregates all of them."

"I am really fascinated by the elections of country X even though I don't live there. I'd like to explore what the outcome will mean."

"I am an expatriate and I want to cover an election that is happening back in my home country."

When Should you Begin your Blog?

You should begin your blog well in advance of the election. You will need at least a few weeks to work out technical problems and build up a reader-ship. Beginning months in advance will give a nice symmetry to the blog's content, but is not essential. You can begin even earlier than that if you'd like, but bear in mind that there will not be very much election news for you to cover until a few months before the election. Regardless, it will take time for people to find you, and for journalists to gain confidence in the quality of your reporting.

Start your blog!

Sites where you can create a free blog:

<http://www.blogger.com> (most popular)

<http://wordpress.org>

<http://www.blogsome.com>

<http://www.livejournal.com>

What Happens to the Blog after the Election?

What should you do after the election is over? If you decide to stop blogging, do so with a formal post. You may wish to evaluate the fairness of the voting, the impact of the election results, or expectations for the newly-elected leader. You may also wish to reflect on your blog's role in the election process. Other than creating closure for your readers, this final post will also give you an opportunity to reflect on the significance of your blog in its entirety. If you represent an NGO or international organization, and even if you are just an individual, why not continuing blogging afterwards on your organization's activities or life in general?

The following section lays out some suggestions about the most important part of any election blog - content.

Election Blog Features

So you've decided to blog about an election? Great! Now what? What will the blog include? What will you write about? Don't panic. This chapter includes lots of suggestions about what features you can include in your election blog and is divided into sections for elementary, intermediate, and advanced bloggers. If you are already blogging you might like to start with section two or three. However, if this is to be your first blog, you can start on part one and then add more elaborate features as your skills as a blogger increase.

The Basics: Elementary Features

1. Posts

React to a traditional media news item: traditional media news items (from a newspaper, magazine, TV show, or radio program) are a great source for a blog post. Remember, if you write a post commenting or criticizing a news item, include a link

to the original article (if it is online).

React to a blog post: in addition to the traditional media, other bloggers can provide a lot of inspiration. Did another blogger bring up an interesting topic in a post? Then give your own commentary. Remember to provide a link to the other blogger's post.

Analyze a campaign issue: These types of posts will probably make up most of what you write about, because you can write about a campaign issue at any time and there are an unlimited number of issues to cover. What is the state of economic development / primary education / public healthcare in your country? What impact will the election have on these issues? Where do the various candidates stand on these issues? You may choose to write in an un-biased way or you can back a particular position. Also, bear in mind that controversial issues tend to get more comments, but, depending on how you present the issue, they can also make you enemies, so think carefully about how you will present a sensitive issue.

"Follow" the Candidate: where are the candidates going to campaign? What are they saying at their campaign stops? This information may be found in local newspapers or on the candidate's website.

Candidate Gossip: who says election blogs have to be completely serious? Gossip about the private lives of candidates, as long as you have a reasonably reliable source (don't want to get sued for libel, do you?) can add some spice to your site and bring in readers.

Public Opinion Poll Results: public opinion polls (a type of survey whose results seek to represent the public at large) are very popular around election time, especially those that ask that all-important question, "who will you vote for?" You may wish to publish the results of public opinion polls on your site. The simplest way to do this is to write about poll results in a blog post or create a simple chart of poll results. Remember to say which organization carried out the poll. If you think that the poll may have questionable validity (because the sample was limited geographically, because the sample seems too small to be representative, etc.) then say so.

2. Links, Links, Links

Other than posts, links are the easiest thing to add to your blog. The easiest place to put links is in a sidebar. Here are some things you might want to link to:

A Blogroll: Bloggers survive through blogrolls (lists of links to other blogs). If you put their blog on your blogroll, then they'll put your blog on theirs (if you ask). If you want to link to different types of blogs (e.g., other blogs covering the election, international political blogs, etc) you may wish to create different categories within your blogroll. "Reputable traditional media sources: other than linking to individual articles, you may wish to link to the homepage of a news source you feel is doing a good job of covering the election and will provide useful information to your readers.

Political party websites: if the political parties in your country have websites, link to them.

Background information and analysis: you're well-versed in the politics of your country, but maybe some of your readers aren't. For this reason, you may want to link to basic information about your country's political system, electoral code, etc. Wikipedia is a good place to find such information. Other bloggers and traditional media sources may also provide this content.

Recommended political books: remember books? People used to learn about the world by reading information printed on bound paper. Books were bulky and expensive, not to mention flammable. Nevertheless, books should not be completely disregarded in this digital age, especially if they include useful information. How do you link to a book? Link to a website where it can be bought or summaries, reviews or even the full text, if it is available.

Voting information: if the government offers practical information about the election online (i.e., where to vote, voting requirements, etc) consider linking to it.

3. About Page

Readers may want to know a bit about your site. An about page can include various information, including the goals of the site (does your site support a particular candidate or is it non-partisan?), the history of the site (how and when was it started?) and biographical information about the writers (naturally, this information will be limited if you are blogging anonymously). If you are lucky enough to be mentioned in the traditional media, you can also put that information here. Your about page might also include a "Code of Ethics." HorseRace08 (USA) states that the goals of the blog are accuracy, regular posts, and respectful commenting.

Taking it to the Next Level: Intermediate Features

1. Candidates Profiles

After you've taken care of the basics, why not take your blog to the next level? One of the first special features you might like to add are candidate profiles. At a minimum, candidate profiles should include a photo of the candidate, his/her political party, and his/her website (if one exists). Profiles can also include a biography of the candidate, including past job experience that is relevant to his/her candidacy. The biography should be as objective as possible. You may also wish to profile their running mates (candidate for vice president) if you are covering a presidential race.

2. Photographs

Photographs are the easiest form of multimedia to add to your blog and they make a blog more visually interesting. You may wish to include photographs (of candidates, rallies, etc.) in your individual posts or create a page dedicated solely to images. You can take pictures yourself or use photographs from a photo-sharing site like Flickr.com, where you enter a "tag" (keyword) and are presented with all photos that have been tagged with that word. You may use them on your site if the photographer has published the photographs under a Creative Commons license that allows for free use.

It is not recommended that you post photos from other websites or from online versions of print media into your blog as this may constitute copyright infringement.

No matter where you get your photos, remember to credit the source in small print in corner of the photo itself or in the caption. Crediting sources will give your blog more credibility and make it seem more professional.

Become an Election Blog Pro: Advanced Features

1. Videos: Candidate Interviews & Commercials

If you have the expertise, videos can be an interesting addition to you site. TV interviews with candidates and campaign commercials are examples of videos you might like to post. If you are not a pro at adding video, you can use YouTube, a video sharing site, to help you out. First upload your video at <http://www.youtube.com>. On the page where your video is displayed you will see an "embed" code to the right of your video. Insert this code into your blog post and YouTube will do the rest. You can also insert other people's videos into your blog this way. Instant video blog!

2. Site Banners

If you have the expertise, you can create banners for your site that other bloggers can insert into the html of their own sites to provide your site with some free publicity.

