The Capacity Development Resource Guides highlight the key technical areas of expertise needed to effectively influence health policy design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Each guide identifies the specific skills, knowledge, and capacities that individuals and organizations should possess in the area. The standardized indicators listed for each competency and capability map to the accompanying Capacity Indicators Catalog, which helps to generate a tailored tool for assessing and scoring an organization’s capacity level. Each guide also includes a list of useful resources for designing and delivering capacity development assistance.

**BUILDING NETWORKS AND COALITIONS FOR GREATER INFLUENCE AND IMPACT**

**DEFINITION**

While the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, a network is often a loose association of people or groups brought together by a common interest, whereas a coalition is a more formal organization created in pursuit of a specific goal (PACT Tanzania, n.d.). Networking and coalition building are important capabilities for a wide range of stakeholders, including individual champions; community-based organizations and groups; local, national, and international nongovernmental organizations; donors; professional associations; political leaders; government officials; the media; and policymakers.

**RELEVANCE TO POLICY**

“Networks and coalitions can be effective in mobilizing political will, influencing policy and financing, and strengthening health programs” (West Slevin and Green, 2013, p. 1). They leverage and shepherd collective voices toward common policy goals; create synergies among members; share information, ideas, and resources; and combine efforts to more efficiently plan and implement joint advocacy campaigns. “Greater size and visibility make it easier for networks and coalitions to mobilize resources and gain recognition from local governments” (USAID | Health Policy Initiative, Task Order 1, 2008, p. 1).

**KEY CAPABILITIES**

Creating and sustaining networks/coalitions requires different yet complementary skills. A network/coalition must outline communication systems, decision-making processes, and membership roles and responsibilities.
Structure and systems will ensure smooth functioning, as well as build trust and maintain bonds among its participants. Networks/coalitions must have strong leadership and the capability to recruit and engage members and partners in their activities (Davies & Lee, 2007). Sustaining networks/coalitions requires understanding barriers to involvement and linking with other networks/coalitions to identify strategies to overcome these barriers. Leaders must have strong skills in oral and written communication, agenda setting, consensus building, knowledge management, meeting management, decision making, team building, strategic and action planning, fundraising, and conflict management (Davies and Lee, 2007). These technical and relational skills are essential to bridging with power structures and decision-making forums and bringing the network/coalition’s voice into the policy process (Ogden et al., 2013).

High capacity for networking and coalition building includes being able to

- Leverage collective bargaining power to build and maintain strong, constructive relationships with relevant policymakers and decisionmakers who have authority and responsibility for policy change
- Collaborate to design and implement evidence-based advocacy campaigns based on the expressed needs and with the full and active participation of their communities and constituents
- Collaborate with other peer networks, coalitions, or groups that share their advocacy and policy objectives

Effective networks/coalitions are known within their community or by their constituents and are viewed as responsive to and representative of their constituency or community priorities. They operate in accordance with the network/coalition mission and goals; have internal systems, structures, and a culture that promotes collaboration and communication; and have systems and strategies in place to generate and manage resources to support the network/coalition’s efforts. Externally, network/coalition members routinely communicate policy actions to their constituencies and mobilize them to become engaged in advocacy efforts. At the highest performance level, networks/coalitions proactively engage in and influence policy dialogue and are recognized and respected by policymaking institutions and leaders as key contributors to policy discussions.

In the ideal, the following would exist:

- Opportunities and mechanisms for diverse coalitions, including those representing marginalized populations, to participate in the policy process
- Transparency and accessibility of information shared between and among government departments and civil society groups
- Funding and other resources available to foster networks and coalitions to promote shared learning and collective action
INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCIES

KNOWLEDGE OF

Other organizations, networks, coalitions, etc. working in the same and related fields (e.g., media, government, civil society, donor community, coalitions, networks)  NC1
Local and national policy environment, laws, stakeholders, and institutions  NC2
Local and national policy and advocacy processes  NC3, NC4
Health sector issues  NC5

