



JORDAN CIVIL SOCIETY PROGRAM

The Pre-Action Review (PAR)

A GUIDE FOR JORDANIAN CSOS ON HOW TO IMPROVE AND BUILD BETTER PROSPECTS FOR ADVOCACY INTERVENTIONS

'Without looking into the past, we wouldn't have been able to effectively design an effective intervention to confront threats to Jordan's Forests' survival'

n *Yahiya Khaled, Executive Director of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), describing its utilization of the Action Review processes*

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I. Guide Background

1. CSP Project on Advocacy

Initial research conducted by the USAID Jordan Civil Society Program on advocacy in Jordan revealed the need for more strategic interventions by CSOs to effect change at the policy, legal and social perceptions levels in a more sustained manner. In response, CSP developed its advocacy program to support Jordanian CSOs in implementing more strategic advocacy interventions which included comprehensive and consultative research on issues, identifying who had done what previously, why the issue had or had not moved, and then define a plan of action for going forward. Through its two-phased “After Action Review” (AAR) grants program, three national-level CSOs piloted this approach from June 2010 through June 13.

Phase I grants extended financial and technical support to CSOs to conduct an After Action Review for their selected issue, and consisted resulted in the development of a three-year strategic advocacy plan based on the AAR process and outcomes. Consequently, Phase II of the program allowed organizations with fully-developed strategic plans to start implementing them. To that end, CSP facilitated the delivery of skills-building required for strategizing through the AAR process to partner CSOs, while paying careful attention to building the capacity of these partners' organizations to analyze and implement strategic planning. In the first phase, CSOs submitted a concept paper identifying an advocacy issue that relates to their core mission and outlined how they envision to plan, prepare, and conduct their After Action Review. The second phase included support for implementation of strategic advocacy projects that are grounded in that research and that are based on priorities identified by emerging coalitions in Phase I. Only organizations that successfully implemented Phase I were eligible to compete for Phase II of CSP Advocacy Grants Program.

2. Why this Guide?

During its five-year time frame, CSP introduced a range of tools and frameworks that have been utilized by its grantees, partners and larger segments of the CSO community engaged in the quest for social, political and economic transformation in Jordan. Such tools and frameworks went beyond the conceptualization of classical and contemporary theories which provide an overall perspective on what and how CSOs can initiate action in an effective way, to the practice of action while developing a localized thus responsive initiative.

While advocacy remained at the core of CSP's grant-making programs, consistent efforts have been made to increase the ability of CSOs to achieve their advocacy goals through capacity building, technical assistance, and the development of resources grounded in the Jordanian context. The shape of these efforts has extended over a range of formats, including the creation of Advocacy Resources which CSP partners have piloted, utilized, improved and utilized in pursuing their own advocacy goals.

The development of this guide came as a response to an examination of the effectiveness and viability of advocacy efforts carried out by Jordanian CSOs at large. For a variety of reasons, including internal and external, political and social, and perhaps structural and economical

reasons, characteristics of Jordanian CSO advocacy reveal ad-hoc efforts, responding to short-term challenges in the environment, paying less attention to planning and more often than not are donor-driven. Furthermore, fundamental deficits and challenges exist with regards to collective action, scarcity of thorough research, and the neglect of examining previous efforts in the same area or inadequate mapping of key interlocutors and players – past or present - who contributed or may contribute to advancing the related advocacy goals.

While acknowledging the challenges of engaging CSOs in Jordan to work together, learn from mutual experiences and identify solutions to the problems they face, CSP committed to bringing forth rich and unique processes which enhance the development of new innovative initiatives for rights-based advocacy. This guide presents an attempt to provide a simple step by step process to conduct what is better called the “Pre Action Review” (PAR) where CSOs conduct reviews, hold consultations and carry out analysis of the current situation and past actions on an issue prior to finalizing their advocacy strategies.

3. CSP's Pre-Action Review (PAR)

Civil society organizations around the world benefit from using a Pre-Action Review in order to identify lessons learned, what works and what does not in the given context and/or with regards to a given issue, in order to efficiently utilize available resources and improve the outcomes of their future interventions. In short, the PAR process "looks at the past in order to define the future" as a means of strategizing, planning, resourcing and facilitation.