3. Comparison of Candidate Positions on Specific Issues

Some people might visit your site to do research on candidate positions on important issues like education spending, healthcare, or free trade. You can learn where can-

didates stand on various issues by checking the candidate's website, reading about their positions in a newspaper or magazine, or seeing them talk about their positions on TV. There are many formats for comparing candidate positions. The simplest way to compare positions is to write a post on, for instance, education spending, and then describe the different positions of the candidates on that issue in your post. If you are a little more ambitious you can create a page of your site dedicated to comparing the candidates.

Promoting Your Blog

Sharing your Stories - Outreach to Traditional and New Media

After you've set up your blog and told your friends, you may also want to publicize your blog to a wider audience to make sure that your stories from the elections are heard. People will not find your blog on their own, except in the rare cases, so if you want to be heard, you have to do a little work promoting your blog. While this section lays out an extensive campaign, you can take whatever parts of it appeal to you and leave out parts that don't.

Blogosphere Outreach

To make sure other local bloggers find out about your site, make a list of local blogs and blogs that will be interested in your site. You can do this by using a search engine like Google Blog Search or Technorati. Once you have made the list:

Send an email to the local bloggers. It can be very informal, with the body saying something simple such as, "Hello, my name is X. I have recently started a blog called "X", at "url." I hope to blog about the upcoming elections. I thought you might be interested in learning about it, and hope you check it out. Thanks so much!"

Read the local blogs regularly and comment in their comment sections, and refer to other blogs in your own posts, with a link, showing that you are interested in what they are doing. If you do blog about another site, send the bloggers a note letting them know. Blogging is not a passive writing activity. Successful bloggers are also active readers and commenters on other blogs.

Conference Speakers



Abgar Yeghoyan

Abgar Yeghoyan is a graduate of the Yerevan Institute of National Economy. He has participated in many training sessions organized by national and international organizations. Mr. Yeghoyan was a head of the department of the Central Counting Center in State Statistics Committee, head of projects directorate of the Ministry of Natural Resources, deputy director of the Armcontract State Enterprise, minister adviser then head of Tourism Development Directorate in the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Since 1997, Mr. Yeghoyan is the president of the "Protection of consumers' rights" NGO.



Amalia Kostanyan

Amalia Kostanyan received an MA degree in Political Science and International Relations from the American University of Armenia in Yerevan, in 1996. In 2000, she received an MA degree in International Development Policy from Duke University in Durham, NC. Ms. Kostanyan also holds a PhD in Biochemistry from the Yerevan State University in Armenia, since 1990. In 1998, Ms. Kostanyan was awarded the E. Muskie Fellowship by the U.S. Information Agency. In 2002, she won the U.S. State Department award for Outstanding Contribution to the Development of NGOs in the South Caucasus Region. In 2006, she received the Chevening Fellowship award, given by the Foreign and Commonwealth office of the United Kingdom- "The State Civil Society Relationship."



Anna Hovhannesian

Ms. Hovhannesian holds a Masters Degree from the American University of Armenia. She has authored a number of publications and presentations related to gender and democratic governance practices. Currently, she works as a Legislative Outreach Liaison in USAID Armenia Social Protection Systems Strengthening (SPSS). She served as the lead information systems specialist for the USAID Armenia Legislative Strengthening Program (ALSP), and as an outreach specialist at the United Nations Development Program on Gender in Development. She performed short term consultancies in the CIS and Asia.



Anna Kurdova

Since 1999, Anna Kurdova has been a Lecturer (Candidate of Science) at the Faculty of Law at the Russian-Armenian State University. In 2006, under the TACIS Water Investment Support Facility (WISF) project, she provided assessments regarding the legal implications of various aspects of the existing situation and the proposed investment. In 2005, she provided technical assistance to the establishment of a state-integrated system for the protection of children, including creation of national and regional childcare commissions in Armenia, under an EU-TACIS project. From 2000 to 2005, she worked at the Armenian Assembly of America NGO Training and Resource Center as a Legal Specialist.



Anna Sahakyan

Anna Sahakyan has over 13 years of experience working in the relief and development field. As a Senior Program Officer at Counterpart International's headquarters in Washington, DC, she is managing and back-stopping Civil Society programs. In 2005, Ms. Sahakyan was Country Representative and Acting Chief of Party for Counterpart's Civic Advocacy Support Program (CASP) in Uzbekistan working with the government, NGOs, and citizens, taking an active role in activities, programs and trainings to encourage and promote their active engagement at local and national level advocacy campaigns



Anush Sukiasyan

Anush Sukiasyan is a Lawyer/ Legal Acts Expert at the "Protection of Consumers' Rights" NGO. She has worked in "Armi Legal aid" LTD and in "Consumer's Association" NGO as a lawyer. She monitors court sessions in Kanaker-Zeytun, Ashtarak, Aparan and Gyumri First Instance Courts, organized by the American Bar Association. She is a participant of many seminars and workshops, such as AYL & "Cordaid" Dutch organization's training on "Human Rights and European Law", and a member of the "Armenian Young Lawyers Association" NGO & the American Bar Association - Central Europe and Eurasia Law Initiative on "Legal Resources and Legal Aid," etc.



Ashot Yesayan

Ashot Yesayan was born in 1951 and graduated from the Yerevan State University, Law Department in 1974. From 1974 to 1987 Mr. Yesayan worked at the Ministry of Social Affairs. From 1987-1990 he worked at the Supreme Council of Armenia, and from 1990-1995 he served as the Minister of Social Affairs. From 1995-1997 he was the Deputy Minister of the Social Affairs. From 1999-2000 Mr. Yesayan was the senior advisor to the Prosecutor General of Armenia and from 2000-2005 Mr. Yesayan was the first deputy minister at the Social Affairs Ministry. Since 2005 Mr. Yesayan has served as the senior advisor to the Prosecutor General of Armenia.



Ara Nazinyan

Ara Nazinyan serves as a representative, decision maker, and spokesperson for the Eurasia Foundation in Armenia. He has more than 12 years of experience in designing and managing development programs in Armenia, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe. Mr. Nazinyan holds an MSc degree in Rural Development Management from Imperial College, in London, and an Honor's Diploma (MSc) in Civil Engineering from the Armenian Agricultural Academy. He is fluent in English and Russian.



Aram Mkrtchyan

Aram Mkrtchyan, PhD is a professor in the Journalism Department of Yerevan State University and the executive director of Radio Hay, the first Armenian independent radio network. He has extensive experience in both communication research and journalism, as well as media management practice in several mass media outlets. Currently he is involved in activities related with the reformation of journalism education in Armenia, and the introduction of a new model of journalism training, based on internationally recognized standards, as well as raising the role of mass media in the development of civil society in the country.



Armen Shahbazyan

Armen Shahbazyan has over 7 years of experience in designing and implementing economic development initiatives sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development and European Union. His primary expertise is in capacity building of public and private organizations that support private sector development by their mandate. He helped establish several business associations in the Armenian tourism industry and facilitated the creation of Regional Development plans in the Ararat and Vayots Dzor Regions of Armenia.



Arsen Stepanyan

Arsen Stepanyan is a civil society practitioner, currently in charge of the advocacy program cluster of the Civic Advocacy Support Program. He has extensive experience in providing consultations to a number of governmental and non-governmental agencies on constituency relations, public participation in and transparency of decision making processes, as well as other civil society related matters. On the national level, he has worked with the Armenian parliament, different executive agencies and local government institutions, as well as media and nonprofit organizations.



