

Value of civil society networks

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OUTLINE

- What is civil society?
- What is a network?
- The case of the NCD Alliance
- Brainstorming exercise

What is Civil Society?

The paradox about civil society is that it covers a vast range of activities - yet it's very hard to define.

What is Civil Society?

- 'A civil society is a public space between the state, the market and the ordinary household, in which people can debate and tackle action'.
- That could include any voluntary collective activity in which people combine to achieve change on a particular issue

Source: What is Civil Society? BCC World Service, July 2001

What is Civil Society?

Dictionary.com's 21st Century Lexicon defines civil society as:

1. The aggregate of non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens
2. individuals and organizations in a society which are independent of the government.
3. Sometimes the term is used in the more general sense of "the elements such as freedom of speech, an independent judiciary, etc., that make up a democratic society" (Collins English Dictionary)

What is Civil Society?

“an essential feature of a
free society”

What is Civil Society?

'A civil society demands from each of us good will and respect, fair dealing and forgiveness.'

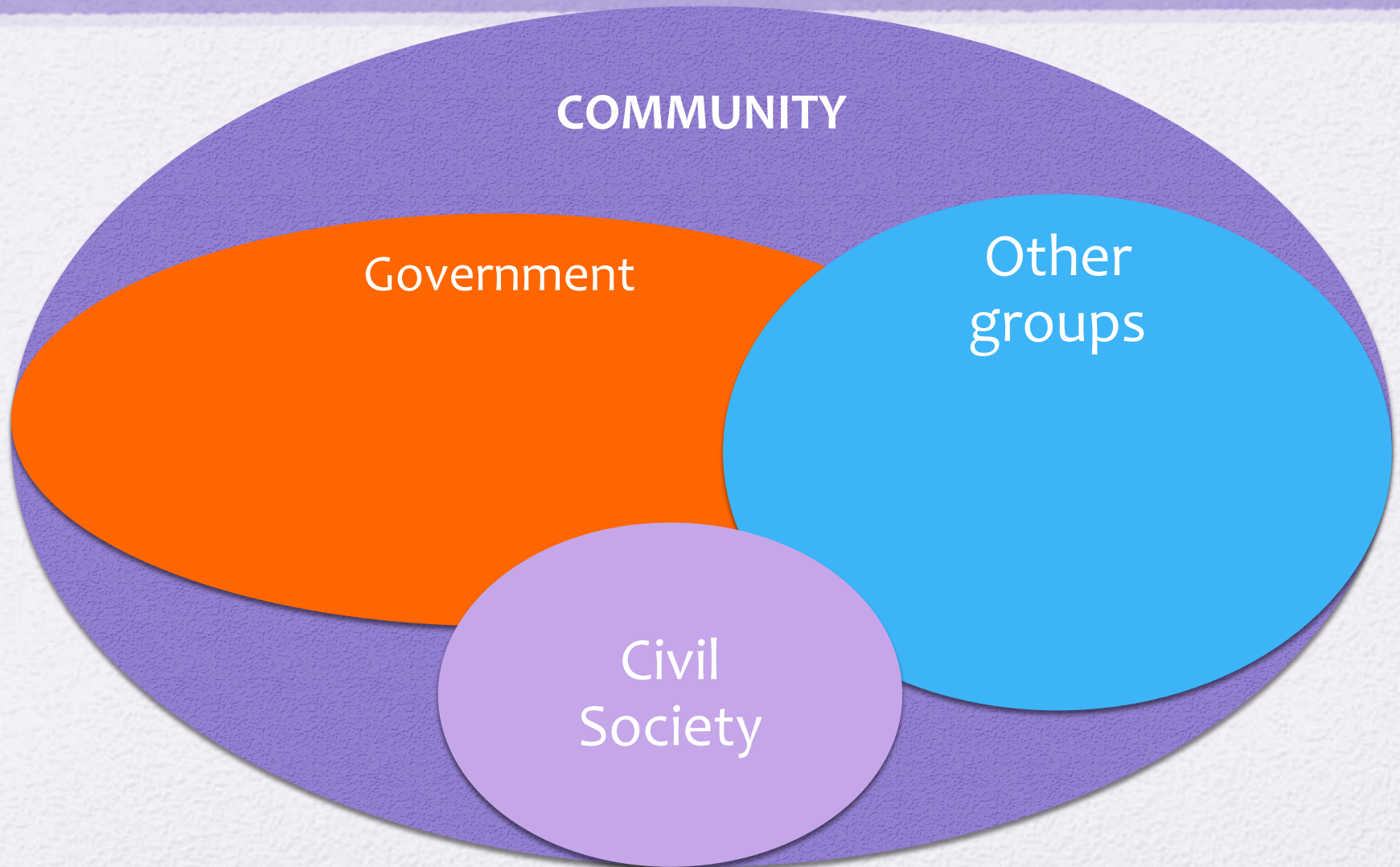
*Inauguration speech US
President George W Bush*

What is Civil Society?