THE PAR IS NOT EVALUATION

There is no room in this process to judge success or failure, nor does it intend to blame or shame groups or individuals for their previous conduct or performance. The process does not concern itself with traditional or trending norms of project or organizational evaluation where feedback is drawn to conclude success or failure.

4. Who May Use the Guide?

This guide is for civil society organizations and activists who undertake advocacy on an issue and recognize the need to review their previous efforts initiatives in a participatory approach with other organizations working on the same issue. The guide is not a training manual but rather a methodic explanation which provides organizations with information about conducting a Pre-Action Review, its main steps, elements and stages. It does not also include exercises related to advocacy and strategic planning as these are included in other specialized training manuals and could be used in conjunction with this guide. (Please refer to section 4. Tools and Resources of CSP's “Jordanian Civic Activist Toolkit”)

5. How this Guide is Organized?

The guide is divided into three sections: the first section includes the introduction, the second gives information and background on action reviews in general, definition, types and guiding principles while the third section deals with the framework of the review and its application.

II. Action Reviews in Brief

1. What is an AAR?

CSP based its original intervention on the After Action Review process and definitions of this vary slightly, mainly perhaps, with regards to the underlying purpose of the use of such a process and the sector or specialization of the organization(s) undertaking it. For instance, the USAID Technical Guidance on AAR defines it as being a *professional discussion of an event, that focuses on performance standards and enables development professionals and colleagues with similar or shared interests*.¹ Discussion being emphasized brings inline another definition which has been cited by a number of United Nations agencies, such as the UN Food and Agriculture Agency (FAO) which presents the AAR as being a *discussion of a project or an activity that enables individuals involved to learn*.² But those two aforementioned definitions, in addition to many more, agree that common features of any AAR are that it:

- § is a learning tool to those involved
- § examines what happened and why it happened
- § is a knowledge sharing tool
- § enables the capturing of lessons learned
- § is enshrined in an environment of openness
- § aims at improving future performance and operations
- § provides better understand significant activities and programs
- § inspires learning while doing

WHAT IS AAR?

The After Action Review is a "process" where discussion, thinking, examining, analysis and building conclusions with regards to past actions, take place on a collective level among peers in an organization, in a setup that brings together many organizations (coalition for instance) and or in sector or community of practice. The goal of the process, although varies from one setup to another, is about investigating change and better improve future potential relevant action.

¹ After Action Review, Technical Guidance, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 2006, found online: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadf360.pdf

² ABC of Knowledge Management, NHS National Library for Health, 2005, found online of FAO website: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/knowledge/docs/ABC_of_KM.pdf

2. Who Uses an Action Review?

The Action Review process is not exclusive to a certain discipline or sector and can be used by anyone. Initially used by the military to learn about its performance, the span of application of the After Action Review expanded tremendously to include corporate business, multi divisions in large companies or manufacturers, groups of NGOs on the local and international level. Much of the available description of the identity of actual users (participants) in the process puts significant importance on the involvement of leaders of organizations as its forceful drivers.

However, individuals who were part of implementing any action which is under review are integral part of planning and participating in the review itself. As the process also depends on a detailed account of what took place, and regardless of the role individuals played in the action of concern to an AAR, they should be consulted in the planning as well as participate fully in the process.

AAR CSO PARTICIPANTS

Executive Directors, Directors, Presidents or General Directors are typically the primary participants in an AAR process. This is not enough! Here is an illustrative list of individuals you need to bring on board:

- § Project Director or Coordinator
- § Field Coordinator(s)
- § Outreach, media, advocacy coordinators
- § Technical consultants
- § Counselors or Legal Advisers
- § Content Managers/Coordinators

3. When is an Action Review Held?

The widely shared assumption about timing of an AAR commonly refers to "after the end of activity, action or a project". Although this provides a literally accurate translation of the expression, it indeed does not provide a critical, thus practical and actual, representation on when reviews are held.