Artashes Torozyan

Artashes Torozyan was born in 1970 in Goris in the Syunik Marz, Republic of Armenia. He is a teacher-historian. He started his professional activities in 1992. Since 2000, he has served as the president of the Goris Teachers Union NGO. He is not a member of any political party. He is married and has two daughters.



Bob Evans

Mr. Evans is an international media expert who, for the past 11 years has focused on the emerging markets of Armenia, Georgia, Russia, and Ukraine. His experience covers all aspects of media management, including international distribution, program design and production, sales and marketing, investor relations, operations, strategic planning and implementation, teaching and mentoring, and crisis management.



Boris Navasardyan

From 1974-1979, Boris Navasardyan was a journalist and studied at the Journalism Department at Rostov State University. From 1979 - 1987 he was a correspondent, and head of the department at Komsomolets newspaper in Yerevan. Mr. Navasardyan was a lecturer and instructor at the Yerevan City Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, and from 1990-1991 was the deputy chief editor of the Russian language version of "Hayastani Hanrapetutiun." Since 1995, he has served as the president of the Yerevan Press Club. From 1990-1995 he was the chief editor of "Zerkalo" newspaper in Yerevan. He was a part of the Journalists' Union of the USSR, Armenia from 1983. Since 2000, he has been the co-president of the International Association of Journalists in the "South Caucasus." Mr. Navasardyan has also been a member of journalistic associations, and their governing bodies.



Zaida Arguedas

Zaida Arguedas, a native of Costa Rica, graduated magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, from the University of Alabama with a B.A. in International Relations and Political Science. Her senior thesis, entitled "Does Costa Rican democracy have a future?" received high honors. Ms. Arguedas received an M.A. in public policy and Latin American studies from the University of Kansas. Ms. Arguedas currently serves as Deputy Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of the United States and as Director of Global Democracy Programs. The League maintains close contact with its partners in Africa, Latin America, the Russian Federation, and many other countries. Domestically, Ms. Arguedas has organized, 44 forums for THE PEOPLE SPEAK, an initiative of the United Nations Foundation, 22 under BY THE PEOPLE, an initiative of the MacNeil-Lehrer Productions, and 13 forums under the League's program, WOMEN ENGAGING GLOBALLY. During 2006-07, Ms. Arguedas organized 24 forums on the importance of the Millennium Development Goals.



Eleanor Valentine

Ellie Valentine is an Information Resource Management professional working for the past 25 years with educators, civil society organizations, and legislatures in the United States, Eastern Europe, the NIS and now, in the Asian subcontinent. In her work with legislative capacity building, she has undertaken development of information access schemes for legislatures, research enhancement, and tools for legislative oversight and improved law making and representation. She has led project teams dedicated to improving citizen understanding of the role of legislatures as well as their opportunities to influence and enhance the work of their elected representatives. Ms. Valentine was a resident of Yerevan working with the National Assembly from 2002-2005.



Theresa Khorozyan

Ms. Khorozyan received her MA in the Theory and Practice of Human Rights from the University of Essex, UK in 1998 and her MA in Political Science and International Relations from the American University of Armenia in 1995. Ms. Khorozyan has extensive experience in working in the areas of human rights, democratization, and development. At present, she works with Counterpart International's Civic Advocacy Support Program as the Election Program Manager. She is also a visiting lecturer in human rights at the American University of Armenia. Ms. Khorozyan worked with UNDP (Armenia and Bratislava) for two years to promote human rights and strengthen national human rights institutions. From 2000 - 2004 Ms. Khorozyan worked with the OSCE office in Yerevan and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia Herzegovina. She was also involved in applied research on various policy issues from 1995-2000 as a Research Associate of the Center.



Zhirayr Edilyan

Zhirayr Edilyan has been involved in Armenian civil society and non-profit development since 2000. Practicing as a trainer/consultant in the non-profit field, he was part of a range of international and local programs studying and teaching NGO management and development. Currently, he serves as the Executive Director of the Civic Development and Partnership Foundation (CDPF) to provide services intended to foster the strengthening of civil society in Armenia through the development of the institutional capacities of organizations.



Lena Nanushyan

Lena Nanushyan graduated from Yerevan State Medical University, after which she studied at the Health Management and Administration Residency at the National Institute of Health. She recently earned an MA degree at the American University of Armenia and now works at the National Assembly, mainly engaging in health issues.



Lucig Danielian

Dr. Lucig Danielian is the Provost and Vice President of the American University of Armenia. Dr. Danielian earned her Doctoral Degree in Communications from the University of Texas at Austin in 1989, and was Assistant Professor of Political Communication at the University at Albany, State University of New York, from 1988-1994, where she received a University Faculty Fellowship for research conducted on mass communication and democratic movements in Armenia, USSR. She has been the recipient of the Harvard University Goldsmith Research Award, a Fulbright Fellowship, an IREX Advanced Research Fellowship, and a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies Joint Committee on Soviet Studies. Dr. Lucig Danielian has been teaching at AUA since 1995, has served as the Associate Dean of the School of Political Science and International Affairs since 1999, and has developed the Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis into a beehive of activity and research over the last five years.



Lusine Hovhannisyan

Lusine Hovhannisyan graduated from the Faculty of Mathematics of the Yerevan State University in 1996. Since 1997, the mathematician/teacher has worked at the National Assembly of Armenia, and since 2001 has served as the head of the Information Security of Computer Network of Legislative Security Office, which is responsible for technical, program and information system security of the website of National Parliament. She has participated in professional development opportunities at the National Parliaments of Poland, Finland, Estonia, and Ukraine.



Levon Mkrtchyan

Mr. Mkrtchyan graduated from the Yerevan State University in 1986. He is a historian-pedagogue and has a PhD in Historical Sciences. From 1989-1994 he worked as a research assistant in the Department of Armenian History at Yerevan State University. He has been a professor and docent at the Yerevan State University Department of Armenian History since 1989. From 1998 - 1999 he was the RA Minister of Education and Sciences. From 1999 - 2000 he was the advisor to the Prime Minister. From 2000 - 2001 he was the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and from 2001 - 2003 he served again as the RA Minister of Education and Sciences. On May 25, 2003 he was elected to the NA. Since May 2006, Mr. Mkrtchyan has been serving as the RA Minister of Education and Sciences.

Karen Baghdasaryan

Karen is responsible for the delivery of advanced technology marketing services, such as market research, analysis, business set-up and running, information, industry status and trends. He has extensive experience in the advanced-technology industry, gained while working as the Chief specialist in the IT Development Directorate of the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development in Armenia, and as a High-Tech Market Research Consultant for the World Bank and Enterprise Incubator Foundation. He received his Honours Diploma in International Economic Relations at the Yerevan State Institute of Economy.



Hakob Avetikian

Mr. Hakob Avetikian was born in Beirut, Lebanon. After completing his high school education, he came to Armenia to continue his higher education. He graduated from the Yerevan State Faculty of Philology. He returned to Beirut in 1970, where he started teaching at different schools. From 1977 he worked at Zartonk newspaper as an assistant to the editor-in-chief. From 1980-1990 he was the editor-in-chief of the Zartonk newspaper. In 1990 he came to Armenia to prepare reports for his newspaper and stayed here. In February 1991 he established Azg newspaper. He has been the editor-in-chief of the paper since 1991.



