

GWJ – Organizational Development (OD) Process

Phase II: Organizational Readiness Assessment

Meeting of Group 6: Thursday, March 10, 2022

Discussion Notes

Organizational Readiness Prerequisites 5 and 8 were discussed:

Prerequisite 8 was discussed at this time because information generated through this meeting's discussion potentially stands to help the GWJ Board in its preparation for the 2022 AGM to be held in November.

Prerequisite 5:

In anticipation of building UN alliances and funding partnerships, GWJ Headquarters and its NFAs can begin now to create an organizational resume/profile that reflects their collective competencies and the ability to mobilize these.

Organizational profiles have multiple uses. In GWJ's case, we would like our external stakeholders including funders to know that we have the experience and skills to build capacity into ongoing implementation of SDG 4 in our NFA countries.

Discussion of experiences that should be included in the GWJ profile:

- Collaborations with other women's organizations – collaboration is so important to impactful work as well as to funders- it is a key feature of GWJ.
- Stacy shared the following collaborations she has carried out in Geneva that have contributed to strengthening GWJ's organizational profile:
 - Submission of statements for CSW and the Human Rights Council. This year's CSW statement was co-signed by an unprecedented 14 other NGOs.
 - In the last 5 years, Stacy has been escalating GWJ's relationship with the UN by becoming Chairwoman of the NGOCSW, Geneva when for

the first time, there was collaboration between NGOCSW, New York and NGO CSW, Vienna

- She (on behalf of GWI) is the Chairwoman of Committee on Human rights, Geneva that supports the Human Rights Council in major ways
- She has been providing civil society speakers from within our membership ranks during Human Rights Council meetings. For example, most recently, Ms. Ramita Suwal, President of Nepal spoke about distance learning.
- She has also developed a relationship with International Labor Organization (ILO) which is important for GWI members and their understanding of the future of work.

These activities are posted in the newsletter and on social media but don't receive the attention they deserve from the GWI membership at large.

Through these activities, we have created a baseline of a relationships with UN agencies, which provides organizational credibility.

- Ideally the GWI profile would include an inventory of members' skills. We don't have access to that information

Prerequisite 8:

GWI Board can create an enabling structural framework that allows GWI to optimize this opportunity.

GWI's structural framework is comprised of the Constitution, the General Assembly, rules and regulations that apply to Swiss NGOs, internal formal rules and policies that govern its work and decision-making, Board and Committees, membership and formal relationships with its member NFAs, processes and procedures, communications, etc.

Structures ideally support an organization reach its goals. In some instances, unfortunately structures can become obstacles to progress.

We have to be alert to the fact that practices, especially historic beliefs and practices can sometimes be mistaken for iron – clad structures.

Organizational structures must be reviewed from time to time – particularly when an old organization like GWI is about to begin a new stage in its life – to ensure to the extent possible that its structures are enabling the accomplishment of goals.

Discussion about useful Organizational Structures for GWI

Geeta’s Comment: *There was a discussion about having a common theme either annually or for a period of time. The idea being that all of GWI – headquarters and NFAs – would work on projects and activities that flowed from this theme.*

There is a multitude of themes that are contained in the implementation of SDG 4 – Inclusive and quality and equal education for all.

While I did not make the connection at the time, I now see Program as Structure. (Program is not usually itself seen as Structure -usually Structure supports the conducting of a program.) If a structure is supposed to support the needs of an organization and our need is to bring Headquarters and NFAs closer together, create a GWI international community of common interest, the whole organization working on a common theme could be one structural solution to our needs.

Therefore, I’m including below, “Program under Structure” for the purposes of deliberation:

- Have a common theme that the whole organization can work on – a sub-theme of SDG 4 – beginning now.
- In order to bring GWI Headquarters and NFAs together in a productive manner rather than working in the current highly distributed manner, perhaps the Constitution should include the value of the NFAs to the functioning of the organization and the responsibility they carry.

Currently, in the Constitution, there is a prescriptive relationship between GWI Headquarters and the NFAs that is limited to two aspects : the payment of membership dues and the inclusion of GWI membership to be stated in NFA Constitutions.

- Create a communication structure that facilitates 2- way communications between GWI Headquarters and NFAs. Communication has been discussed under almost every pre-requisite – illustrating its importance.

Currently, there are multiple channels of communications (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Linked In), Update.

There is a bottle -neck in terms of the Discussions Network. The Education Committee is supposed to pose a question that will initiate discussions on a range of issues but that has not necessarily worked. We do have 600 subscribers to the network.