Businesses, for instance apply AAR procedure at the introduction of a new product line in a production facility or probably for the purpose of extracting good business practices at any time. The Harvard Business Review refers to an early account of applying AAR among businesses, when Shell Oil experimented with it in 1998, but also points out that *'Teams at such companies as Colgate-Palmolive, DTE Energy, Harley-Davidson, and J.M. Huber use these reviews to identify both best practices (which they want to spread) and mistakes (which they don't want to repeat)'*.³

AARs have also been used, on the international level, to review responses to disasters, emergencies and catastrophes (created either by man or nature). In May 2005, four leading international humanitarian organizations came together to jointly conduct an After Action Review of their humanitarian responses to the Tsunami Crisis which hit countries of South Asia in December 2004. CARE International, Catholic Relief Services, OXFAM GB and World Vision International explored how they could jointly improve their performance and quality of work by reflecting back on their activities and actions- provision of emergency aid and relief. (The full report on *'Joint After-Action Review of our Humanitarian Response to the Tsunami Crisis can be found online at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/FC4003368F0378D6C12570180039867F-care-tsu-17may.pdf>*)

³ *'Learning in the Thick of It'*, Marilyn Darling, Charles Parry, and Joseph Moore, Harvard Business Review, 2005- found online: <http://hbr.org/2005/07/learning-in-the-thick-of-it/ar/1>

In Jordan, few examples exist of civil society's application of an After Action Review outside of CSP's support. Examples include CSP grantee Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) working with the Jordan Green Building Council (GBC) to review actions made in the area of forestry protection in Jordan during the past 5 years. The review process kicked-off in 2010 at a time where there were no major threats or risks in the larger environment, but rather taking place at a time when initiatives –in such an area- were lacking or less effective and stimulating for the larger spectrum of environmental groups and organizations in the country.

4. The Advantages of Action Reviews

AARs are a learning process which aims at creating a common understanding of what has or has not occurred to generate a collective shared experience of how an action should be performed. This has several advantages to participating organizations:

- § The feedback generated from the review compares the actual output of a process with the projected outcome.
- § Through the AAR process, participants identify organizational and environmental strengths and weaknesses and together decide on how to improve future performance.
- § The shared learning experience improves task proficiency and promotes good relationship among the organizational members and others committed to the same issue.

5. Guiding Principles of AAR

As much as in any other methodic processes, the AAR is guided by principles which reflect its essence, its purpose and what it is used for. Those principles have emerged in previous sections in this guide when tackling the AAR definition, when it is used and by whom. The following principles should guide CSOs leaders and activists when considering the application of an Action Review, whether held before, during or after an advocacy intervention.

- § **Effective Leadership Engagement:** the process requires a commitment from organizations to the process through the presence and effective participation of leaders, heads of organizational units and board of directors. Participation of leaders reflects both commitment and willingness to future plans.
- § **Equal Participation of Team Members:** Individuals, who were part of implementing an action, are integral part of planning and conducting the AAR. The AAR process also depends on a detailed account of what took place. Therefore regardless of the role individuals played in the action of concern to an AAR, they should be consulted in the planning as well as participating fully in the process.
- § **Inclusion of Stakeholders:** AAR should engage stakeholders in the process on the basis of equality and mutual respect, with a view to strengthen capacities and ownership by enabling stakeholders' reflection and feedback on what took place. As there is often a competition among different stakeholders, careful attention should be made to give them equal importance throughout the process.

- § **Positive Environment for Feedback:** learning would not be achieved without motivation and self-interest in the process, as well as respect among all participants. Positive environment encourages participants to engage in the process with positive attitude and with a view to learn from the past in order to improve performance in future actions.

- § **Generating Shared Knowledge:** AAR should be about empowering people to know how things went based on accessing the shared experience of members of a team or organization or a group of organizations. Therefore, such knowledge should be transferred to a collective knowledge and shared on the organizational and the collective level. From a single organization, knowledge should become part of the organizational systematic learning experience in the ways by which it informs future plans and performances. For example, the findings about the best timing for activities should be used in the future activity planning; the findings about organization members strengths and weaknesses should influence future work division; etc.

III. How to Conduct a Pre Action Review

1. Determine which Type is Suitable to Your Work, Issue, Configuration or Coalition

Action Review, whether positioned to be before an action takes place or after, is not a rigid discipline or science. However, experience and the practice of applying them have rounded them in three major types:

- § Formal Review
- § Informal Review
- § Personal Review

The Formal Review, which will be the main feature discussed in later sections of this guide, is concerned with the type of review that takes place usually at the end of a project or activity and is characterized by requiring coordination and planning according to the scope, scale and purpose of the review

The Informal Review, are concerned with reviews of a smaller scale project or activity while requiring less planning and coordinating and may take place immediately at the conclusion of the activity and sometimes are conducted on-site.

The Personal Review, as its name implies is a planning utility that concerns individual reflection on the course of action or activities of the immediate past (or even the longest term activities).

