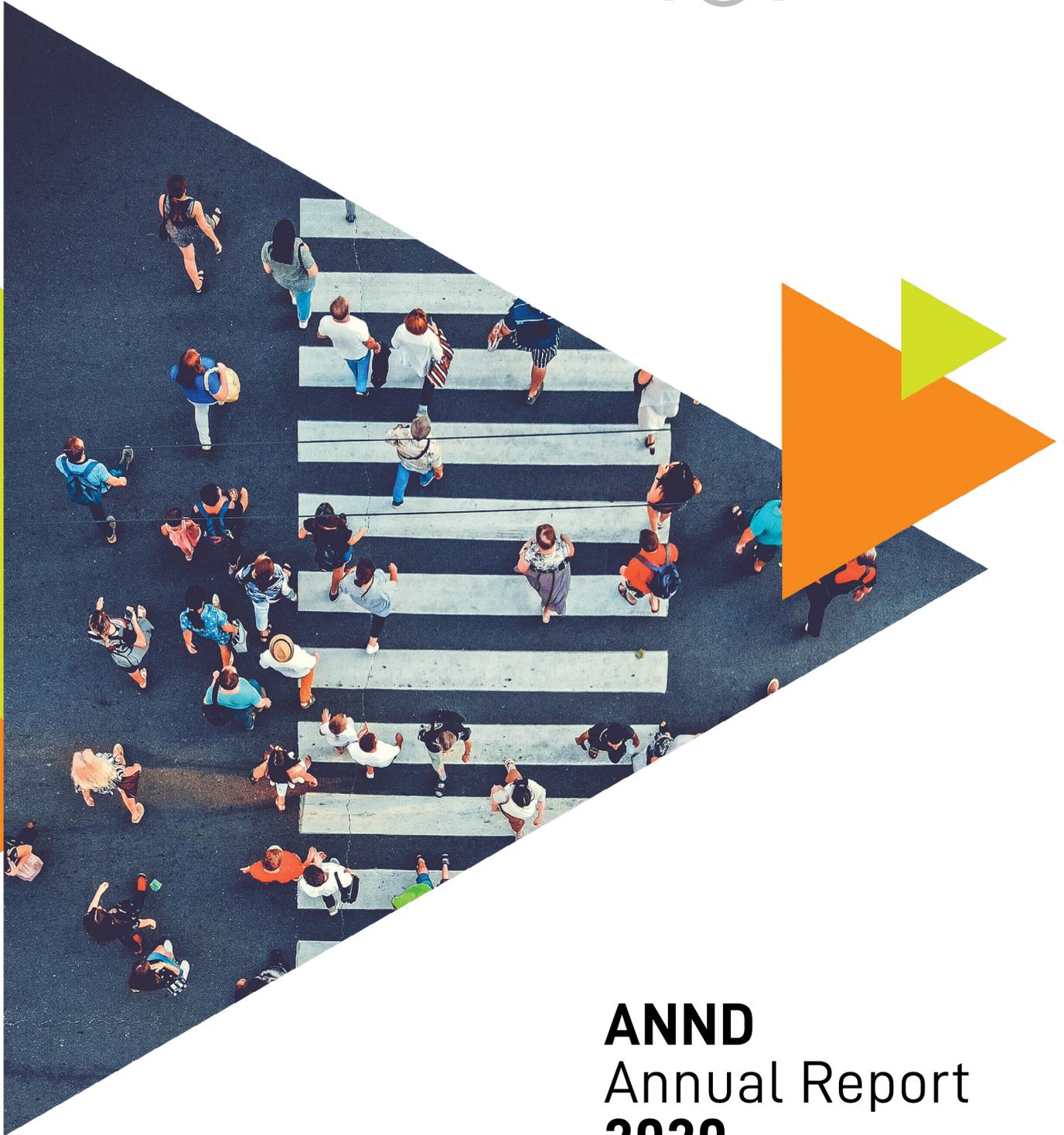


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Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية



ANND Annual Report 2020



ANND
Annual Report
2020



The Arab NGO Network for Development works in 12 Arab countries, with 9 national networks (with an extended membership of 250 CSOs from different backgrounds) and 23 NGO members.

P.O.Box: 4792/14 | Mazraa: 1105-2070 | Beirut, Lebanon
Tel: +961 1 319366 | Fax: +961 1 815636



Contents

Introduction	4
Strategic Goal One	6
Strategic Goal Two	12
Strategic Goal Three	19
Strategic Goal Four	26
Strategic Goal Five	32



► Introduction

Friends and colleagues,

The year 2020 began with some hope and positive indicators hinting at signs of change, with the second wave of the Arab Spring in Iraq, Sudan, Algeria, and Lebanon. Possibilities then were almost palpable and achievable. However, the year ended with one of the most elusive and complex challenges in modern human history.

The pandemic which began early in the new year spread rapidly with dangerous repercussions on humanity, which are not limited to health. It imposed new patterns of social distancing, distance learning, virtual communication, and avoidance of family social gatherings. Its economic, commercial, and political repercussions were at the same level as health, social, and environmental challenges.

It was an eventful year for the Arab region, not least of which was the dangerous surge in armed conflicts in Yemen, Syria, and Libya. Instability impacted the region as a whole and created gaps allowing external forces to intervene under the pretext of regional and international conflicts to impose their influence and compete over markets and resources. The region became an international arena of conflict between major poles, from the US and Europe to China and Russia, through Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Peoples' roles became marginal and their influence on events and developments was limited.

The Arab Mashreq faces an existential conflict from Iraq to Lebanon through Syria. Of course, the most complex issue remains the Palestinian question. Palestine has entered a new phase following normalization initiatives by Gulf countries: the UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain. It was in exchange for promises of protection from external challenges. The process has now reached Sudan, in exchange for its removal from the list of terrorist countries and aid to overcome the burden of wars, dictatorships. In Morocco, it was for receiving the upper hand in the conflict over Western Sahara. All these steps will lead to the liquidation of the Palestinians' right to establish their independent state in accordance with the decision of international legitimacy. It also came after the main sponsor of the peace process abandoned objectivity and impartiality, declaring full bias in favor of the Israeli occupation.

