



Organizational Network Analysis

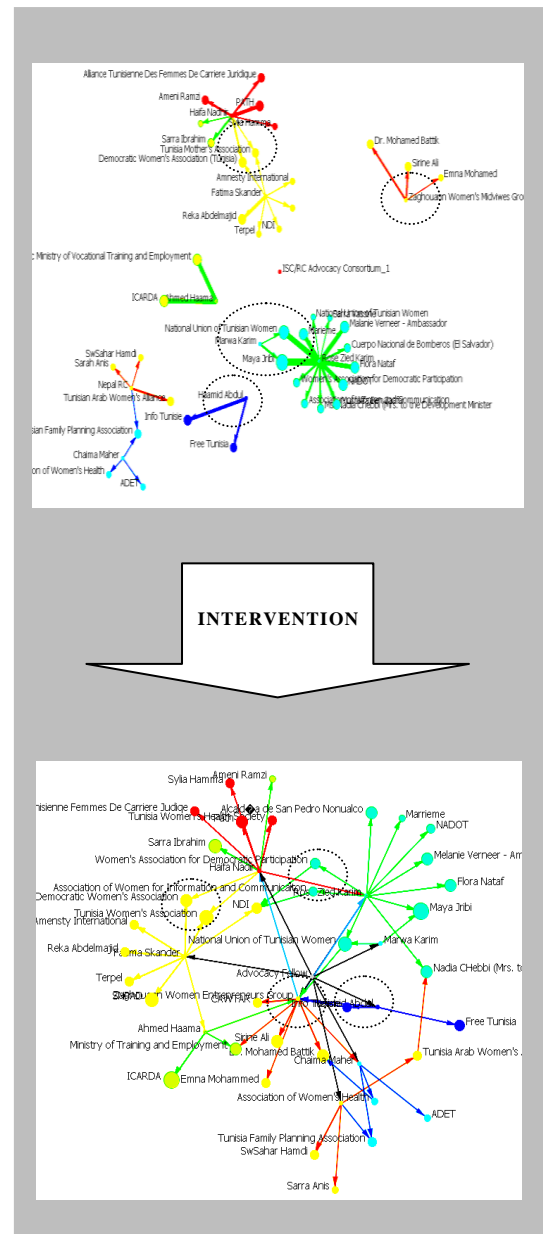
Root Change’s Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) methodology is a powerful tool for visualizing, monitoring and building understanding about patterns of collaboration and networking between individuals and organizations across complex systems. Our approach is adapted from tools that have been used extensively for strategic assessment and organizational strengthening purposes by Fortune 500 companies such as American Express, BP, IBM, McKinsey and Microsoft.

The challenges facing communities in developing countries today - HIV/AIDS, disaster prevention, natural resource management, engendering good governance practices - are complex. These challenges are embedded in environmental, social, organizational, and political contexts that exist outside the capacity and influence of any single organization, community, or individual. Tackling these challenges requires cooperation among diverse organizations, communities and individuals, each offering its own unique skills and resources.

In recent years, networks have assumed a place of prominence in both public and private sectors as the foremost means as organizing to solve complex challenges and achieve collective goals. International development policy-makers and practitioners are increasingly employing interventions that include developing networks of organizations. HIV/AIDS services are delivered to communities through referral networks, conservation activities are led by a blend of public and private actors, small farmer cooperatives form networks to ensure more cost effective input supply acquisition and market delivery, and advocacy coalitions are formed to promote good governance and fight corruption.

The proliferation of these networks for development has increased the need for diagnostics with the power to evaluate and increase the effectiveness, scalability and accountability of networks.

Root Change facilitators have applied ONA in over a dozen countries with global organizations such as the World Bank Institute, UNDP, Conservation International, and USAID, as well as numerous local NGOs and government institutions.



ONA is a diagnostic and planning tool that is useful in a range of situations. These include:

Project Design Root Change's ONA methodology is useful for gathering information about the various organizations already operating in a region or sector. In particular, ONA maps and metrics, combined with stakeholder dialogue, can help project designers to identify the following:

- Organizations and individuals that are already actively networking and may be particularly receptive to a project that incorporates a networking component.
- Organizations providing programmatic resources—funding, equipment, supplies, capacity development, or intellectual capital—to those working directly with individuals and communities.
- Gatekeeper or broker organizations that act as a bridge between different constituencies, and can assist a new initiative by facilitating dialogue between diverse groups.
- Varying patterns of interaction and structural sources of challenges in different regions or sectors that may influence strategic decisions around activities and funding.

Capacity Development and Systems Strengthening

ONA is useful for targeting capacity development interventions which strengthen individuals and the system's capacity to achieve goals:

- More effectively leverage assets - material, monetary, intellectual, social, political - from a wide and diverse set of actors to address both network members and system-wide challenges
- Strengthen organizations', communities', teams' or individuals' capacity to think systemically and engage "outside of the box" problem solving and action planning
- Seed a variety of small, experimental pilot interventions across the network, experimenting, innovating, and monitoring system shifts which favor the desired program, project, or network results
- More effectively coordinate around a set of challenges, managing both resource flows, as well as building the capacity of actors in more targeted, critical capacity areas which reflect direct beneficiaries and systems needs

Our Approach

A growing body of evidence suggests that network development often results in inefficient, underleveraged, and unsustainable networks. Driven by the explicit and implicit rules, cultures and behaviors of a few key actors, the system ends up adopting the dominant logics at the network and community levels which are not in-sync with the communities and individuals to which the network was intended to serve.