Comparison of the Formal and Informal Reviews ⁴

Formal	Informal
Are facilitated by an objective outsider	Are conducted by those closest to the activity
Take more time	Take less time
Use more complex review techniques and tools	Use simple review techniques and tools
Are scheduled beforehand	Are conducted when needed
Are conducted in meetings or other “formal” settings	Are held at the event’s site
Require a more standard and thorough report	Can be covered by a less comprehensive report

⁴ Based on ‘After-Action Review Key Features’, After Action Review, Technical Guidance, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 2006.; Appendix B= found online: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadf360.pdf

2. The Four Fundamental Questions of an Action Review

A general framework for any review suggests four key questions and purposes when “looking at the past to define the future”:

In looking at the past...

- § What was supposed to happen represents the ideal situation in which an issue or problem should have been solved according to. This could have been manifested in a policy paper, project proposal or a declaration or convention.
- § What actually happened is a factual account of what took place with regards to the examined issue. Such an account is evidence-based and can't rely only on collective memory.
- § Why there were differences describe deviation and discrepancies with adequate reasoning. That is analysis of what was supposed to happen and what actually happened.
- § What has been learned refers to ability to document and make use of the above elements in the context of planning.

To define the future...⁵

- § What are the intended results and measures?
- § What are the challenges that can be anticipated?
- § What has been learned from similar situations?
- § What would bring success this time?

3. Preparations for the Review

3.1 The Issue

A departing point in starting for the preparations of the proposed review assumes that the topic (issue) is clear and defined. In the example above, international humanitarian organizations who came together to review their humanitarian aid response in the math of Tsunami crisis have had a commonly held issue which prompted their collective review. However, in some cases, particularly when broader issues are common among a group of organizations (or divisions of the same organization), there maybe a challenge in capturing a specific topic in which the review process should focus on. With regards to advocacy related projects and/or campaigns, a few determinants may help in setting the suitable topic to review, including factors such as:

- § There have been or are several organizations or coalitions working on the issue

⁵ Adopted from: Fact Sheet: After Action Reviews and the Action Review Cycle™ (ARC), Signet Research & Consulting, LLC., 2007- found online: <http://www.signetconsulting.com/downloads/AAR%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

- § The issue has been tackled for a certain time, preferably not less than a year
- § Variety of advocacy programs took place in relation to the issue such as behavioral change programs, policies, legislation, etc.
- § It deals with several problems that are interrelated
- § It targets a particular group (e.g. women, children, migrant workers, etc.)

3.2 Participants

In general, it is suggested that consultations be held in advance with organizations, groups and individuals who may be part of the review process. The consultation should be mainly

designed to scout out organizations' readiness, scope of potential involvement and types of expertise each organization may share during the review process.

CHECKLIST FOR IDENTIFYING PARTICIPANT ORGANIZATIONS IN ACTION REVIEW

- Ⓟ Organization has a mandate and objectives related to the issue
- Ⓟ Organization has programs and active involvement in advocating for the issue
- Ⓟ The organization has a reasonable level of active participation in networks, coalitions and/or forums.
- Ⓟ Organization has been advocating for the issue for at least one year
- Ⓟ Organization has the expertise needed for the review
- Ⓟ Organization is willing to share its experience openly
- Ⓟ Organization can allocate time and resources for the review

The underlying critical question here is who should lead the process? Or whose job is it to do the above? Is it a one organization with willingness, passion and resources which can initiate the call to the review? Or does there need to be a form of consultation among a group of organizations in the same field to initially agree on the need to conduct the review? Simply put, it might be the previous or the latter, or both of them! One organization may be in a better position and state of flexibility, or even aspiration, to throw a review proposal on the table of other organization, bringing forth intentions and draft plans to share with others. It could also be the case that several organizations have been alerted to a certain situation within the environment of their work and upon that initiated jointly the process.

3.3 Establishment of a Pre Review Framework

Establishing such a framework is similar to formulating a "contract" or a "mission statement" among those who will participate in the review process. It is a step that clarifies the nature and scope of the review process while, most importantly, forecasting the expectations from each participating member. The following points serve as guidelines for establishing the contract:

- § Discuss the Action Review goals to reach consensus on the main goals and objectives of the process.
- § Refine and fine-tune the issue of concern (usually will have to be narrowed down)
- § Specify the problems to be reviewed within the issue.
- § Define the methodology of the review
- § Set a time-table for the review
- § Allocate resources for each step of the review
- § Define responsibilities

REVIEW FOREVER? AT ANY COST?