Hranush Hakobyan

Ms. Hakobyan graduated from the Department of Applied Mathematics of the Yerevan State University in 1975, and from the Law Department in 1994. In 1989, she graduated from the Academy of Social Sciences under the auspices of the Soviet Union Communist Party Central Committee. She was a professor at Gavar State University from 1990-1995, and served as a deputy of the Supreme Council and was the Deputy Chairperson of the Supreme Council Standing Committee on Health Care and Social Affairs. From 1995-2007 she served as a deputy of the the National Assembly of Armenia and is currently the Chairperson of the NA Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, and Youth Affairs.



Serge Popoff/ Mane Mamyan

Serge Popoff has more than 20 years working experience in the "Veolia" company, in water supply services.



Mark Granius

Mark Granius has 10 years of international development management, private sector, and educational work experience. He holds dual Masters Degrees in International Development Management and Business Administration from the American University in Washington, DC. Mr. Granius has served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Bulgaria, a teacher and business consultant in Japan, an Advocacy Program Officer in Belarus, Deputy Chief of Party on the Community Action Investment Program (CAIP) in Uzbekistan and, most recently, as the Central Asian Regional Chief of Party for Counterpart International's Civil Society Support Initiative (CSSI). CSSI was a 3-year, \$14 million program being implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan with a focus on advocacy, organizational development and institutionalizing nation-wide networks of NGO service providers.



Yelena Sabirova

Yelena Sabirova graduated from the Institute of Architecture and Construction in Samarkand. From 1997 - 2001 she was an NGO leader, the head of the Center of Support to Disabled Children and their families in Tashkent. From 2001 - 2006, she was the head of the Trainers and Consultants Center "Bilim va Jamiat." From 1996 - 2006 she was a trainer and consultant at Counterpart International. From 2003 - 2006, she was a consultant and group manager of trainers at CASP-Counterpart International. Ms. Sabirova has been the Deputy of the Head of Representation of the German Association of National Universities in Uzbekistan since 2006.



Narine Mailyan

Narine Mailyan has been engaged in the Foundation for Small and Medium Business activities since 2001 and has worked on a number of projects and publications aimed at the creation of favorable conditions for SME sector development, e.g. advocacy initiatives for SME interests, guidance for vulnerable groups to become self-employed, establishment of alternative business dispute resolution mechanisms, business environment study, and research and was involved in the publication of "Combating Corruption: SME Perception and Solutions."



Nouneh Sarkissian

Nouneh Sarkissian graduated from the Department of Russian Language and Literature of Yerevan State University. Beginning in 1986, she worked at the State TV as a journalist. In 1991 she moved to A1+, the first independent production in Armenia as a journalist, and later served as the News Coordinator. Since 1995, Ms. Sarkissian has served as the Managing Director of Internews. She is the author of and has produced hundreds of reports, programs, and films. She has also designed and managed tens of media projects. She is a member of the Armenian Union of Journalists and Yerevan Press Club.



Nune Pepanyan

Nune Pepanyan is a professional Project Manager. Since 1999, she has served as the President of Lusastgh Benevolent NGO, engaged in problems of the disabled in Vanadzor. Since early 2006, she has served as the Program Coordinator of the Financial Sustainability of the NGO Sector the Republic of Armenia at the Professionals for Civil Society NGO in Yerevan.



Poghos Shahinyan

Poghos Shahinyan's professional career has covered three sectors: government, the private sector, and the non-profit sector. Mr. Shahinyan undertook research on human resources development in Cambridge, UK. He also participated in the John Smith Fellowship, which provided him with an opportunity to appreciate and better understand the UK policy making process. He worked as an Advocacy Specialist at World Learning in Armenia and currently works with the National Road Safety Council to broaden the possibilities of cooperation not only with state stakeholders, but also with the private sector.



John Hughes

After working 20 years as a reporter/columnist at major-market newspapers in America, John Hughes moved to Armenia in 2001, and in 2002 founded the New Times Journalism Training Center along with British journalist Tony Halpin (currently the Moscow bureau chief for the Times newspaper of London).

New Times Journalism Training Center publishes the online journal ArmeniaNow.com, viewed by some 15,000 visitors weekly, in more than 80 countries. Hughes is also the author of: "Armenia: The Story of a Place in Essays and Images."

Sona Ayvazyan

Sona Ayvazyan has an MA degree in Political Science, and an MA in International Environmental Policy. She is a founding Member of the Center for Regional Development / Transparency International Armenia. From 2000 - 2005, she was a board member, and director of environmental projects. She has been an Executive Director since December of 2005.



Vahan Sirunyan

Vahan Sirunyan graduated from the Yerevan Institute of National Economy in 1997 with a specialization in World Economics and Public Finance. From 1999 - 2005 he worked at the Ministry of Finance and Economy as the Head of Division of Internal Audit and Budget Process Methodology. Since 2005 he has worked as Budget Advisor/ MFE Workstream Leader in Support to the Roll-Out of Program Budgeting: Armenia project, financed by UK DFID. His major accomplishments are the design, establishment, and development of the following financial systems in Armenia: Public Procurement System, Internal Audit System in the Public Entities, Commitment Control, Payment, Reporting and Internal Audit Systems in Treasury, Reporting System of Public Entities, and Public Non Commercial Enterprises.



Raffi Niziblian

With a degree in Communications Studies and Masters in Community Economic Development from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, Raffi has over 14 years experience, 4 of which have been in Armenia. Prior to co-founding Deem Communications, Raffi was instrumental in his role as the Commercial Manager of VivaCell Mobile Operator. With a keen understanding of the global market, Raffi has shaped a proficient insight for the needs of the local market in the areas of marketing, sales, customer care, image making, and PR.



Preeti Shroff-Mehta

Dr. Shroff-Mehta has over 15 years of leadership experience in International Development and Academic Teaching in South Asia, Europe, Africa, and North America. She has managed programs sponsored by the US State Department and USAID, the World Bank, Ford Foundation, USA, Ontario Ministry for Community Economic Development, Canada, OXFAM, England, Social and Health Ministry, Government of Finland, Misereor, Germany and UNICEF, India, and many other private foundations. She has served as an adjunct faculty at Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland and World Learning's School for International Training, USA.



Kyla Springer

Kyla Springer grew up in a small town in Ohio, spending her time playing the clarinet, painting, and acting in theater. Attending the American University in Washington, DC she studied international development and spent several summers in Latin America working on health programs. She lived in Argentina for one year, working with grassroots community groups and made a documentary film on urban food security issues. After volunteering on a US presidential campaign in 2004, Kyla came to Counterpart International where she lends her creativity to the organization's public relations efforts.



Knarik Arabian

From March to August of 2006, Knarik Arabian was the Project Manager of the "Private For-Profit Sector Involvement in Institutionalization of Social Partnership in Armenia" research project, at the NGO Center. In April of 2005, Ms. Arabian was elected to serve on the NGO Center's Board. She has had extensive involvement in the design and execution of the NGO Center's NGO capacity building, social partnership programs, programmatic management of grants, provision of training and consultancy on NGO management topics, facilitation of multi-sector meetings pertinent to NGO empowerment and civil society issues.