- For Communications, there could be number of structural solutions:
 - ✓ Currently, Presidents and CIRs are another GWI Structure that is supposed to facilitate communications – does not always work well.
 - ✓ An important structure to establish is the CIR Committee. This would demonstrate to NFA leadership including CIRs, the importance of the role of CIR, how valued CIRs are in the effective functioning of GWI’s internal 2- way communications system and in helping the organization move forward in a well -coordinated way.
 - ✓ The institutionalization of the Membership letter is another important structure – the letter goes to all members whose email addresses we have – we have approximately 3,000 addresses. The is new and the first letter has gone out in the last week – the frequency of Membership Letters can be increased.
- NFAs themselves have a bit of trouble with intra- NFA communications. Sometimes members may get in touch with GWI bypassing the NFA President and CIR – this is problematic. GWI should copy the president on the response to the individual member?

- GWI does many things to communicate with its membership through the NFA leadership. This is not a communications problem. It is a problem of communications within voluntary organizations.

There is still an idea out there that is harbored by many volunteers that volunteering is not such a serious undertaking – that it can be done when they feel like it. Many volunteers have always said that their families come first – no one is contesting that their families come first – but in the gentlest way we need to tell them that they should not volunteer because when they don't carry out their responsibilities, the organization suffers.

- Recognition, understanding and encouragement should be given to the people who do volunteer and do a such a good job.
- There is cognitive dissonance between volunteers saying that they will take on certain responsibilities and then not doing so. This is to the total detriment to the organization especially an organization like GWI, that has been operating on an extremely austere budget for the last five years and depends heavily on its volunteers.

To fix the cognitive dissonance, suggestions (below) made at the meeting have been implemented before but can be re- implemented more effectively:

- ✚ Provide clearer job descriptions
- ✚ Provide an understanding of how volunteers create synergy – when they carry out their responsibilities, they allow other volunteers to carry out theirs. When a volunteer does not carry out her responsibilities, she impedes the work of other volunteers.
- ✚ Describe the impact of volunteer work on the organization
- ✚ Describe the benefits of volunteering – particularly for young members in terms of professional and personal development.
- ✚ Board and other Volunteer training is an essential supporting structure

- ✚ Do not force members to volunteer
 - ✚ Provide a realistic understanding of the hours required of the volunteer, so that she can make a knowledgeable decision to accept the responsibility or not.
 - ✚ Do not institute a precedence of “laissez – faire” procedures – always have someone check in with the volunteers, inquire how they are doing and provide support and encouragement.
- All Swiss NGOs, require a Secretary on the Board in addition to President and Treasurer. GWI does not have the position of Secretary. Needs to be included in the new Board configuration. So far, Stacy has been submitting the Minutes, Financial Statements and GA Minutes as required by the civil code law but this is the Secretary’s job.
 - We need a VP for Education to highlight and emphasize GWI’s core work. Right now, Education is combined with Advocacy to be done by one person – these should be two separate portfolios handled by two VPs.
 - The suggestion was made that there should be position on the board of VP for Organizational Development (OD). However, OD is an unbiased, consultative practice that facilitates internal dialogue and manages organizational change. By its very nature it cannot be a position on the board. Some NGOs may have position of organizational development (not OD) that is internal to the organization that work on the continuous changes in organizational operations (tasks) as opposed to the quantum organizational changes of the OD practice.
 - The board should be enlarged so that there are enough people to do the required work.
 - There could be an additional structure by appointment (does not require a change in Constitution) of a Committee that works with the board (reports to?) that is comprised of a few NFA Presidents that would function as a liaison between the Board and the rest of the NFA

Presidents. This peer – to- peer structure can facilitate mentorship, understanding, awareness, support and strengthening among the NFAs

- If there are votes to be elicited between AGMs, there should be training sessions for GA delegates on voting and importantly understanding what they are voting on and its importance to the future of the organization – particularly when it comes to budgets and financial statements
- There should be a special effort made to help non- English speaking NFAs to understand what is being proposed for the vote.

Other information:

- Singapore has a high proportion of expats- all NGOs have to follow the rules of the Registry of Societies. Expats cannot belong to the Executive Committees of NGOs such as our NFA in Singapore – which is a difficulty because they do have volunteers for the positions but they are not allowed to serve.
- Singapore has student members and male members. Male Members have been teaching the incarcerated men in the NFA’s prison program
- Our Pakistani NFA has a new newsletter that Stacy will highlight in the Update

Next Meeting on Thursday, March 31, 2022 to discuss Prerequisite 9 as well as most effective manner in which the Steering committee can interact with external stakeholders who will be invited into the process.