



VOICE Advisory Board Meeting, February 7 2017, Oxfam Novib Executive Director's Room, The Hague / FINAL MINUTES

Advisory Board (AB)

Ms. Anke van Dam (AD), Strategic Policy Advisor, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Bart Romijn (BR), Director, Partos, Netherlands

Ms. Nidhi Goyal (NG), Trainer and Researcher: disability rights and gender justice, India

Ms. Farah Karimi (FK), Executive Director, Oxfam Novib, Netherlands

Ms. Josephine Kulea (JK), President, Samburu Girls Foundation, Kenya (arrival on August 31st)

Apologies

Mr. Edwin Huizing (EH), Director, Hivos, Netherlands

In attendance

Marinke van Riet (MR), Programme Manager, Voice

Clemens Wennekes (CW), Finance Coordinator, Voice (partial attendance)

Rajan Shah (RS), Grants Coordinator, Voice (partial attendance)

Inez Hackenberg (IH), Linking and Learning Coordinator, Voice (partial attendance)

The meeting opened at 9:10AM and ended at 14.20PM on February 7th.

1. Summary of Key decisions

- In the case of consortium members' absence there will be an alternate from the same organisation to ensure continuation and presence.
- The documents need to be shared at minimum a week in advance of the AB meeting.
- For future meetings the agenda and documents should indicate the key advice sought / key questions asked of the AB members.
- Next meeting is preferably aligned to a Linking and Learning event if possible but no later than September 2017.

2. Action list

Action	Responsibility	Deadline
Share revised Annual Plan	MVR	15 March
Schedule next AB meeting	MVR	15 April



3. Summary of AB meeting

The meeting started with the chair BR facilitating a discussion on continuous presence of all AB members at the request of AD. This was in light of EH's late apology and the need to have both consortium members present. Based on this, the AB decided that in case of consortium representatives they would be able to assign an alternate member to ensure a presence of both. In the case of AB members from the global south, this doesn't apply.

In addition, it was agreed that documents should be shared at minimum one week in advance of the meetings provided that they also indicate the key areas / questions for which advice of the AB is sought. This will help with the AB's preparations as well as focus the discussions. This was again confirmed in follow-up emails to have a healthy balance between presentations and discussions.

MR presented the update of the progress made within Voice based on the shared General Update document. Key highlights include the eight creative national launches which were accompanied with 17 national Calls for Proposals. NG raised a question about the level of documentation of the launches as there are some interesting lessons learnt about involvement of the target groups and general level of creativity which was affirmed by MR. In addition ND and JK wanted to make sure that especially for the empowerment grants appropriate outreach was being done to the target groups beyond the capital city and bigger organisations. NG suggested mapping 15 key influencers at national level who would all be responsible for liaising with their own constituencies and grassroots networks. Especially for People Living with Disabilities this is an effective strategy.

Eight global grantees are being contracted based on an assessment of 355 proposals covering all regions, impact areas and target groups. MR expressed some concern about the huge interest and the limited human resources available at national level to assess the proposals.

MR also explained the Entries of the Empowered idea based on the Portfolios of the Poor. This is an approach to invite representatives of the target groups to keep a regular diary into (1) moments of discrimination / marginalisation, (2) who they turn to for support and (3) who they lobby or influence to change practices and/or policies. AD recommended contacting Include for more information on the methodology as they have experience with diaries. FK recommended to continue to liaise with the Innovation and Impact Measurement and Knowledge Department within Oxfam Novib to enhance synergies.

RS presented an analysis on the first Global Call for Proposals and again expressed a concern on the level of interest at national level and the human resources available (1 Programme Officer, 0.5 Finance Officer). BR asked about the level of effort required at national level and if there is anything that can be done to refer organisations to other opportunities. RS explained that Voice only has one simple form for applications but that it still requires a week at minimum. RS also explained the eligibility test and NG recommended developing infographics or an animation to explain the application process. AD recommended that we add information to our website about the other funding opportunities: such as Accountability Fund and the four regional women's funds called Leading from the South. MR responded positively to this and also requested the Ministry to bring together all grant makers on an annual basis to enhance coordination and synergies.



IH continued the discussion with the presentation of the global context analysis which was also presented the previous day in a joint event with Civicus: *Joining Forces, Exploring Forces* where NG also participated in a panel. The presentation contained ten trends which were extrapolated from the ten national context analyses. IH mentioned that the context analysis served as a very useful baseline in the countries based on which priorities have been developed. IH also explained that further work on the Theory of Change will be required to make sure local actors are the drivers for change and a proper narrative of change is included (currently more described as a Theory of Actions). FK asked if there were any surprises in the context analyses and IH responded that the level of invisibility of some groups (albinos, small people etc.) surprised and shocked her and that overall all groups had a lot in common. BR stressed that the context analysis and communications strategy in general should lead to a good narrative and storytelling which should find its place on the website. In addition BR recommended using crowd-sourcing techniques to develop further the communications angle including but not limited to the media. This led to a discussion around the role of the media within the consortium partners themselves vis-à-vis the grantees whose voices we would like to amplify. A fine balance needs to be sought.

Overall the unique element of Voice is that we are allowed to take risks, make reasonable mistakes and the Linking and Learning component. FK recommended using the lessons learnt of E-motive as a useful guide for Voice to prevent a repetition of mistakes. In addition FK mentioned that a potential learning question for a Linking and Learning event is the role of religion in development in general and Voice in particular.

4. Feedback on Draft Annual Plan and Budget

CW presented the overall budget as well as financial report over 2016. He explained the set-up of the contract with 9 million Euro set aside for the management, 3 million for the Linking and Learning and 2.6 million Euro for VAT. He also explained that the underspent was mainly due to recruitment challenges particularly in the Oxfam offices due to the transition process and finding people with the right qualifications and attitude. Upon agreement with the Ministry and previous AB meeting this underspent has been now re-allocated to translation and additional capacity to review proposals at national level. CW also expressed concern about the limited capacity at national level (staff and monitoring) and the AB responded that the Ministry should consider changing the nature of the Voice contract to avoid the steep VAT allocations. In addition the AB recommended using the contingency budget line to reinforce some national capacity.

Update MR post-meeting: The VAT and additional resources were discussed in a meeting with the Ministry on 9 February. Unfortunately the Ministry cannot change the nature of the contract due to legislation around tenders and public service contract. The Ministry also stressed that Voice first needs to show more results before a discussion takes place on additional resources and/ or reallocation.

MR ended this session with indicating the areas in the Annual Plan that have changed highlighting the target groups at national level and the intersectionality which is strongly encouraged and in some countries even required. An updated version of the Annual Plan will be shared before mid-March.



5. Close and Follow-up

The AB agreed that they would like to have the next AB meeting ideally aligned to a Linking and Learning event provided the costs and time involvement are not prohibitive and the meeting takes place before the end of September. If this is not possible the fallback option is to have another meeting in The Hague in September (after the holidays). MR would keep the AB posted on these developments and make a joint decision before mid-April.

There being no other business the meeting was declared closed at 14:20 on February 7th.