Olga Safaryan

Olga Safaryan has been an attorney at Law since 1999. During the last 5 years, she has worked with the "Internews-Armenia" NGO as a Legal Advisor.

Onnik Krikorian

Onnik Krikorian is a journalist and photojournalist from the United Kingdom currently living and working in Armenia. He has worked in the media sector since 1991, including contracts with the UK's The Independent and The Economist and The Institute for War & Peace Reporting. He has been reporting on Armenia and the region since 1998 for various international and local publications and is also an established blogger.

List of NGOs Participating at the Conference

Grantees of Civic Advocacy Support Program (CASP)

1. Center for Regional Development/Transparency International - Armenia, Yerevan, Nalbandyan 5, apt. 38, tel.: (+374 10) 58 55 78, 52 69 14 , e-mail:crd@transparency.am, main areas of activity: human rights, politics
2. "Protection of Consumers Rights" NGO, Yerevan, Hanrapetutyuan 76/1, tel.: (+374 10) 54 38 18 , e-mail:upcr@web.am, main areas of activity: human rights, politics
3. "INTERNEWS - Armenia" NGO, Yerevan, Arshakunyats 3, tel.: (+374 10) 58 36 20, 56 90 41, e-mail:nounch@internews.am, main areas of activity: mass media
4. "Professionals for Civil Society" NGO (PFCS), Yerevan, Abovyan 44, apt. 6, tel.: (+374 10) 56 81 08, e-mail:pfcs_professionals@yahoo.com, main areas of activity: civil society development
5. Mental Health Foundation, Yerevan, Hanrapetutyuan 82B, tel.: (+37410) 54 45 04, e-mail: kpotapova@mentalhealth.am, main areas of activity: health care
6. "Foundation for Small and Medium Business" NGO, Yerevan, Tigran Mats 4, 251, tel.: (+37410) 56 24 00, e-mail:inbox@fsmb.am, main areas of activity: economic development

CASP Research/Publication Grants

1. Public Advocates Union, Yerevan, tel.: (+374 10) 58 88 37, e-mail: hpm@hpm.am, main areas of activity: human rights, politics
2. "Sustainable Water Environment" NGO, Yerevan, Vardanats blind alley 8, e-mail: swe.ngo@rambler.ru, main areas of activity: environment, ecology
3. "Asklepy" Health Protection Center NGO, Yerevan, Gyulbekyan 37, apt. 21, tel.: (+374 10) 27 57 44, e-mail: achill@netsys.am, main areas of activity: health care
4. "Women's Union after S.Sandukht virgin" NGO, Yerevan, Nairi Zaryan 70, e-mail:ssandukht1@rambler.ru, main areas of activity: human rights, politics

Grantees of Civic Development and Partnership Foundation

Abovyan

1. Center for Community Dialogues and Initiatives, address: Raffi 19, Tel: 27-54-63, e-mail: ccdi@ccdi.am, areas of activity: human rights, politics

Gegharkunik

2. "Gegharkunik Human Rights Protection Centre" NGO, address: 14/27 Gr. Lusavorich St., Tel.: 0264-26-880 , e-mail: hrpngo@arminco.com, areas of activity: human rights, politics
3. "Astghatsolq" Disabled Children's Parents NGO, address: 1, September

21, Chambarak town, Gegharqunik marz RA, Tel.: 0265-23-636,
e-mail:chambarak@armentel.com, areas of activity: science, technology

Armavir

4. "Armavir Development Center" social-economic NGO,
Armavir, H.Avetisyan 39a, Tel.: 0237 - 63475,
e-mail:armavirdc@xter.net; aramnaira@rambler.ru ,
areas of activity: community development

Yerevan

5. Pain Control & Palliative Care Association NGO,
address: 27 Movses Khorenatsi str., app., 85, Yerevan, 375010,
Tel.: 28-70-21, e-mail:ArmPallMed@yahoo.com,
areas of activity: healthcare
6. Araza NGO, address: 7 Kievian St., #94, Yerevan,
Tel: 22-70-97, e-mail:araza@arminco.com,
areas of activity: refugee issues
7. Eva Social Benevolent NGO, address: Yerevan, Azatutyan lane 5b, 1,
Tel: (094) 00-88-56, e-mail: ngoeva@yahoo.com, areas of activity:
social groups with limited opportunities
8. Maternity Fund of Armenia Charitable Public Organization, address:
23, David Anhakht str., Yerevan, 0014, Tel: 28-75-49,
e-mail: maternity@armline.am, areas of activity: healthcare
9. Armenian Association for the Disabled "Pyunic", address: Yerevan,
Tsitsernakaberd 16 street, Tel: 56-07-07 e-mail: samsx63@rambler.ru,
areas of activity: disabled issues
10. "Association of Audio-Visual Reporters" NGO, address: 23/1 Papazyan
Str., Apt. 42, Yerevan, Tel: 26-58-08, e-mail:audio.visual@yahoo.com,
arzman@gmail.com, areas of activity: art, culture
11. "Pharmprogress" Youth NGO, address: 45 Khorenatsi str., #52,
Yerevan, Tel: 57-82-05, e-mail: danapharm@email.com, pharm-
progress@pharma.am, areas of activity: healthcare
12. "Millennium Communities" Development Foundation , address: 28
Paronian Str., apt. 94, Yerevan, Tel: 54-15-07, e-mail: mcdevfounda-
tion@yahoo.com, arskarapet@yahoo.com,
areas of activity: community development
13. National Road Safety Council NGO, address: 7 N. Tigranyan steet, apt.
24, Yerevan, Tel: 56-77-26, e-mail: poghos@roadsafety.am,
areas of activity: human rights, politics
14. Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment NGO,
Demirchian 29/57, address: Yerevan, Tel: 52-36-04, e-mail:
office@awhhe.am, elena@awhhe.am, areas of activity: healthcare
15. "EGO" Young Psychologists NGO, address: V. Vagarshyan 3, apt. 41,
Tel: (+37491) 547809, e-mail: ego_psychologists@yahoo.com,
ego@web.am, areas of activity: professional union