Action Reviews participants may engage in review of as much issues they desire. But that comes with both cost and time allocation. With no rules on how long process last and how much will that cost, the best suggested approach is to take one topic at a time. Most organization conducting formal action reviews structure a two to three day workshops on average. That, however, assumes that partners on the table are equipped with all resources they need to embark on the discussion

3.4 Preparing for the Review

Here, the work starts on setting up the review process. Activities under preparation vary from taking care of logistical arrangements to coordination of participants expected input as well as the facilitation process. Common aspects of preparations for a review include:

- § **Decide on a facilitator of the process:** Ideally the facilitator should be an outsider in relation to the activities and actions that the Review focuses on; however, s/he must be an insider in relation to the the issue, with an experience in advocacy, the context and surrounding environment of the issue. This will als include defining the methodology and the discussion guide for the Action Review.
- § **Allocate, designate and provide reosurces and people to underatke the Action Review activities, including the desk review, analysis, logistical arrenagments and follow up.**
- § **Train the core team or organizations' representatives on the Review methodology as a process of learning and generate the guiding principles of the process to ensure that all participants in the process have grasped the essence of the review process.**
- § **Introduce the core team with the basic skills necessary for undertaking the Review. It is imperative to ensure that the core team has the needed skills to implement the Review. Training of participants or the core team on literature review analysis and facilitation of group discussions is necessary in case the organizations do not have such experience.**

- § **Identify means of communications among the team or participants in the Review process. This entails producing a plan for communication that details the ways by which the team is going to communicate with each other, e.g. weekly meeting, a group email, using shared folders, etc.**
- § **Decide on meetings' venues and needed facilities for the meeting, who will host the meeting of the team? And who will prepare for the meetings?**

4. Conducting the Review

4.1 Desk Review

- § **Review the available literature of reports/research on the selected issue: What are the main debatable matters around your research at the theoretical level?**
- § **Determine whether there is any connection between the research that has been conducted in the last 5-10 years and advocacy initiatives that took place at the same time: A literature review as part of the Action Review process aims to tell what has been done and give a sense of which areas need to be filled in. This requires looking at the strategies developed through research and organizations' reports and to analyze whether the outcomes of the research were applied on the practical level or there was a disconnection between research and activism in particular at the advocacy level with regards to the issue of concern.**
- § **What are the existing concepts and terminology used in describing (debating, discussing and presenting) the issue? What concepts you will be using and why?**
- § **Situate yourself within a theoretical debate and determine your position from the discussed terminology and concepts within the literature: What is your position viz-a-viz the previous debate? Identifying an organization's position within a theoretical debate requires looking at the broader debate internationally, and particularly into the context through which such a theory or conceptual debate took place. The debate would then be applied to the case of advocacy initiatives in order to determine whether the definition is applicable or not, and if it needs some modification. There need to be a justification for modifications made.**

What Literature?

You are not expected to review poetry and art critique in this context! Literature refers to available knowledge and thinking about the subject or issue of concern. It is expressed in many forms, including, but not limited to:

- § Quantitative, Qualitative or Applied Research studies.
- § Laws, Legislation or draft of both related to the issue.
- § Policy and position papers developed by NGOs, Think Tanks or public institutions.
- § Media reports which focused primarily on discussing or investigating the issue.

4.2 Program Inventory

This phase of the Action Review starts with creating a list of programs that will be reviewed. This should be done collaboratively between participants of the Issue-based AAR. One of the main criteria to select programs for review is that they aim at making a change whether of perceptions, policies, or legislation. Also, it should be precisely stated what are the initiatives/programs you are including in your inventory? Why, how did you select them?