My country Lebanon, the smallest of the Arab countries and the most beloved by east and west due to its cultural, political, and social diversity over the decades, had played a major cultural role in the past. It was a haven for freedoms, an educational and health center, and a tourist and service destination. All that was destroyed along with its capabilities and role by an alien, exclusionary culture that does not know diversity, justice, or logic.



We bid farewell to a disastrous year that left us with high poverty rates in the Arab region exceeding 30% (75% in some countries) and unemployment in excess of 12%, up to 30% in some countries, exceeding 40% among youth, and also 40% with regard to disparity between women and men. Food challenges also prevail, as the region imports more than 75% of its food needs, in addition to the crisis in water, and natural and environmental resources.¹

Most of the countries in the region have had to borrow from IMF programs, raising the ratios of debt to national income to unprecedented rates. Additional burdens are expected, in addition to increased dependency and resorting to austerity measures without taking serious reform steps.

The repercussions of the crisis are expected to linger in the coming year (2021). However, it should be fateful if people can take the initiative to confront with vision, courage, and determination.

Despotism is collapsing in all the countries of the region, but the alternatives are not ready yet. Preparing alternatives is a more complex issue than merely establishing a vision and policy alternatives. The most important question, though, is who will carry this project for change and lead the transition to democratic systems defined by justice, equality, and welfare?

In its latest strategy (2020-2023), ANND adopted the idea that any project for change requires linking between the vision and alternative program, on one hand, and the ability to achieve it, on the other. The strategic link lies between knowledge, analysis, and proposing alternatives, on one side, and enhancing capacities, which include institutional building, defending public freedoms and the public sphere, networking, and cooperation, on the other.

Thus, ANND's strategy moves between developing the work of civil society through building its capabilities and deepening its understanding of development challenges and turning it into a political actor capable of bringing about the desired change for a better future of prosperity and progress.

It is a difficult and complex task, but not impossible. We have reached the end of a decade of revolutions and events that swept the region and stressed the desires of its people and their yearning for emancipation and liberation. We entered a decade of great transformations and there is no turning back thanks to firm determination, solid will, purpose, and renewed vision. There is much in this report to learn from, but more so of hope and promises for a better tomorrow.

1 Policy Brief: [The Impact of COVID-19 on the Arab Region An Opportunity to Build Back Better](#); ESCWA, JULY 2020,

► Strategic Goal One:

Build a critical mass of development actors and partners in the Arab region to become effective in development policies at national levels, (including those related to economic and social rights, trade union and professional demands, and CSO involvement in influencing social and economic policies, women’s empowerment, integrating PwDs, and defending minority rights), through influencing alternative policy proposals and raising awareness.

Expect to see

Members and partners are participating in the capacity building process to build their skills to engage with policy makers.

Expect to see

Members and partners are using selected channels to influence policy-making processes in their countries, including post conflict and post war countries.

Like to see

Selected members and partners have created a common alternative narrative for development and are starting to reach out to policy makers.

Love to see

Selected members and partners are engaging with policy makers in a constructive dialogue around alternative development policies, including in post conflict and post war countries.



1.1 Relevance of the work:

Countries in the region are facing crises of their own, either on the socio-economic, financial, security levels or even conflicts and/or wars. The enabling environment for civil society has continued to shrink in recent months, and organizations have had little space to engage and even reflect on certain matters affecting their countries and region. Conflicts and wars have had their share too; until this day, Syrian, Yemeni, Iraqi and Libyan organizations are pushed back in their own countries and are equipped with very limited capacities and resources. As such, the needs differ in the region. On one hand, there is increase need of capacity building to strengthen basic skills and knowledge and enrich CSOs resources to allow them a better engagement with policy makers; and on the other hand, a targeted capacity building linked to specific themes and processes such as development, human rights and Agenda 2030 would promote the structured engagement of CSOs in many processes and channels relating to advocacy on all levels.

ANND is currently facing multiple challenges and is gathering efforts to overcome and adapt to a wide range of considerations while coordinating its engagement in the region. As reflected in the four-year strategy recently adopted at ANND (2020-2023), the network will reorganize its capacity building activities in a regional structure to provide a methodological and sustainable model concerning development policies, which will be an added value in the field of capacity development in the Arab Region. More importantly, the model will prioritize engagement on national levels, and equip members and partners located in as many countries as possible with solid and pertinent capacities. The new approach will be also based on a systematic process characterized by centralized planning, follow-up and decentralized implementation.

1.2 Activities implemented in 2020



ANND Study Week



National Dialogue Sessions



Trainings

ANND Study Week on Macroeconomic, Trade, Investment and Development policies

From 2 to 21 December 2020, ANND and in co-operation with the Third World Network organized the Annual Study Week program on macroeconomic, trade, investment and development policies. This year the study week lasted for 3 weeks and included 13 sessions with the participation of 13 prominent experts from international organizations with long expertise in macro-economic policies and development. The experts came from the Third World Network, UN agencies, Social Watch the Reflection Group for Sustainable Development. The sessions were moderated by participants of previous study week, in an attempt to create links between the study alumni. The program benefited to 14 participants from 6 countries.

Co-organisation of Anabtaoui training with Arab Institute for Human Rights:

The Arab Institute for Human Rights, in partnership with ANND organized the annual regional training course in the field of human rights “Anabtawi 30”, entitled “Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals: The Right to Health as a Model”. The course was organized remotely in its first and second stages. The first phase was held between 20/06/2020 - 26/07/2020, with 100 participants, and the second phase was held between 12/6/2020 and 12/17/2020 with 35 participants. ANND contributed substantially to the training course and gave 7 sessions during the week on Sustainable Development concepts, approaches and goals, on specific challenges in the region, on advocacy challenges and on the implications of COVID-19 on social and economic rights.