- In the absence of common understanding or definition, civil society is usually understood as **the social arena that exists between the state and the individual or household.**
- Civil society lacks the coercive or regulatory power of the state and the economic power of the market but provides the social power or influence of ordinary people.

Source: World Health Organization, 2001

Role of Civil Society



Role of Civil Society in Health

1. Health service systems
2. Health service delivery
3. Advocacy, policy and standard-setting

What is a network?

Something resembling an openwork fabric or structure in form or concept, especially:

- A system of lines or channels that cross or interconnect: *a network of railroads.*
- A complex, interconnected group or system: *an espionage network.*
- An extended group of people with similar interests or concerns who interact and remain in informal contact for mutual assistance or support.**

Value of Civil Society networks

**The *case* of the
Non-communicable Disease
Alliance**

An example of a Global civil society network



PLAN

for the
**UNITED NATIONS
HIGH LEVEL SUMMIT ON
NON-COMMUNICABLE
DISEASES**

THE NCD ALLIANCE

- The NCD Alliance was founded by four international NGO federations representing the four main NCDs – cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory disease.
- The NCD Alliance unites a network of over 2,000 civil society organizations in more than 170 countries.
- The mission of the NCD Alliance is to combat the NCD epidemic by putting health at the centre of all policies.

What does the NCD Alliance do?

- **The NCD Alliance uses targeted advocacy and outreach to ensure that NCDs are recognized as a major cause of poverty, a barrier to economic development and a global emergency.**
 - speaking with a united voice at international meetings
 - mobilizing the 2000 organizations on our network producing the latest policy work on NCDs and building the evidence base
 - convening expert working groups on a range of topics
 - pressing governments to recognize that NCDs are a global development priority requiring an urgent response

What is the value of Civil Society networks?

“It was a stroke of genius for the major NCD NGOs to form the Alliance. When the history of these time is written and the credits given for the Summit, the name of the NCD Alliance will be writ large”.

- Sir George Alleyne, Director-Emeritus, PAHO



100 DAYS OF ACTION

CANCER IS A GLOBAL CRISIS

JOIN LIVESTRONG IN TELLING WORLD LEADERS TO FACE UP TO IT

Count the 101 ways to face up to it. (List of 101 ways to face up to it)

21,320

THE UN SUMMIT WAS ON SEPTEMBER 19TH

LIVESTRONG Face Up To It Campaign

O is for OUTRAGE

ACT ON DIABETES. NOW.

Find out more on www.worlddiabetesday.org

International Diabetes Federation Postcard Campaign – O is for outrage

Get the Message

RESULTS

- 418,000 text messages
- 25,000 Facebook fans
- 44 email sign-ups

87 text messages were FREE of cost to mobile phone subscribers in 17 countries!

3000 text messages of support for Caribbean leaders attending the United Nations High Level Meeting on NCDs

4000+ messages of support for NCDs and their associated risk factors

Persons asked to text the word "YES" to the short code for their country

Join the "HEALTHY REVOLUTION" and visit our website!

Get the Message: Mobile Phone Text Advisory Campaign in support of the United Nations High Level Meeting on NCDs

www.healthycaribbean.org

www.facebook.com/getthemessage

www.twitter.com/HealthCaribbean

HEALTHY CARIBBEAN COALITION

Healthy Caribbean Coalition Get The Message Campaign

Strengths

- The majority of respondents praised the Alliance's leadership in successfully influencing the outcomes from the UN Summit on NCDs.
- Many respondents said that the Alliance enabled a voice for civil society to collaborate for a common goal.
- The Alliance had credibility because of the four federations aligning together for NCDs.
- The Alliance was helpful to partners and many smaller NGOs in providing materials and intelligence on UN and WHO actions leading up the UN Summit.
- The Alliance has been successful in changing the landscape for NCD prevention and control

Challenges

- Improving role clarification amongst the founding federations (the Steering Group), the Partners Group, and the Common Interest Group.
- Pressure for the expansion of the Steering Group beyond the four federations, and more inclusive decision making processes.
- Increasing the effective utilization of federation members and other experts across the work of the Alliance.
- Developing mechanisms and guidelines for engaging the private sector productively and transparently.

**How do you see the benefits of a
Caribbean civil society network?**

“One man may hit the mark, another blunder; but heed not these distinctions. Only from the alliance of the one, working with and through the other, are great things born.”

Antoine de Saint

"UNITED WE STAND"