Grantees of Goris Teachers Union (GUM) NGO

Syunik marz, Goris

1. Goris-Boomerang" NGO, Goris, Mashtots 5,0284 / 2-40-96.
main areas of activity: art and culture
2. "Eco-Sis" NGO, Sisian, Fizkulturnikneri 4/41, 02830 / 68-00,
ecosisian@yahoo.com, main areas of activity: agriculture
3. "Rights Information Center" NGO, Goris, Mashtots 3, 0284 / 2-40-20,
itek@rambler.ru, main areas of activity: refugees' problems
4. "Kapan Teachers" NGO, Kapan, Davit Bek 12/1, 0285 / 2-27-67,
magda52@mail.ru, main areas of activity: Education
5. NGO of Disabled People "Khariskh", Sisian,
Charenci 6/14, 02830 / 31-29, Susanna-Isaj@yahoo.com,
khariskh@mail.ru. main areas of activity: young people
6. "Sisian Development Center" NGO, 5 Charents street, Sisian,
Syunik Region , (2830) 56-66, (2830) 32-12, sdc_inf@yahoo.com6
sdc_ngo@yahoo.com. main areas of activity:
community development
7. "Kapan Women's Unity", 3/8 Yerkatukhayinneri, Kapan,
Syunik Region , (0285) 6-58-30 hsusanna@freenet.am.
main areas of activity: women's problems
8. "Kapan Community Union" NGO, A.Manukyan 5a, Kapan, Syunik
Region , (0285) 6-21-33, hamaynq@syunik.am.
main areas of activity: community development
9. "Healthy Generation of Mountaineers" NGO, Ankakhutyan 6,
Goris, Syunik Region , (0284) 2-37-52.
main areas of activity: environment, ecology
10. Syunik Region "Shotokan" karate federation , Komitas 23,
Goris, Syunik Region, (0284) 2-66-49
gorishealth@yahoo.com, main areas of activity: sport, hobby
11. "Goris Civic Education Center" NGO, Arzumanyan 17, Goris, Syunik
Region, cced@freenet.am. main areas of activity: education
12. "Goris Women Center" NGO, Ankakhutyan 3, Goris,
Syunik Region, (0284) 2-46-77, hash767@mail.ru.
main areas of activity: women's problems
13. "Princess Parvana" NGO, Mashtots 1,Goris, Syunik Region,
(0284) 2-33-34, princess@freenet.am.
main areas of activity: women's problems
14. "Bari Ert" automoto fans NGO, Syunik 142/10, Goris, Syunik Region,
(0284) 2-56-76, perine@freenet.am. main areas of activity: profession-
al unions
15. "Goris Creators" NGO , Khorenatsi 55, Goris, Syunik Region,
Jirmar28@freenet.am. main areas of activity: art and culture
16. "Syunik civic education center" NGO, Avangard 4/8, Goris,
Syunik Region , (0284) 2-33-87, grigorya@rambler.ru.
main areas of activity: Education
17. "Khayt" beekeepers NGO, Mashtots 150/9 Goris, Syunik Region,
(093)10-16-26, asparsz@yahoo.fr,
main areas of activity: agriculture
18. "Powerful future" NGO, Meliq Stepanyan 18/5,
Kapan, Syunik Region. main areas of activity: young people

19. "Scientific Center for International Experience Studies" NGO, Myasnikyan 3, Sisian, Syunik Region, ies_center@mail.ru.
main areas of activity: science, technology
20. "Syunik pre - school Children" NGO, Gusan Ashot 26, Goris Syunik Region, (0284)2-44-66, syunax@mail.ru.
main areas of activity: education
21. "Goris Press Club" NGO, Mashtoci 3, Goris, Syunik Region, (0284) 2-24-35, 2-07-31, Shso9@yahoo.com.
main areas of activity: mass media

Vayots Dzor marz

1. "Greens Union of Armenia" NGO, Vayots Dzor branch, Vayk, Shahumyan 80, 0282 / 2-11-90, ruzanvayk@rambler.ru.
main areas of activity: environment, ecology
2. "The Young Family Support Center" NGO, Yeghegnadzor, Arsenyan 11, 0281 / 2-01-45, rinagay@rambler.ru.
main areas of activity: young people
3. "Social-Psychological and Statistic Researches Center" NGO, 11 Arsenyan, street, Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor Region , (0281) 2-24-66, khmarkos@yahoo.com.
main areas of activity: invalids' problems
4. "Young Generation" NGO , 4 Vayk street Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor Region , (0281) 2-24-40, 2-24-03, karin_m@rambler.ru.
main areas of activity: young people

Grantees of NGO Center Vanadzor branch

Shirak marz

1. Third Nature NGO, Shirak marz, Gyumri, 56a-26 Commissats st., (374 0312) 35859, thirdnaturengo@yahoo.com
2. XXI Century - Engagement NGO, Shirak marz, Gyumri, Abovyan st 248, (374 0312) 214 05, (374 0312) 4 11 99, armserg@rambler.ru
3. Nursery school N 5, Shirak marz, Gyumri , Nar-Dos st., 51A build., (374 0312) 35742, levon@asparez.am; nadia@asparez.am
4. Children's and youth non-governmental organization Kantegh of Gyumri, Shirak marz, Gyumri, Khrimyan Hayrik st., 62 building, apt. 14, (374 0312) 34368, (374 0312) 34368, kantegh@mail.ru
5. Youth For Peace and Development NGO, Shirak marz, Gyumri, Abovyan st, building number 216, (374 0312) 23834, (374 0312) 38981, yfpd@web.am
6. Leadership Center for Development of Civil Society NGO , Shirak marz, Gyumri , Paruyr Sevak st 1, (374 93) 237958, ruza_b@mail.ru
7. Yerkind Social-Legal Support Centre" NGO, Shirak, Gumri, K. Demirchyan 31, (374 0312) 34864, (374 91) 453266, skyngo@yandex.ru
8. "Meghvik" NGO, Shiraki marz, Gumri, Nizami 52, 0312 42964, 0312 24695, (374 0312)42964, meghvik@web.am

Lori marz

1. Mankavarzh NGO, Lori marz, Vanadzor, Nursery school N 5, (374 0322) 54182, (374 0322) 31534, mankavarjngo@freenet.am
2. Youth Center for Democratic Initiatives" NGO, Lori marz, Vanadzor, Tigran Mets street, building 17, apt 11, (374- 0322) 40910, (374 0322) 40910, edmon@democracy.am
3. "Pharmprogress" Youth NGO Vanadzor brunch, Lori marz, Vanadzor, (37491) 422693, hharutyun@yahoo.com
4. "Aravot "Benevolent NGO, Lori marz, Vanadzor, Taterakan 8, (0322) 43088, aravott@mail.ru, aravott@rambler.ru
5. "Lori Development Center" NGO, Lori marz, Vanadzor, Njdehi 7#34, (0322) 25268, Decelo@freenet.am
6. Armenian Constitutional Right-protective Centre, Lori marz, Vanadzor, Shirakatsi1 lane building 2, 0322 22967, (374 0322)44781
Media and Research Center " NGO, Lori marz, Vanadzor, (0322)40607

Advocacy Glossary

Note: The terms below have been defined in a particular context - as they pertain to the process and state of improved democratic governance.

Accountability

The acknowledgment and assumption of being directly responsible for, and able to account for one's or another's decisions, actions, and their consequences.

Action alert

A letter, email, radio broadcast, or television broadcast sent out by an advocacy organizations to their members, or to the general public, to encourage a specific action in response to a particular issue or piece of proposed legislation.

Activism

Active participation and engagement of individuals and groups, to bring about change in a community.

Adversarial advocacy

A type of advocacy that employs actions, which express opposition and dissent to decision makers.

Advocacy

The act of addressing important community issues and effecting positive change in policies relating to those issues through mobilization, participation, and empowerment of individuals so that they can influence stakeholders of the issues and policy decision makers.

Advocacy campaign

A planned set of actions intended to change public policy or practices for the benefit of disadvantaged groups.

Advocacy network

An extended group of individuals, sub-groups, and organizations with similar interests or concerns, who interact and remain in informal contact for mutual assistance and support on an advocacy issue.

Advocacy organization

An organization that works on behalf of its constituencies or beneficiaries to help them meet their needs through changing public or agency policy.

Advocacy strategy

A combination of different advocacy tools used to achieve change in policies, practices, and perceptions.