Regional Validation Session for the toolkit on Agenda 2030:

ANND is in the process of developing a comprehensive toolkit on Agenda 2030, advocacy and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and initiate a series of training activities and a training of trainers on the regional level. These training activities are expected to take place in 2021; in preparation for these activities, ANND organized on 19 and 20 November 2020 a Regional Validation Session Event to introduce, discuss and validate with civil society representatives from the Arab countries the toolkit on Agenda 2030 and SDGs, as well as the two guides on advocacy and human rights.

National Multi Stakeholder dialogues on Agenda 2030 implementation:

The first was convened virtually by the Phenix Center for Economic Studies in Jordan, on September 15 2020, and attended by 25 participants representing a wide spectrum of government ministries & institutions, as well several NGOs, Academia, human rights national committee members, and other related stakeholders.

The second was organized on the July 7th, by the Espace Associative in Morocco. The event was held through Zoom platform and live streamed on Espace Associatif Facebook page. The session had several panelists discussing key development challenges in Morocco, including gender climate justice and economic policies, and was attended by the representative of the Department of Environment, Ministry of Energy, Minerals and the Environment and the Director of Women, Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality and Family.

Support to Local Capacity Building Initiatives in Lebanon:

ANND contributed to a training organized by Baladi-Cap for a Network of Lebanese Civil Society interested in Environmental Priorities. This training allowed ANND to share its experience in networking and the lessons learned after 20 of networking with local networks that lack this experience.

ANND contributes to an online training curriculum developed by the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA), and ANND executive director prepares a 45 min course that is included in the online course.

ANND contributes to the Permanent Peace Movement (PPM) training curriculum with a course on Human Security from Socio-Economic Perspective.

1.3 Progress towards results and major impediments:

ANND members and partners showed interest and engagement through their participation in the different the capacity building activities, through identification of the participants and discussion of the material and providing feedback. Around 45 participants attended the TOT Validation sessions on behalf of Arab CSOs. Moreover, some participants provided very good and critical feedback on the material discussed, which was successfully implemented by the experts and reflected in the training toolkit. Some participants were asking about next similar sessions and engagement in the development of the toolkit to be well prepared for the ToT. They were very eager in learning more about development and its different concepts, as well as their link with advocacy and Human Rights.

Members and partners used the Agenda 2030 channel to influence policy-making processes in their countries particularly in Morocco and Jordan, were ANND members along with their partners were engaged with national policy makers during an interactive exchange on economic and development policies, which constitute major issues for the country.

Through the Anabtawi training, members and partners were able to develop their alternative narrative for development incorporating human rights principles, concepts and approaches in development, in particular the right to health, in the advocacy campaigns for the issues of the Arab region. The study week contributed to the development of a narrative that dissects the implication of trade and investment policies of development.

Selected members and partners were engaged with policy makers in a constructive dialogue around alternative development policies including Espace Associative that actively participated in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) session for Morocco during the virtual High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2020.

Members' Role



Focal Points



**Identifying participants
for trainings/ capacity
building**



**Information
Dissemination**



Experience Sharing

1.4 Success stories and lessons learned

ANND showed flexibility and capacity to adapt to the challenges, by shifting the programs online and developing an e-learning program using new tools like the Thinkific.

ANND Study Week program was implemented online; that accommodated in total 13 sessions, with 13 experts. As in all ANND Study Week programs, experts were from the Third World Network but as well from the extended ANND networks (Eurodad, Reflection Group, etc.) As organized online and for around an hour and a half session, their participation to the program was easier. This allowed the program to be more comprehensive and interesting for the participants. In their evaluation, selection of experts and expertise were highly appreciated.

The scheduled and prompt online meetings have allowed more and structured exchange between organizations, including exchanges on best practices and new tools and ways for managing work and activities in times of crisis. This has indeed strengthened some main capacities of member and partner organizations, such as technical, administrative and organizational.

Lessons Learned

- Necessity to enhance and improve the online capacities and skills of staff and members.
- Possibility to adapt hybrid approaches in the future in capacity building activities.

► Strategic Goal Two:

Community organizations are successfully influencing alternative regional and international development policies by working together and collaborating to put pressure on international and regional institutions

Expect to see

Members and partners are actively participating in the creation of the action plan to put pressure on international and regional institutions.

Expect to see

Members and partners are engaging in dialogues with regional and international institutions around alternative development policies.

Like to see

Members and partners are using the tools and methods from the action plan in their interactions with World Bank, IMF, EU, EIB, and EBRD.

Love to see

The World Bank, IMF, EU, EIB, and EBRD representatives in the region are taking into consideration the opinion of ANND members in their recommendations to the governments in the region.

2.1 Relevance of the work:

Civil society plays a crucial role in achieving sustainable development. Since Busan Partnership, the role of civil society together with the need for inclusive approach within development cooperation has been recognized. Several regional and international processes have enabled spaces for civil society engagement although there are limitations in terms of inclusiveness and efficiency. ANND members and partners actively engage in dialogues with regional and international institutions, considering them as advocacy and accountability tools. ANND aims at bringing region-specific development needs and priorities in these channels of advocacy and enhancing the role of civil society in alternative development policy formulation and implementation.

1.2 Activities implemented in 2020



CC Meetings



Majalat Thematic Workshops



HLPF Side events and VNRs



Side Event on Role of IFIs



Global Sessions on Private Sector



UN Human Rights Monitoring (UPR)



During the first six months of 2020, ANND members and partners actively engaged in dialogue with European Union and at the United Nations level. All activities were organized virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Co-organization of MAJALAT project Thematic Workshops

Accordingly, on May 20th, a webinar under the Economic Development and Social Dialogue theme (ECOSOC) of the [MAJALAT project](#) was organized. The webinar focused on the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on the global economy, and particularly on the socio-economic rights of the region's population, and the response of the European Union to the coronavirus pandemic in the Southern Neighborhood countries. As an outcome of the event, a set of recommendations related to establishing new paradigms in economic development and social protection were sent to the EU, including one calling for involving local civil society actors in the determination of economic support and crisis response packages.

The second webinar under the theme in 2020 was organized by ANND on 31 August, consisting of a capacity-building session tailored for civil society organizations looking to deepen their knowledge on the trade and investment policies of the EU towards its Southern Neighborhood Countries (SNCs), and the mechanisms involved in decision making on these policies.