Root Change's unique approach to ONA begins bottom – up: discovering and illuminating indigenous, pre-existing networks - frequently not formally recognized, within which organizations, communities, and individuals are embedded and working to strategically strengthen and mobilize the networks.

1. **Network Value Chain Development** – A “Network Value Chain”, an integrated set of sub-networks which function together to meet the needs of a particular community, is developed through interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The network value chain is developed and vetted in facilitated, participatory session(s) with stakeholders from across the network.
2. **Participant Survey** – A network analysis survey tool is developed by facilitators, often in collaboration with participants. The survey includes questions about the flows of information, resources and collaboration that are important to the network. To maximize understanding and data quality, Root Change facilitators implement surveys with full groups of participants.

Monitoring and Evaluation ONA is useful for baseline and monitoring the development of networks of organizations over time:

- When applied at the beginning of an initiative, network analysis can provide useful baseline information about interactions in a nascent network or community of practice.
- Network maps and data can be used to begin stakeholder dialogues around network effectiveness and potential network strengthening interventions.
- ONA can also be used to track the development of a network over time.

Organizational Alignment

In addition to analyzing and monitoring networks of interaction between organizations, ONA can also be applied within an organization to analyze interactions between staff or work groups.

- Analyzing flows of information between work groups and country offices
- Highlighting the power of deliberate network weaving strategies for developing sustainable networks that support flows of information and resources between diverse stakeholders.

3. **Data Analysis** – The results of the survey are entered into network analysis software with inbuilt algorithms that generate network maps and metrics. Network maps (figure 2) position organizations or individuals according to their connections with others and network metrics act as a range of performance measurements that can be used to generate deeper understanding of interactions.
4. **Participatory Feedback** – Although network maps and metrics are useful in their own right, they are most powerful when used to facilitate discussions with network members. The questions generated by analyzing the ONA results can help to draw out valuable qualitative observations about a network that can form the basis of a plan to increase network effectiveness.

Figure 1: Network Map Example

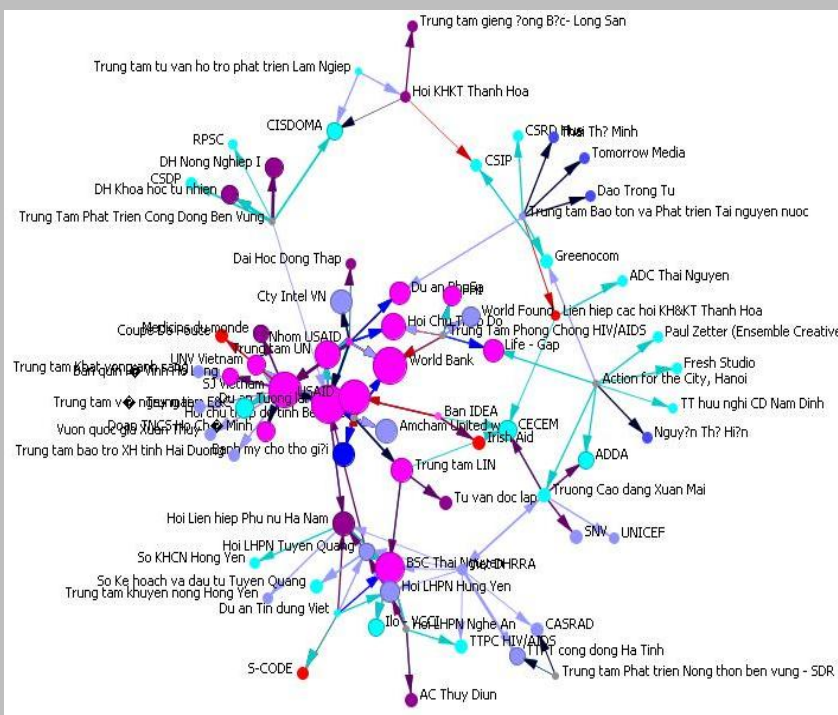
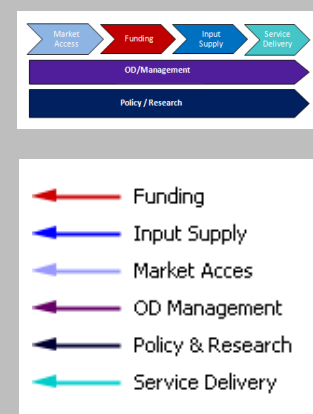


Figure 2: Network Value Chain Example



For more information on how you and your partner organizations can take advantage of Root Change’s Organizational Network Analysis services, please contact Jacob Gray at jgray@rootchange.org.