Once programs and activities have been selected, they should be analyzed by asking these questions:

- § Were there any linkages between the literature review and the program you are reviewing? In answering this question a linkage is to be made between the existing research outcomes and programs implemented. It should be stated clearly whether these programs came as a response to challenges or needs suggested by activism research or there is a disconnection between research and programming in relation to your issue.**
- § The relation between national policies and strategies and the programs, have any of these programs responded to policy paper(s) and national strategies/ reports that were reviewed in your literature review (e.g. how the National strategy for family violence informed the implemented programs on this issue)**
- § How were these programs designed? Were they part of a strategic plan of the organization or separate independent projects? Have these programs been strategically planned? What approaches were used in the design of the strategic plan (e.g. Human Rights based Approach)?**
- § What were the advocacy elements that have been enclosed in these programs (e.g. Lobbying, coalitions building, and awareness-raising)?**
- § Were any of these programs monitored and evaluated? How effective was the monitoring and evaluation?**
- § Generally, what were the outcomes of these programs? Compare these programs to the initial objectives: what were the goals to be achieved? And what was achieved?**
- § What are the unidentified challenges in the programs?**
- § What were the missing opportunities?**
- § Were there any follow-up plans for these programs?**
- § Were these programs participatory? Were all stakeholders included from the design to implementation?**

4.3 Sociopolitical and Legal Analysis

Consider the political, social and cultural contexts surrounding advocacy initiative(s): What are the opportunities provided by and challenges imposed by the socio-political context? Also consider both the macro (larger, overarching situation) and micro level (more specific, community-based details).

- § How recent or forthcoming political decisions affect the ability of civil society to advocate for change.
- § The greatest obstacles and opportunities facing civil society in its efforts to be a positive force in these areas.
- § What are civil society strategies to overcome and solve these problems, and what do civil societies do to strengthen the participation and influence of groups in vulnerable environment as regards issues of importance to them?
- § What are the types of institutions either at the government, private sector or community level are best suited to supporting positive change?

The next section contains a review of an example on conducting the three above stages part of the Action review

Saving Jordan's Forests

Action Review by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN)

Between late 2010 and spring 2011, RSCN conducted an Action Review which aimed at examining the current and past state of interventions responding to reported severe levels of deterioration of Jordan's forestry caused by unsustainable land use activities. At the time, the RSCN –as a leading environmental organization- was aware of several actions taken by several environmental organizations to illuminate most or some of the threats impacting forests. But two fundamental elements were absent from the environmental agenda at that point in time:

- 1- an articulate, comprehensive and holistic account of those efforts and consequent state-of-affairs of their actions
- 2- a more thorough look into the past of advocacy actions and what have they managed to bring forth, what they haven't and why.

In conducting the Action Review, the RSCN applied a three-step process including holding 1) Desk Review, 2) Program Inventory and 3) Analysis. The following section provides a brief account of how RSCN approached the three steps.

1) Desk Review

Five types of literature have been reviewed by RSCN. Those are shown in this following table

Type of the Document	GoJ	NGOs Policy Papers	UN Doc	Research / Study	Media Clipping Reports
Number	1		1		45

Breakdown of Reviewed Media Clippings

Year	Legal	Policy	Political	Socio – Economic	Awareness
2005	7	3	3	6	3
2006	5	4	3	1	5
2007	4	3	4	1	4
2008	6	3	6	3	3
2009	9	2	6	2	5
2010	6	2	4	4	7
2011	10	8	11	7	7

For instance, the RSCN reviewed clipping reports relating to forests for the years between 2005 and 2011 published in major daily newspapers in both English and Arabic. They reviewed reports regarding legal, policy, political, socio-economic and awareness issues. That type of efforts is enormous, requiring dedicated staff to scan into hundreds of

newspaper editions both online and offline, assigning key words for search, tabulating clip, etc.

2) Program Inventory

The RSCN identified four advocacy campaigns, relevant to forest conservation, and which were conducted during the time span covered by its inventory- from 2005 to 2010. The inventory included providing a summary on each advocacy campaign like the following example:

Save Jordan Trees Campaign

The campaign Save Jordan's Trees was launched in January 2006. Forest land makes up less than 1% of Jordan. If the amendment had become permanent, that remaining 1% would have been under threat. To fight the amendment, the Advocacy Committee of RSCN organized a multi-faceted plan of action. First we created a working group within RSCN, including environmental, legal, research, advertising and marketing specialists then developed a work plan for the Save Jordan's Trees campaign that targeted different audiences in Jordan.

RSCN realized it needed to reach out beyond its own membership base. Thus, it invited all the environmental NGOs in Jordan to a meeting and 12 attended. We created a working committee, with RSCN taking the lead.