The third in the series of webinars was organized on October 7 2020, and consisted of a discussion moderated by ANND between civil society and EU officials, on issues of trade, investment, and regional policy priorities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. EU officials included four officials from DG Near, and two members of EU delegations in Tunisia and Lebanon.

Later in fall 2020, days before the South Seminar, ANND organized the ECOSOC thematic workshop, which was divided into two sessions on November 23 and 25. The first session was highlighted by a presentation from the thematic expert on the status of EU policies after the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a discussion about recommendations among CSO representatives. The second session included brief interventions from EU officials and interactions between them and CSO representatives on recommendations discussed in the first session.

Co-organization of MAJALAT Southern Neighborhood Policy Seminar

The Neighborhood South Policy Seminar of the Majalat project was organized at the end of November 2020, and included 3 keynote events held over the two days November 30 and December 1st.

The three panels covered the socio-economic and political context in the region, and the future priorities and policies of the EU concerning the neighboring south. The panelists in the first two

events consisted of researchers and intellectuals working on the region, while the third panel consisted of EU officials.

Engagement in processes on private sector's role in development:

ANND partners and members were engaged in Global and Regional processes on private sector role using the findings of the Arab Watch Report: ANND members contributed to the discussion in the Policy Forum for Development, in the ESCWA workshop on Private Sector and in a number of IMF consultations organized in 2020 for the region. All of these fora allowed an in-depth discussion around the role of the private sector, its response to the sanitary crisis and its role in development in general. ANND interventions were based on the discussions and the research findings of the Arab Watch

Engagement in High Level Political Forum “Transformative Pathways in the Arab Region”

On July 9th, ANND organized a virtual side event at HLPF 2020, entitled Transformative pathways in the Arab Region. Together with civil society panelists from Syria, Egypt and Jordan, the UN ESCWA Chief of 2030 Agenda Unit; during the session main findings of the Arab Sustainable Development Report 2020 were presented as well as key development challenges.

ANND coordinated with Syria and Morocco towards the High-Level Policy Forum at United Nations level. Acting as the regional focal point for coordinating with UN Major Groups, ANND supported the engagement of civil society at Voluntary National Review presentations of the two countries. ANND's Syrian partner delivered [a 2-minute oral intervention](#), posing questions directly to the Syrian official delegation.

Engagement with the IMF/World Bank

ANND organized a virtual side event during the CSPF of the annual meeting of the IMF and WB. The event was entitled «The Role of IFIs in a World of Intersecting Conflicts and Crises in the Middle East and North Africa» and took place on 5 October 2020. The event assessed IFIs' policies in contexts of crises and conflicts, mainly in the MENA Region, by examining the existing policies and their impact on inequality. It looked into countries with ongoing IMF negotiations, in light of country specific contexts, such as the economic failure and the inability to negotiate in Lebanon, and the case of emergency lending in Egypt. Finally, it assessed IMF policies on a regional level as they relate to the effect of the pandemic. The session was organized with international organizations including: Oxfam, the Center for Economic and Social Rights, Social Watch, the third World Network, the Global Policy Forum, Society for International Development as well as national organizations: The Phoenix center of Economics & Informatics studies in Jordan, the Syrian Center for Policy Studies and the Arab Watch Coalition.

The IMF organized a first-time consultation on October 29, 2020 with the Executive Directors (ED) that cover the MENA region to get the views of civil society and provide them with an opportunity to ask questions to officials. ANND members and partners from the region played a key role in this consultation, 8 out of 14 consulted were from ANND staff, members and partners. The consultation session revolved on the economic situation in the region within the context of COVID-19 and what the fund is doing in terms of supporting the efforts being taken by countries to fight the pandemic.

Engagement concerning the Lebanon Program:

Lebanon is negotiating a program with IMF after the country failed to pay due Eurobonds which pushed the authorities to request the IMF's assistance. The negotiation process between the Lebanese government and the IMF started in May and more than 16 meetings negotiations took place so far. The civil society in Lebanon is concerned of the social implications of the IMF program, thus ANND developed an article on the implications of the IMF policies with cases from other Arab experiences [Lebanon under the tutelage of the International Monetary Fund? Cases from other Arab countries](#) and another entitled ["An IMF bailout for Lebanon can make things worse"](#) that was published in the Bretton Wood Project Bulletin.

Moreover, and together with Lebanon Support, ANND conducted a social media advocacy campaign entitled #DebunkingIMF. The campaign featured videos and experiences from different countries. ANND was able to reach out to colleagues from Pakistan, Argentina, Jordan, and other colleagues who work on a global level to share the experience of their countries with IMF. Each of these videos focused on a specific aspect (impact on economic growth, impact on health services, impact on women and gender relations, etc.) in order to explain what to expect from an IMF package that would be dedicated to save Lebanon from the crisis. The short animated videos were shared widely and received a lot of interaction on social media.

ANND joined and played an important role the creation and the work of social protection "collective" which includes more than 20 organizations and experts in the field of social protection that developed a policy paper [here](#), including civil society recommendations.

ANND convened 2 virtual meetings for the collective the first was the IMF mission chief and the second the WB senior staff on social protection, the meetings allowed the collective to present their policy protection and to position themselves as a counterpart on the policy discussion. The officials of the WB and IMF showed interest in pursuing this dialogue with collective as long as the negotiations are taking place.

Holding the Coordination Committee Meeting

On 28 June 2019, ANND held its coordination committee meeting in Amman, Jordan. This meeting included a SWOT exercise and discussed and adopted ANND strategic objectives for 2020-2024. Based on the feedback of this meeting, the strategic planning consultant was able to finalize ANND strategy and to submit to the general assembly. The general assembly was held on 20 February 2020 in Beirut, it reviewed and approved the narrative, financial and audit reports of ANND, it discussed and provided feedback to the Anti-Corruption and Protection Policies, it approved the new strategy and M&E framework and nominated the new coordination committee.

During the COVID-19 crisis, ANND coordination committee met virtually in a more frequent manner than during normal times so that the members are updated on the situation and the response in their different countries and on the role of the civil society.

