



# **NGO Alliance for Health Promotion**

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## **Annual Report 2010**

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***“Health Promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health.”***

### ***Introduction***

The Alliance, formerly called the NGO Advisory Group for Health Promotion, was established to play a leadership role in the partnership between NGOs and WHO in the follow up to the Jakarta Conference, 1997. Its members are NGOs working with grass-roots communities and form an essential part of civil society. Irrespective of the prime objective for their creation they all have a concern to enhance health for all.

“Civil society is an expression of community empowerment where groups of people sharing common interests, concerns or identities come together for social and political change. It is a central element in the successful implementation of international and national policy-making.”

Successful health promotion demands a complex interaction between government and private sector institutions, public health facilities, skilled health personnel, and access to both modern and traditional medical and educational resources. Additionally, all factors must work with individuals taking responsibility for their own health.

The context in which this interaction functions is largely determined by community assets and cultural dynamics, and by the social and economic determinants that condition health. Health for all depends not only on understanding the basic factors that condition healthy outcomes globally, but also on paying greater attention to the context in which they take place. It implies leveraging the positive environmental elements and limiting the negative.

### **The NGO Alliance for Health Promotion**

The Alliance is an open and inclusive partnership of NGOs and other stakeholders committed to the goals of the Alliance. Its members’ profiles cover a great diversity of areas.

A4HP’s goal is to improve health by generating awareness of existing NGO efforts in the promotion of health and bringing added value to their work through strengthened advocacy, development of partnerships and sharing of best practices, initiatives and experiences.

Year 2010 has provided multiple opportunities for the Alliance to mobilize the NGO community at international, national and community levels and contribute to advocating for successful health promotion strategies.

The focus of activities in 2010 has been directed towards building partnership and mainstreaming health promotion.

### **Governance**

The Alliance has been governed by a Board of international NGOs which are the founding members of the Alliance and constitute also the Board. Members are: Berhane Ras-Work, Bernard Kadasia, Joanna Koch, Myrna Lachenal, Xuanhao Chan, Sonia Heptonstall, and Gabriella Sozanski.

Berhane Ras-Work, Chairperson, Bernard Kadasia, Vice-Chair, Sozanski Gabriella, Secretary/Treasurer.

Seamogano Manowe, IAC finance officer was approved as **auditor** by the 2009 AGM.

The **Secretariat** is hosted by the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices, IAC and has been managed by Gabriella Sozanski on a part-time voluntary basis.

### **Membership**

The NGO Alliance has extended and strengthened its network adding several national and local organisations to the existing international NGOs who participated at the Civil Society Session at the 7GCHP in Nairobi, 2009, and those who signed up for the joint statements on NCDs and the MDGs at the January EB and the WHA in May.

The Alliance is now in the process of reviewing and formalizing its membership. For that purpose it has clarified membership criteria and has brought some amendments to its Statutes. See Annex 1.

### **Meetings**

The Board has had 10 meetings during 2010.

Other meetings in 2010:

<i>19 January 2010</i>	<i>NGO Consultation during the WHO Executive Board Meeting, WHO Geneva Joint NGO intervention coordinated by the Alliance on EB agenda item "Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy"</i>
<i>18 May</i>	<i>Workshop during the WHA in WHO, Geneva "Mainstreaming health promotion - Developing an effective toolkit to cover the gaps" Joint intervention of NGOs coordinated by the Alliance on WHA agenda: Monitoring of the achievements of the health-related MDGs</i>
<i>15 July</i>	<i>Alliance Workshop during the IUHPE Conference "Making health promotion tangible"</i>
<i>30 Aug-19 Sep</i>	<i>Virtual discussion forum as a follow-up to the Workshop, 15 July</i>

12 November	Annual General Meeting, WHO Geneva Strategic Planning Meeting, WHO Room A, Geneva “Working together to advance the health promotion agenda in 2011”
17-19 November	6 <sup>th</sup> World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders, Washington, DC “NGO strategic efforts to make mental health promotion ‘tangible’ - presentation of the Alliance

### Policy and strategy work

Consistent with the Bangkok Charter which calls for making the promotion of health a key focus of communities and civil society, and the Nairobi Call to Action which included recommendations from the Technical Paper of the Alliance, the A4HP continued to work on local knowledge as a community asset and effective tool to promote health. The key question was how to help empower people and communities to control their life and achieve better health and a better quality of life.

During 2010 the focus of our activities has been directed towards building partnership and mainstreaming health promotion.

We have developed a mechanism for bringing the Nairobi Call to Action to national affiliates of member NGOs.

We organised dialog meetings to strengthen and develop the Alliance capacity and network including regional/national/local organizations. The Consultation meeting during the January EB of WHO was one of these types of meetings.