A media campaign publicized information about the negative environmental impacts of the amendment. Letters were sent out to all members of Parliament, a petition circulated and was posted online, and paid advertisements were placed in major newspapers. We noticed a dramatic increase in the number of signatures on the petitions after the advertisements went out.

The momentum continued to build, with over 6,000 signatures collected and the online petition circulation in blogs and chat rooms. Then the Senate met unexpectedly, and the amendment was refused.

Part of what made the campaign so powerful, was its detailed organization, and its success in bringing together all the interested parties. In February 2006, following an active media campaign and petition signature drive, the amendment was rejected by the Senate. Online at www.savejordantrees.org.

3) Analysis

The RSCN applied a methodology of its own choice to analyze the findings of Desk review and Program Inventory data. The methodology was based on following criteria:

A. Desk Review

§ Examine if literature represents the subject under discussion within a human rights approach.

§ Discuss if literature represents the subject under discussion objectively or subjectively, holistically or partially.

§ Identify gaps in the literature.

B. Program Inventory

§ Identify if the programs were based on a participatory approach.

§ Investigate diversity of tools used in these programs.

- § Identify gaps and weaknesses in the programs.
- § If the programs represent the subject under discussion from human rights perspectives.

4.4 Preparing the Report

The above three stages of desk review, analysis and program inventory should have presented questions which have been answered by means of discussion and deliberations throughout the Review process. These questions, together with answers and analysis, should be completed in a report. It is essential again to highlight that the main outcomes from the PAR is to define the conceptual debate about the issue under discussion, the position of the organizations and stakeholders involved in moving the issue forward along with the main guiding principles and the main priorities and strategic goals that should be addressed based on the review. Below is a suggested report outline which may be used, adapted or utilized entirely or in part.⁶

⁶ Adapted from `After Action Review`, Technical Guidance, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 2006; Appendix G- found online: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadf360.pdf

Suggested Outline of Report

Executive Summary

- § Background
- § successes
- § unexpected results
- § recommendations

I. Background

II. What did we set out to do?

III. What actually happened?

IV. What went well, and why?

V. Issues and Recommendations

- Issue
- Discussion
- Recommendation

(repeated for each finding, as needed)

VI. Unexpected Results

VII. Conclusions

Appendices (names of team members, budget/actual costs, evaluation comments management or administrative tools, products, other documents and documentation)

5. Following Up on the Results of the Review

As described in earlier sections of this guide, no matter how you call this action review (before, during or after), it is the fundamental departing point to look into the future while concluding a methodical review of what happened in the past or what is happening now.

What you should do with the results of the review may fall under one or more of the following:

- § Initiate responsive programming and activities with adequate planning, as an immediate potential follow up.
- § Build new strategy based on lessons learned throughout the process. Strategy-building based on the results of the review process tend to be informed, critical and adequately positioned to overcome problems of past action(s).
- § Correct and reform practices and procedures implemented in the area or field of activity pertaining to the examined action and issue.
- § Develop new tactics to confront emerging situations in the environment which the review process pointed out to have been a source of threat which impacted past action(s).
 - § Cultivate innovation and better performance among organization's team(s) and members of community of practice.

Where to go from here?

Participants in a pre-action review go home after conclusion of the process with a number of assets. Knowledge is good asset to build on, but that would not justify entirely going through such a process.

Leaders of organizations have the opportunity to create new forms of collective action which extend beyond a single organization capacities, by treating the results of the review process as if they were part of their organizations' mandate and commit to pursuing what they stipulate.

About this Guide

The *Pre Action Review Guide* presents an attempt to provide a simple step-by-step process to conduct what is better called the “Pre Action Review” (PAR) where CSOs conduct reviews, hold consultations and carry out analysis of the current situation and past actions on an issue prior to finalizing their advocacy strategies. The guide enshrines and builds on lively advocacy experiences from Jordan.

Pre Action Review Guide is presented as part of the *Jordanian Civic Activist Toolkit* which brings a rich selection of experiences, lessons learned, and resources from activists in a unique manual that highlights Jordanian civil society initiatives that took place between 2009 and 2013. These advocacy campaigns were led by both formal and informal groups as well as individual activists and coalitions of citizens aimed at protecting human rights, developing an inclusive society, advancing the rule of law, ensuring access to information, securing access to public places, among others. Common to all these initiatives is commitment to improving life in local communities and building Jordan as a prosperous nation with rule of law, freedoms, rights and diversity.

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