On 15 December 2020, ANND coordination committee met virtually and reviewed the progress on ANND programs and financial situation and agreed to hold a virtual general assembly on February 2021 to discuss the situation in the region, exchange about the implications on civil society organizations in different countries and discuss the progress on ANND strategic interventions and ways forward.

2.3 Progress towards results and major impediments

Members and partners are actively participating in the creation of the action plan to put pressure on international and regional institutions, as ANND organized one side event at HLPF to present an overview of the region-specific development challenges. Representatives from two countries of the region that have their Voluntary National Review, namely from Syria and Morocco participated to the HLPF process. In addition, two spotlight reports following multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions were developed.

In addition, the main findings of the Arab Sustainable Development Report 2020 as well as key development challenges were presented during the session, engaging members and partners in dialogues with relevant regional and international institutions about alternative development policies.

With regard to the consultations organized by IMF in the region, 8 out of 14 were among ANND staff, members and partners. This shows that representatives from the World Bank, IMF, EU, EIB, and EBRD in the region are taking into consideration the opinion of ANND members in their recommendations to the governments in the region.

Members' Role



***Voice of National
Context***



Panelists- Experts



***Consulted by Global
Actors***

8 out 14
participants in first
time event IMF
MENA regional
consultations with
ED were among
ANND staff, mebers
and partners

2.4 Success stories and lessons learned

Although ANND considered virtual space discussions as the alternative amid COVID-19, to enhance interaction between ANND's members, partners and officials where relevant, many of the limited mechanisms of dialogue within international institutions became further challenged due to lack of direct, in person participation. For instance, during HLPF, Morocco was not given floor as the official delegation opted for written questions only, restricting active advocacy opportunity. This requires ANND and its members and partners to call for enhancing participatory virtual mechanisms through clear modalities and technical support.

► Strategic Goal Three:

ANND produces knowledge that proposes policy alternatives and serve tasks related to advocacy, awareness-raising, and communication with parties concerned with economic, social, and cultural policies in the Arab region.

Expect to see

ANND is producing knowledge that is proposing alternative development policies.

Expect to see

ANND members and partners, as well as extended development actors including CSOs, academia, media and trade unions in the Arab region have access to the knowledge produced by ANND.

Like to see

ANND members and partners, as well as extended development actors including CSOs, academia, media and trade unions in the Arab region are referring the knowledge produced in research and policy dialogues.

Love to see

Authorities and policy makers are taking into consideration the policy recommendations developed by ANND.

3.1 Relevance of the work:

The Arab region has an active and lively civil society with accumulated advocacy experiences in pushing for human rights-based policy alternatives. On the other hand, researchers and research organizations have been producing localized and cutting-edge analysis in and on the region. However, links between evidence-based research and civil society advocacy efforts still need to be strengthened in order to achieve a greater policy impact. Those links become more important in times of transitions or crisis including wars, conflicts and COVID-19, since such situations require fast, yet scientifically accurate expertise.

Accordingly, ANND continue to facilitate institutionalized and participatory processes for knowledge production in order to propose alternative development policies. The thematic focus for 2020-2021 is on private sector accountability given the increased role of the private sector in development and the need to ensure that this role is respecting human rights and contributing to development. Moreover, ANND is continuing its work on assessing the root causes of inequalities and understanding the links between those inequalities and the ongoing conflicts devastating the region. Lastly, within its broader approach to contribute to a development alternative, ANND is complementing its work on the pillars of development paradigm by delving into the culture component. The network aims to see ANND members and partners, as well as extended development actors including CSOs, academia, media and trade unions in the Arab region have access to the knowledge produced and are referring to the knowledge produced in research and policy dialogues.

3.2 Activities implemented in 2020



Arab Watch Report



PPPs Manual



***Training Curriculum
on Agenda 2030
HR+advocacy***



***National Spotlight
and UPR reports***



***Regional Paper on
ODA (CPDE)***



***Conflict and
Inequalities paper***

Arab Watch Report

Every two-years ANND produces the Arab Watch report which is a major research process involving a group of researchers, academic and activist and including a research component, a dialogue and advocacy efforts. The 2021 report will focus on private sector accountability.

In 2020, the process was launched by identifying the group of researchers that will engage in the work, developing and agreeing on the main concepts and the key messages and launching the research process at different national levels. The report will have different objectives: mapping the businesses (by sector, size and contribution to development) in the Arab region, deconstructing the alternative economic narrative to the mainstream narrative on the role of private sector in development and proposing policy alternatives to holding the private sector more accountable.

Manual on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Within the same interest in holding the business accountable, the manual is addressed to civil society actors to understand PPPs and contribute to policy discussion when a new PPP law is being discussed or to be able to assess the different PPP in their countries from a development and human rights perspective.

Paper on Conflict and Inequalities

A series of virtual seminars/panels are being held and entitled “MENA Panel on Inequality and Conflict”. These have a double objective: first, to convene the conversation on inequality and conflict in the region and provide a first step to forge a wider network around the issue; second, to produce knowledge materials and support the development addressing the linkages between conflict and inequalities in the region and illustrate it with country examples. The series of panels will be completed with a final report documenting the discussions in the virtual panels. This outcome report will be integrated to the IFI-inequality and conflict paper developed in parallel processes.

Regional Paper: Promoting debate on culture as a vector of democratization

ANND prepared a preliminary plan for the study/regional paper entitled “Culture as a Vector of Democratization in the Arab region” and led bilateral meetings over skype with 10 experts from members and partners from the region to discuss the topic and consult them on the themes to tackle and profile of researchers fit for developing this work. These consultations helped the expert of ANND in developing a concept note which included solid background from the world and region, cultural issues to be addressed, and the detailed plan for the study.

The study will include one main research paper on the regional level, and two case studies, one from Lebanon and another from Morocco. Three main researchers from Syria, Egypt and Tunisia will contribute to the development of the main research paper, and one Lebanese and one Moroccan researcher will work on the case studies individually. The expert and policy advisor at ANND will be responsible for compiling the work completed by the six researchers and producing a draft of the complete study by December 2020.