SKILLS TO BE ABLE TO

Cultivate relationships and work collaboratively to share and leverage information and resources  NC6
Listen to others, build consensus, and manage conflict  NC7
Prioritize opportunities, make decisions, and provide direction  NC8
Effectively communicate issues internally and externally through writing, interpersonal communication, or public events  NC9
Assess and build skills of other members in advocacy, policy analysis, and data use  NC10

ATTITUDES/VALUES/ATTRIBUTES

Values working in collaboration, and cultivates a spirit of partnership with others  NC11
Is politically astute and diplomatic and can accurately analyze power dynamics  NC12
Shares resources and responsibility for work, and acknowledges joint credit for achievements  NC13
Values transparency, inclusiveness, and open communication  NC14

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES

TECHNICAL ABILITY TO

Shape a clearly articulated network vision, mission, goals, etc., shared by members  NC34
Monitor, analyze, and document implications of existing policy and proposed policy alternatives, especially from perspectives of gender, equity, and inclusion  NC15
Monitor, evaluate, and document network/coalition activities and progress  NC16, NC17
### TECHNICAL ABILITY TO (CONTINUED)

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess and provide capacity development support that responds to members' expressed needs and priorities</td>
<td>NC18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design and institute systems to collect, maintain, analyze, and synthesize data on key program areas and the policy environment</td>
<td>NC19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and implement an advocacy strategy based on a clear analysis of constituent/stakeholder needs, opportunities, and power dynamics</td>
<td>NC20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Link with/participate in global advocacy efforts/campaigns</td>
<td>NC21</td>
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### RELATIONAL ABILITY TO

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Establish and maintain collaborative and mutually supportive relationships with external groups and organizations representing diverse constituencies (e.g., youth, women, service providers, marginalized groups, health professionals, media) and diverse sectors (e.g., health, labor, economic, youth and sport, human rights, gender, women, military, education)</td>
<td>NC22, NC23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain constructive links with various policy stakeholders, including communities, decisionmakers, and peer organizations</td>
<td>NC24</td>
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<td>Earn the trust and credibility (have legitimacy) with the public, constituents, media, and donors</td>
<td>NC25, NC26, NC27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attract/recruit and retain members from relevant groups and organizations from various sectors and constituencies and with diverse organizational skills/resources</td>
<td>NC28, NC29, NC30</td>
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<td>Communicate routinely and transparently with all members on network activities, governance issues, resource requirements, etc.</td>
<td>NC31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage member organizations in network activities, decision making, governance, etc.</td>
<td>NC32</td>
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<td>Promote network's image and achievements externally via media, publications, conferences, etc.</td>
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### ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT TO SUPPORT

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<tr>
<td>Fundraising for network activities and operations, as well as systems to document member contributions (e.g., human, financial, in-kind) and cost-share</td>
<td>NC35, NC36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective and efficient financial management of a budget and organizational resources</td>
<td>NC37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic and advocacy planning</td>
<td>NC38</td>
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ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT TO SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

- Decision-making and technical structures that clearly define leadership, governance, and membership roles, responsibilities, and functions  NC39
- Systems and procedures that ensure participatory decision making, delegation, and teamwork  NC40
- Strong internal (among network members) and external (with constituents, media, decisionmakers) communication systems and structures  NC41, NC42
ILLUSTRATIVE CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES

- Conduct workshops to
  - Create a network/coalition mission, structures, objectives, roles, and responsibilities
  - Conduct strategic planning among interested organizations and individuals
  - Build advocacy capacity and develop advocacy strategies
  - Train trainers to facilitate “cascade” training
  - Train network members in use/presentation of data
- Propose and award small grants and technical assistance to form, expand, or develop competencies of network/coalition members
- Support/invite network participation in technical seminars, conferences, or briefings at the national and global levels
- Support/invite network participation in policy-related events, roundtables, meetings, press conferences, etc.
- Conduct ongoing technical assistance/support in sustaining network activities (e.g., improving communications and knowledge management systems, evaluation)
- Exchange visits with other networks and coalitions
- Support linking with/participating in global advocacy campaigns

RESOURCES