At the January Executive Board meeting of the WHO the Alliance demonstrated its mobilizing force by submitting a joint intervention on NCDs. eighteen NGOs have signed up.

At WHA63, May 2010, nineteen NGOs signed the Joint intervention promoting the achievements of the MDGs. Our aims were to strengthen advocacy of NGOs by mobilizing civil society and to support the process of mainstreaming health promotion with an aim to reduce the growing health equity gap by recognizing the value of and honouring local communities, thus, contributing to the implementation of health policies consistent with the Millennium Development Goals.

On 18 May the Alliance organized a Workshop and presented its project: Mainstreaming health promotion: Developing an effective toolkit to cover the gaps. The project aims at promoting the approach to evidence that meets local needs and provide measurable outcomes.

Both the January Consultation meeting and the Workshop organized by the Alliance during the WHA were about how NGOs in alliance can maximize the opportunity

and mobilize a wide network of NGOs and Civil Society players for a coordinated action and contribution to mainstreaming health promotion.

The Project identified implementation gaps and proposed ways how to address the challenge.

Quantitative research concerning public health measures and the social and economic determinants of health are well documented. However, A4HP research points to significant gaps in our understanding of how differing environments affect health outcomes. There is a lack of information to guide grassroots development, the area in which NGOs are most active. In addition, our NGO partners frequently lack the resources necessary to evaluate such factors. This hinders their ability to make evidence-based programming decisions or to demonstrate value to stakeholders and donors in the interest of replication.

A4HP plans to address the omission by developing a knowledge base of proven practices in health promotion focussing specifically on community assets and cultural dynamics. It will then identify and promote a toolkit to demonstrate the value of assessing qualitative as well as quantitative evidence.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> IUHPE Conference in July a World-Café workshop was organised by the Alliance entitled: Making Health Promotion “Tangible” in order to gain valuable input from participants for the Community Assets Knowledge Base and Evaluation Toolkit. The workshop aimed to highlight practical challenges and approaches to generating “evidence” for the role of community assets in the process of mainstreaming health promotion. Issues surrounding the need for “evidence” were discussed and participants were invited to provide innovative solutions based on their experience.

#### *Topics for discussion groups*

- 1) What are community assets? What dilemmas or opportunities do they present? How do you see them contributing to health promotion?
- 2) How do you know when something is working? How do you measure it?
- 3) What are the challenges in using evidence to improve programs and demonstrate value?

A discussion paper has been developed based on the outcomes of the workshop. It is imperative that key stakeholders acknowledge that community assets and cultural dynamics are critical yet often overlooked factors in determining implementation strategies or evaluating outcomes. It is also important to understand how qualitative evidence can serve as a useful complement to quantitative evidence.

As a follow-up to the July Workshop we launched a virtual discussion on how outcomes of NGO activities in health promotion can be made measurable or “tangible”. The discussion was divided into three thematic weeks around the same questions that were deliberated in the July workshop.

It was successful in attracting more NGOs and interested parties to collaborate with the NGO Alliance on the project and, ultimately, in working with the WHO and

the funding community to integrate these factors into their decision making processes and policies for mainstreaming health promotion.

Since the start of the Community Assets Project in May 2010 the Alliance has convened academics, policymakers and practitioners from all parts of the world to share experiences and practices of using community assets for health promotion, and to understand how they can best be leveraged for positive impact. The workshops at the 63<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly, the 20<sup>th</sup> IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion, and the online discussion forum at A4HP's web site have resulted in sharpening the focus of the project while broadening critical interest in the topic and project.

The next step is to survey NGOs in A4HP's growing network to collect specific data on their experiences with community assets. The web platform will be developed and the database populated concurrently with the survey. A 10-week project management plan is in place and we are actively seeking funding to support the project activities. The goal is to have the Knowledge Base online in May 2011.

### ***Increase Effectiveness***

In order to increase effectiveness we have further developed our website. It has served as a useful tool to allow for a wider network of NGOs and Civil Society to take part in debating major issues of common interest. One example was the e-discussion launched in August-September about the three questions related to Community assets and evidence.

Other communication tools have also been used, including an information sheet introducing the Alliance missions, objectives and activities, as well as a project sheet.

### ***Finances***

The income of the Alliance in 2010 has come from an agreement on collaboration (APW) signed with WHO Health Promotion Unit and a carry-over from the previous year's budget. Without the invaluable contribution of voluntary work of the members and partners the functioning of the Secretariat would not have been possible.

The Financial Report is attached (Annex 2).

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The Alliance expresses its thanks to the Health promotion Unit of the World Health Organization for providing continuous logistical and financial support for carrying out the activities of the Alliance aiming at strengthening the common voice of NGOs and Civil Society and thus, contributing to the implementation of the WHO priority goals.

The Alliance expresses its gratitude to Members providing financial support and voluntary work for running the Secretariat and implementing its business plan 2010.