Toolkit: guide to advocacy and SDGs

In light of the Safir project, ANND will be training 21 CSOs from Arab countries on methods and tools for advocacy and SDGs. Under the UNDEF project, ANND will also

provide training to 15 CSOs on Agenda 2030 and SDGs. As such, ANND started drafting a full and comprehensive training kit on rights-based development and SDGs. This toolkit is intended for trainers who want to organize or implement workshops enabling participants to have a more in-depth critical understanding of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs and to enhance the possibility of using them in their field of work. Three experts are currently developing the training material, which will be put together before the end of the year.

UPR Lebanon:

Since the end of 2019, ANND has led the work of a coalition of national CSOs in light of Lebanon's third cycle UPR review, now scheduled to take place in Geneva in March 2021. ANND has coordinated the development of 11 joint and individual reports/submissions, which were successfully submitted to the OHCHR in early July. The reports specifically tackled human rights issues of women, children, people with disability, refugees, LGBT, in addition socio-economic, civic and political and environmental rights in Lebanon. Before the end of 2020, ANND will compile these submissions and produce one comprehensive report on behalf of the national coalition, which will be launched on the national level, and serve as an advocacy tool for the delegation of CSOs which will attend the review of Lebanon's UPR next year in Geneva.

Case studies on the socio-economic implication of the COVID-19 pandemic:

In the frame of its work with the CSO partnership for development effectiveness (CPDE), ANND worked on 5 case studies on Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Yemen and Algeria on the socio-economic and human rights implications of the pandemic. The cases contributed to a global report developed by the CPDE on the topic and aimed at developing policy recommendations especially to development cooperation actors to ensure that their responses is based on human rights and social justice consideration.

3.3 Progress towards results and Impediments

ANND is producing knowledge that is proposing alternative development policies. For example, a background paper on private sector accountability that sets the main concepts and the key messages of the report was developed. In addition, a specialized research team including 20 researchers from 11 Arab countries was formed and given the opportunity to discuss and agree on the concepts and the messages. ANND members and partners are contributing to the development and discussion of the research, which increases their ownership and makes it more likely for them to use it when done. This will allow further access to the knowledge produced by ANND for members and partners, as well as extended development actors including CSOs, academia, media and trade unions in the Arab region. Material from the training curriculum are also being summarized and transformed in an e-learning manner, which will also help in accessibility and knowledge sharing. The communication strategy and the related tools (detailed below) will also allow more access to the knowledge produced.

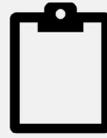
ANND members and partners, as well as extended development actors including CSOs, academia, media and trade unions in the Arab region are referring the knowledge produced in research and policy dialogues. Effectively, eleven reports on the different Human Rights situation and issues in Lebanon were submitted to the Human Rights Council. A coalition of around 50 organizations worked together to develop the reports and followed this process with four statements at critical moments in the country (Statement on the COVID-19 response, statement to UN Special Mandate holders after Beirut Blast, Statement to International NGOs after Beirut Blast). Authorities and policy makers are thus potentially taking into consideration the policy recommendations developed by ANND.

Two full and detailed concept on Study of Culture was developed and a total of 6 researchers were recruited to develop different research papers.

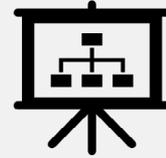
Members' Role



***Researchers and
their identification***



***Surveys/
consultations***



***Case studies/
Analysis***

3.4 Success Story

A coalition of about 50 NGOs in Lebanon coordinated a massive research work to report to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) on Human Rights situation in Lebanon in the context of the UPR process. The coalition builds on previous UPR coalition work ANND has led and proves the efficiency of coordination and information sharing done by ANND. On the other hand, these coalitions do not remain as ad hoc initiatives but support each other and collaborate when relevant as reflected by the number of statements developed raising human rights concerns in relation to COVID-19 and the Beirut explosion.

These statements, reflecting civil society concerns on economic and social rights and issues of transparency, corruption and accountability in Lebanon received feedback from relevant stakeholders. For instance, Special Rapporteurs issued a joint statement calling for independent, impartial international investigation in Lebanon as the civil society called for and European Commission invited ANND for dialogue around the needs after COVID-19. On the other hand, many international partners showed their solidarity and support, endorsing and disseminating these statements.

The coalition received many invitations to contribute through articles or interventions in events around those topics including by the Fédération des Français a l'étranger, article at German Platform and the intervention at BCCIC Panel Discussion on Lebanon.

► Strategic Goal Four:

ANND supports efforts to improve the civil society enabling environment in Arab countries through networking and providing channels for dialogue at the national, regional and international levels.

Expect to see

CSOs in the Arab region are conducting research and providing frequent updates on the civic space situation in their countries through the channels of communications/dialogues that will help better understand the overall civic space issues and advocate for an enabling environment.

Expect to see

CSOs in the Arab region are producing structured and comparative knowledge and analysis (reports, briefs, etc.) on the civic space situation in their countries.

Like to see

CSOs in the Arab countries are gathering and translating their efforts into common advocacy actions/initiatives on the regional and global level, in order to defend civic space.

Love to see

Networking among CSOs is strengthened on the national and regional levels, and linked to the global level, represented in joint and coordinated actions, that are taken into consideration by mandate holders.

4.1 Relevance of the work:

Recent events in the Arab region show that the process that started in 2011 has not concluded yet. Despite the descent of many countries into conflicts, or into authoritarianism once again, peoples of the region are showing that the Arab Spring is no longer to be considered an event, but that it rather marks the start of a new era of continuous struggle to be included in democratic process and achieve dignity. During the last year, countries which seemed to “have missed” the first wave of the Arab Spring, such as Sudan, Algeria, Iraq and Lebanon, witnessed unprecedented protests and movements, holding similar demands related to socio-economic justice, accountability and democracy.

These developments created a new civic space reality. The region was considered one of the most stable regions before the Arab Spring, with very limited spaces provided for civil society. Civil society was either co-opted by the state or repressed and excluded from participating in policy processes. Uprisings all across the Arab region unmasked a different reality, leaving conflicting impacts on civic space.