Advocacy tool

A method or technique used to help achieve an advocacy objective, such as coalition building, grassroots mobilization, lobbying, information management and media utilization, and budget and policy analysis.

Advocate

One who is a voice on behalf of another in pursuit of a particular policy change.

Ally

One who shares the viewpoint of and supports the campaign of another.

Beneficiary

An individual and/or legal entity who receives benefits from a particular project or program.

Caucus

The meeting of the members of a political party, usually to decide on policies or select members to fill positions. Also, a group of parliament members who represent a certain issue or interest.

Citizen empowerment

A crucial element of social justice advocacy, involving channeling powerlessness into empowerment by tapping into the social capital (existing advantages created by virtue of one's relationships) of constituents and their communities and allowing them to develop their own solutions.

Citizen petition

A formal, written supplication, or application, by a group of individuals or organizations to decision makers in a branch of the government to petition the court or the governor.

Civil society

The web of associations, social norms, and practices that comprise the activities of a society as separate from its state and market institutions. It includes non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, foundations, guilds, professionals, labor unions, academic institutions, media, pressure groups, political parties, and individual citizens. Civil society is the space between state and private life where citizens can resolve community issues.

Coalition

A group of organizations working together in pursuit of a common goal.

Community

A tight and cohesive social entity within the context of the larger society.

Community mobilization

Motivating and preparing individuals and organizations to take action towards policy priorities.

Consensus

The collective buy-in and agreement among the members of a group or community, each of whom exercises some discretion in decision making and follow-up action.

Consensus building

The act of carrying out activities aimed at strengthening the involvement of those most affected by an issue in the design and leadership of advocacy. Effective constituency building enhances the organization and political voice of people and lends legitimacy and leverage to change efforts.

Constituency

A group of people, or a community, who has a common concern and whose interests are advanced by organizing and engaging in advocacy to solve that problem.

Constituency base

The group of organizations or individuals who are concerned with a particular issue and may agree to support a given campaign strategy to resolve that issue, but are not aware of the campaign.

Constituency mapping

A methodological tool used by organizers to analyze and specify information through visual means. Used for designing community maps, sources of power, strategies, etc.

Credibility

The believability of, or ability to verify the veracity of, a statement, action or source, and the propensity of the observer to believe any of them.

Egalitarian

Characterized by equal political, economic, social, and civil rights for all people.

Empowerment

The expansion of assets and capabilities of vulnerable people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect those people's lives. Also, the process of citizens and different groups becoming confident about their capacity to exercise actions to ensure positive changes in their lives. A process of learning and actions that strengthen the self-esteem of individuals, their analytical and organizational skills, and their political consciousness, so they can gain a sense of their rights and join together to develop more democratic societies.

Exclusion

A situation in which some citizens are unfairly left out of the political, social and economic norms of the society.

Facilitator

A person in a neutral position, responsible for ensuring that in a meeting or training the goals are made clear, and achieved within a set timeframe. Facilitators intercede when necessary to prompt discussions and keep them on track, encourage participation, and calm down overly intense arguments.

Feedback

The process in which comments, responses, and recommendations are presented to the organizers and implementers of particular activities.

Gender

A classification that distinguishes between masculine and feminine according to social constructions and norms, as opposed to the biological criteria that determine one's sex as male or female.

Globalization

The vast interconnectedness of individuals, institutions, societies, and natural environments across the globe through markets, technology, information systems, and telecommunications systems. Some argue that for the most part globalization facilitates unprecedented opportunities for growth, development, and prosperity for developing nations, while others argue that for the most part globalization benefits the rich while putting those in developing nations at a further disadvantage.

Grassroots

Ordinary or local folks who lack political power as individuals but through collective campaigning efforts have the ability to urge, persuade, or force those possessing political power to make certain public policy changes.

Issue

A point of dispute or matter of public concern that warrants or requires resolution in order to ensure positive changes on behalf of individuals, communities, or society as a whole.

Legal advocacy

A type of advocacy that attempts to change policies through the legislative branch of the government by influencing the drafting, modifying, and/or passing of legislation in ways that seek to achieve improved outcomes for a specific group of people.

Legislative advocacy

A type of advocacy that influences the drafting and passage of legislation. This type of advocacy attempts to change policy through the legislative branch of government.

Lobbying

The act of influencing the opinions of legislators, legislative staff, and government administrators directly involved in drafting legislative proposals in order to influence legislation.

Mass media

Channels of communication specifically conceived and designed to convey a message to a very large audience such as the population of a nation state.

Media advocacy

A type of advocacy that strategically uses any form of media to help advance an organization's objectives or goals. In this context, media is a tool, not an end in itself, but a means to an end.

Mobilization

The promotion of civic activism through a process that engages members of a community to identify issues, design and actively participate in campaigns.

NGO (Non-governmental organization)

A non-commercial, non-profit organization (excluding political parties and religious organizations) that is established and operates outside of the structure of the government. In some countries NGOs must register in order to operate legally. They are typically value-based and guided by the principles of altruism and voluntarism.

Negotiated advocacy

A type of advocacy that emphasizes consensus-building, compromise, and conflict management, while working cooperatively with decision makers.

Networking

Reaching out to and increasing the number of people who believe an issue is important and would be willing to take action to support policies that affect the issue.

Using all of one's contacts to promote personal objectives and interests.

Organizing

The process of mobilizing a community to facilitate collective action directed to achieve a specific outcome.

Outreach

A series of actions directed towards increased public awareness and citizen activism.

Participatory assessment

When an assessment is conducted with the active participation of interested parties and beneficiaries.

Passive / silent supporters

Those who are not actively involved in a particular campaign, nonetheless have an interest in the campaign's issue and success.

Performance indicators

Clearly articulated results against which performance will be assessed required by successful performance monitoring and evaluation.

Policy assessment

The collection of reliable information, through surveys, regarding a certain issue or policy, including the merits and pitfalls of that policy and any relevant facts that can be used during policy discussions.

Power

Authority over, or capacity to influence, the distribution of resources. Advocacy is interconnected with power from different standpoints. Power can be measured in quantities, skills and dedication to an idea. Power is also important in terms of citizens' capacity to influence a situation. The power of the community can take different forms, such as economic, election, or organizational.

Primary target audience

The decision makers (often government officials) who have the authority to affect the outcome of an organization's stated objectives.

Proactive advocacy

A type of advocacy that produces a change, such as an amended legislation or a new public policy that is almost always quantifiable.

Program evaluation

A process of collection and analysis of program information about the activities within a project framework, its main characteristics and results aimed at drawing conclusions about the program, increasing program effectiveness, and/or developing future programs and plans.

Program monitoring

An ongoing assessment of planned versus actually implemented program activities and the use of program resources in comparison with the planned program results.

Protective advocacy

A type of advocacy that maintains the status quo and "protects" rights from being eroded.

Secondary target audience

Individuals and groups that can influence the primary target audience, such as key members of a legislator's staff, community leaders who have influenced the legislator's decisions on previous issues, and the legislator's family and friends.

Talking point

An important topic or issue to be discussed during a meeting or presentation.

Teamwork

Effective collective work that benefits from the synergy of individuals with different knowledge and skills working together.

Volunteerism

Investment of time and labor from people, without any expectation of remuneration.