On the other hand, serious developments unfold on a global scale as the world battles with the coronavirus. The outcomes of the pandemic on economic and political systems in the long run are still unknown, but some trends are likely to leave an impact on civic space. As the states took the lead in fighting the spread of the virus, declaring a state of emergency, many authoritarian regimes further cracked down on individual freedoms under this pretext. The lockdown of cities and countries was sometimes an occasion for governments to exercise less accountability and transparency, and impose further restrictions on freedom of expression. This is especially relevant to the countries of the region, mainly those that were experiencing waves of protest. In this context, it is important to rethink the role of raising awareness and empowering people to take initiative, as a way to protect civic space. On the other hand, issues such as digital privacy and data protection came to the forefront amidst the coronavirus crisis. Finally, the Coronavirus pandemic has already reconfigured international cooperation, and will most probably leave its mark on aid systems and trends in the long run. It is expected that CSOs will be affected by the changing models of international cooperation and aid.

ANND's civic space monitor presents the latest updates related to civil society and civic space in the Arab region, analyzes them and locates related trends. This monitor is important to shed light on violations facing civil society, and to shed light on civil society voices in the region. It is an important advocacy tool as well to be used by ANND and its partners and members, and an important knowledge production that can inform CSO strategic planning. On the other hand, ANND engages with international partners such as CPDE and CIVICUS.

4.2 Activities implemented in 2020



**ANND Civic Space
Observatory
35 new articles on
national updates from
10 countries
10 national reports**



**Highlights in national,
regional and global
processes on enabling
environment and
CSO Role based on
monitoring**



**CIVICUS Monitor
Research Partner
17 updates
1 global report**

Regional Meeting

The regional meeting was held on February 18 and 19 (one day and a half) in Beirut with the participation of more than 60 experts and civil society representatives from the region. In the wake of the crucial developments that the region was going through, especially with many countries witnessing movements and transitions, ANND held this regional meeting to discuss the general challenges facing civil society and social movements in their transition towards democracy and sustainable development. The role of civil society and the shrinking civic space were at the core issues discussed during the forum. Updates and reports on civic space, which were still in the process of drafting, were presented to the audience. Country focal points presented their work, and exchanged it with each other to receive feedback. They benefited from the presence of experts from outside the project and from various countries and backgrounds. A closed meeting was held the next day with the focal points to delve more into the technicalities of the reports. Focal points discussed the main challenges they faced when writing the reports and in the fieldwork, the definitions of the various concepts they used as well as the guidelines that were sent to them and based on which they wrote their reports. The outcome of this working group will be of great importance in the planning of the next phase of the report and was already reflected in the proposal submitted for the renewal of the project.

Updating the Monitor with civic space news

Updates on the status of civic space and civil movements in the Arab countries are being posted regularly on the civic space microsite. These updates show the different transitions and developments that civic space and civil society are undergoing in Arab countries. For example, civic space updates in Algeria are detailing the transition process in the country, news on the Algerian uprising and the violations that CSOs and activists are facing. In Bahrain and Mauritania, on another hand, updates are illustrating how civil society is dealing with the shrinking civic space, the different initiatives taking place in such a difficult context, and documenting violations against freedom of expression and assembly. In Iraq and Lebanon, the monitor shows news on the ongoing protest movements happening in both countries in light of the political, social and economic transitions. Updates in Jordan and Egypt show public debates and updates related to legal reforms, and cover violations of rights and freedoms. Thus, these updates document and accompany the different trends we are witnessing in the region.

National Reports on Civic Space

These national reports provide an in-depth analysis of the status of civil society in their countries. They discuss the roots of the current movements (if existent) and give an overview of their evolvement within an enabling or restrictive environment. They discuss civic space within the legal and regulatory environment, discuss the support of regional and international organizations to CSOs and an open civic space as well as the pushback of CSOs against the shrinking trend, using strategies such as networking and creating coalitions. Reports on Lebanon, Iraq, Algeria and Sudan, analyzed the massive waves of protests and uprisings in these countries in depth, and how they evolved, in order to explain the general setting before delving into other aspects of the enabling environment. Reports on Jordan, Bahrain, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt also discussed previous social movements these countries witnessed, and the impact they left on civic space.

Regional report on Civic Space

The report starts by a brief theoretical discussion of the concepts related to civic space, such as civil society, social and popular movements, etc., especially as we witness new forms of organizing in the region. The report then classifies the forms of movements we witness today, in relation to the civic space they operate in. Building on the national reports, the regional report adopts a comparative approach as it discusses civil movements in Tunisia and Morocco, which operate in an environment of relative freedom, then moves into discussing the “second wave” of the Arab Spring in Algeria,

Lebanon, Iraq and Sudan, detailing the Sudanese model. Finally, the report extracts the main trends that characterize the shrinking civic space in the region (10 countries). Finally, also through a comparative approach, it presents the different trends in the legal frameworks that affect civic space in the region.

4.3 Progress towards results and Impediments

The civic space monitor now covers 10 countries: Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Bahrain, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania and Sudan. The monitor is consistently updated and covers news on civic space in the region. Ten national reports of high quality were produced, in addition to a regional report that formulated new conclusions and produced knowledge that can be useful to CSOs in the region. CSOs in the Arab region are conducting research and providing frequent updates on the civic space situation in their countries through the channels of communications/dialogues. All these reports and articles contribute to a better understanding of civic space issues in the region and help shed light on them. Moreover, the regional report includes main trends on a regional level, lessons learnt drawn from comparisons among national cases and a more longitudinal look into the civil society on a regional level. Thus, ANND is producing structured and comparative knowledge and analysis (reports, briefs, etc.) on the civic space situation in their countries.