Anthony Godfrey, Charge d'Affaires of US Embassy in Armenia Conference Opening Plenary Session



Conference Opening Plenary Session



Track A speakers



Track A, break-out session



Track B speakers



Track C

Track C speakers

DAY 1: FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 2007

		A Government-NGO Relations: Systems Approach to the Public Policy Process	B Business-NGO Relations: New Frontiers in Sustainability and Development
10:00 - 11:30	Registration Desks Open – Participants Register for Conference Badges and Packets @ Lobby		
12:00 - 13:30	Opening Plenary Session @ Large Auditorium		
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch @ Cafeteria, Second Floor		
15:00 - 17:00	Section 1 Panel Discussions	<p>Challenges and Opportunities in Government-NGO Relations</p> <p>MODERATOR: Amalya Kostanyan</p> <p>Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levon Mkrtchyan: Challenges of the Government in working with NGOs in the legislative process • Eleanor Valentine: Opportunities of parliaments in working with NGOs in the policy making process • Ashot Yesayan: Benefits of NGO-government partnership • Theresa Khorozyan: NGO oversight of the public policy process <p>@ Large Auditorium, Second Floor</p>	<p>Challenges and Opportunities in Business-NGO Relations</p> <p>MODERATOR: Ara Nazinyan</p> <p>Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Baghdasaryan: The business view on corporate social responsibility in today's Armenia • Knarik Arabyan: Experience of charity by for-profit organizations in Armenia—presentation of research findings • Armen Shahbazyan: Business associations as a way to improve public policy • Anna Kurdova: Comparative perspectives on legislation enabling business-NGO collaboration <p>@ VENUE: Room 23a, Second Floor</p>
17:00 - 17:30	Discussion		Discussion
17:30 - 19:00	Opening of Expo @ Lobby		

DAY 2: SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 2007

09:00 - 09:30	Day 2 Registration / EXPO @ Lobby		
09:30 - 13:30	Section 2 Break Out Sessions	<p>Working with National Parliaments</p> <p>Facilitators/Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleanor Valentine: Tips in working with parliamentary committees (providing expertise and testimony) • Lena Nanushyan: Experience of National Assembly Social Affairs Committee in working with Armenian NGOs • Zhirayr Edilyan: Parliamentary Voting Record Project—presentation <p>@ VENUE: Room 24, Second Floor</p>	<p>Fundraising from the Business Community</p> <p>Facilitators/Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zaida Arguedas: Building infrastructure for fundraising from private sources • Raffi Niziblian: Marketing non-profit projects to the business community—social marketing • Narine Mailyan: From philanthropy to corporate social responsibility <p>@ VENUE: Room 23a, Second Floor</p>
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch @ Cafeteria, Second Floor		
14:30 - 18:30	Section 3 Break Out Sessions	<p>Local Government Bodies—Partnership and Advocacy</p> <p>Facilitators/Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nune Pepanyan: Practical tools for partnering with local government • Artashes Torozyan: Overview of advocacy projects with local government bodies—tips and tools <p>@ VENUE: Room 24, Second Floor</p>	<p>Collaborating with Business for Development</p> <p>Facilitators/Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poghos Shahinyan: Beyond Funding: business' benefits from partnership—presentation of MURANO and NRSC seatbelt campaign • Abgar Yeghoyan: With business, but not for business—how to avoid conflict of interest and maintain independence • Serge Popoff/Mane Mamyan: Interest of business in long-term development of non-profit organizations <p>@ VENUE: Room 23a, Second Floor</p>
18:30 - 19:30	Dinner @ Cafeteria, Second Floor		
19:30 - 21:00	Cultural Performance: National Dance and Song Ensemble @ Large Auditorium		

DAY 3: SUNDAY, APRIL 15, 2007

09:30 - 10:00	Day 3 Registration @ Lobby		
10:00 - 12:30	Section 4 Panel Discussions	<p>Improving NGO-Government Relations—Recommendations</p> <p>MODERATOR: Amalya Kostanyan</p> <p>@ VENUE: Large Auditorium, Second Floor</p>	<p>Identifying New Opportunities in NGO-Business Relations—Recommendations</p> <p>MODERATOR: Ara Nazinyan</p> <p>@ VENUE: Room 23a, Second Floor</p>
13:00 - 15:00	Closing Plenary with Reports @ Large Auditorium		
15:15 - 16:00	Closing Reception @ Cafeteria, Second Floor		

C Community/Citizen-NGO Relations:
With the People, for the People

D Media-NGO Relations:
Redefining Interaction for the Public Interest

Challenges and Opportunities in Community/Citizen-NGO Relations

MODERATOR: **Anna Sahakyan**

Presenters

- **Hranush Hakobyan:** Work with constituents from the perspective of a member of parliament
- **Preeti Shroff-Mehta:** The role of the public in issue identification: a comparative perspective
- **Mark Granius:** Networks and coalitions—beyond the rhetoric (why coalitions and networks create confidence in the public)

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Discussion

Challenges and Opportunities in Media-NGO Relations

MODERATOR: **Nouneh Sarkissian**

Presenters

- **Lucig Daniellian:** The role of the media in the public policy process—the Armenian model
- **Boris Navasardyan:** Common myths and realities about media among NGOs—the media perspective
- **Hakob Avetikian:** The fine balance between coverage, cooperation and conflict of interest—media as a partner or merely a medium for message transmission?

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Discussion

Working with and for the Public

Facilitators/Presenters

- **Mark Granius:** Tools for ensuring accountability to the public (annual reports, membership meetings, transparent governance, etc.)
- **Preeti Shroff-Mehta:** Tools and tips for participatory issue identification

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Tools for Effective Communication with Media

Facilitators/Presenters

- **Bob Evans:** Message development, delivery planning and impact evaluation
- **Kyla Springer:** Media toolkit for NGOs
- **Aram Mirtchyan:** From Pop to Politics—how to work with radio

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Partnering for Results

Facilitators/Presenters

- **Shavarsh Kocharyan:** Work with constituents from the perspective of a member of parliament
- **Yelena Sabirova:** Constituencies: how to mobilize and utilize
- **Sona Ayratyan, Anush Sukiasyan and Olga Safaryan:** Individual case work as a way to gather policy implementation data and build a constituency

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Media Communication—Adding Value to the Public Policy Process

Facilitators/Presenters

- Illustrative Case Study—Making the state budget process transparent*
- **Vahan Sirounyan:** Budget process and accountability to the public
- **Anna Hovhannesian:** Budget process—an example of NGO-media collaboration for the public good

Redefining Communication: Internet as a medium to influence public policy

- **Lusine Hovhannissyan:** www.parliament.am
- **Onnik Krikorian:** Blogging for mass consumption
- **John Hughes:** Electronic journalism in a non-electronic society

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Improving Civic Participation—Recommendations

MODERATOR: **Anna Sahakyan**

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Improving Media-NGO Partnership—Recommendations

MODERATOR: **Nouneh Sarkissian**

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THE ROLE OF NGOS IN THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS
CONFERENCE 2007





Track D speakers



Track D, break-out session



*Arlene Lear, Senior Vice President, Counterpart International
Advocacy Expo, Opening Speech*



Advocacy Expo



Conference Closing Plenary Session speakers



Conference Closing Plenary Session