The findings of such reports are usually used in advocacy spaces by ANND members and partners, or in processes related to civic space and human rights. However, the pandemic and the travel restrictions this year led to the cancellation of many important events, or to the use of online conferencing. This change in the meetings format, as well as the reduction of space available for CSOs has affected their ability to engage and participate in advocacy. The civic space program by ANND has nonetheless created a network of activists and organizations that coordinate and work on civic space. ANND members and partners participate in national, regional and global channels, such as UPR processes, processes related to Agenda 2030, dialogues with multilaterals such as the EU, UN, etc., and network with international partners such as CIVICUS and CPDE, in order to defend the right to organize, participate, and create an environment conducive to civil work.

Members' Role



***Direct, immediate
alerts on violations***



***Report on national
context/ changes***



***Case studies/
Analysis***

4.4 Success Story/ Lessons Learned

The monitor was able to track transitions in the region, especially countries going through uprisings. It was able to document transitions in Lebanon, as well as the detailed developments in Algeria after the toppling of Bouteflika. The monitor proved a good tool to follow the civic space developments in the region, especially as it goes through fast and serious transitions, whether they are related to the uprisings or to the lockdown measures.

The Civic Space monitor has also previously served as a platform for shedding light on Sudan events during the uprising, and for publishing statements and petitions on violations against the right to assembly and freedom of expression.

► Strategic Goal Five:

Develop ANND’s institutional capacity in coordination, communication, and sustainability

Expect to see

Policies and tools are developed at the institutional level to promote knowledge and information sharing.

Expect to see

Members, partners and staff are effectively using the newly developed policies and tools.

Like to see

ANND's members, partners and staff can exchange information, knowledge and experience systematically.

Love to see

Communication between civil society organizations is promoted at the national, regional, as well as international levels, through joint and coordinated actions.

5.1 Relevance of the work

An organizational assessment of ANND was conducted in 2018 and contributed to the strategic planning of ANND in 2019. The findings of the assessment were: “we consider that ANND is a strong, well established, influential organization not only within the MENA region but also outside of it. This stable position is due to many factors, including the stability on the leadership of the network which is a great asset for the network’s future work. At the same time, we see that for the network to remain in the cutting edge it is important to strengthen specific procedures and create new ones that will allow the network to learn, improve, innovate and keep adding value, in spite of the adverse and ever-changing conditions of the region and the sector.” Accordingly, ANND’s new strategy included a standalone goal on institutional capacities.

5.2 Activities implemented in 2020



M&E Framework



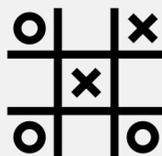
**Policies Code of
conduct Protection Anti
Corruption - Gender**



**New tools: Thinkific
New platform for
enhancing online
meetings/ trainings**



**Monthly Newsletter
Minimum 4 national
and regional articles**



**Communication
Strategy**



Visuals



Development of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and M&E Strategy

In June 2019, Coordination Committee members agreed on developing a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework and M&E strategy. Between November 2019 until date, ANND has organized series of workshops with the consultant towards the development of this strategy and the framework.

In February 2020, prior to COVID-19 restrictions, ANND organized a CC meeting, that adopted the strategy and the framework. In addition; the work on developing a code of conduct, protection, anti-corruption policies were finalized and adopted by the CC and GA in February 2020. Based on these policies implementation, at the level of the secretariat, a staff union has been formed by 3 staff (one from each department) and elected in July 2020.

Assessment of Communication Tools and Policies and Preparation of Communication Strategy

Between April and May 2020, ANND communications consultant conducted an evaluation on ANND's communication, interviewing relevant stakeholders for ANNDs work, including Secretariat staff, ANND members and partners in the region and globally as well as donors. The result of the evaluation was presented to the ANND team; that forms the basis of the communication strategy development within ANND, currently under progress.

ANND Monthly Newsletter

ANND is publishing regular monthly newsletters with an average of 4 articles per issue, members, partners and experts are contributing to diversify regionally and enrich the newsletter content. Newsletters were published regularly in August, September, October, November and December 2020.

Thinkific

ANND is operating on a new online learning platform called "Thinkific", members are actively using Thinkific to communicate efficiently while implementing projects involving knowledge sharing and training. Thinkific was also used during the ANND Study Week in 2020.

5.3 Progress towards results and Impediments

Policies and tools are being developed at the institutional level to promote knowledge and information sharing as ANND has now implemented new and comprehensive policies on anti-corruption, protection and a code of conduct targeting all staff, members and partners. The policies are published online, available to access of all relevant stakeholders.

The preparatory work on M&E strategy and communication strategy benefited all ANND program staff, developing their capacity on key aspects of the strategy, allowing their effective implementation and reporting.

Members, partners and staff are effectively using the newly developed policies and tools, the newsletter articles are checked by members and partners and provide regular updates about relevant topics for ANND in the region.

ANND's members, partners and staff can exchange information, knowledge and experience systematically through user-friendly platforms such as Thinkific, the newsletter, and other tools developed in the last year. The new website is also made to facilitate access to reports, updates, papers, knowledge, and general information about the region. Communication between civil society organizations is promoted at the national, regional, as well as international levels, through joint and coordinated actions.

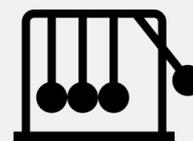
Members' Role



Contribute to communication materials



Adopt and disseminate policies



Disseminate communication outputs

5.4 Success Story/ Lessons Learned

Between December 2019 and July 2020, ANND's program team developed an extensive M&E framework, with multiple tools for monitoring change, organizing activities and reporting to internal and external partners. More importantly, the staff developed over the course of eight months an M&E mindset, and have started to conduct monthly meetings and workshops to either complete tools, edit others, and/or discuss changes and progress of the work completed at all levels. The outcome of these meetings have impacted the way we handle activities and the organization we put in place. Similarly, the process of developing the communication strategy by engaging members worked smoothly, members collaborated efficiently in the workshops held, they were able to perform key task throughout this process, like pointing out the networks challenges and weaknesses, identifying clearly stakeholders and their level of engagement, in addition they were able to develop the first product based on their findings which was the newly published website.

The team is showing positive feedback on the newly adopted plans, methods and tools but has not developed yet a systematic process of exchanging information and feedback. The exchange of information and feedback is still at the level of the activities and not a general assessment. A short time interval periodic template assessment can be implemented.



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