Foundations of Organizational Strategy: The importance of a strong Mission and Vision

40TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY - 7TH NOVEMBER 2012

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1. Why this session?

2. Introduction to Strategic Planning
   Activity I: Strengthen your Mission and Vision

3. Best Practices
   Activity II: How to link them to your overall strategic plan

4. Action Points
The importance of a strong Mission and Vision as a UNA

• Vision, mission and values are key elements of an organization’s strategic planning.
• They must be approved by the board of directors and should be communicated to staff, volunteers, members and other stakeholders
• They increase the efficiency in achieving goals and objectives
• They allow to make informed projections, to anticipate and respond to change
1. WHY THIS SESSION?

Through this session, you will:

- Learn how to strengthen your mission and vision
- Learn how to express and communicate your mission and vision as it pertains to WFUNA’s overall mission
- Learn how your mission and vision relates to key target groups, objectives and your activities.
2. INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic plan

- A tool that provides guidance in fulfilling a mission and vision with maximum efficiency and impact

- It should articulate specific goals and describe the action steps and resources needed to accomplish them

- Should be reviewed every three to five years
2. INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic plan – Vision Statement

• **WHAT?** Description of the organization’s desired future state. “Where do we want to be?” “What do we hope for in the future?” Beliefs, values and ideas are the basis for your vision.

• **WHY?** The vision sets out what the organization wants to accomplish, and should inspire members, staff and supporters. It helps establish the unique contribution that an organization makes.

• **Example:** “Our vision, as a community, is to inspire a passion for learning.”
Strategic plan – Vision Statement

Good visions are

- Aspirational, short and memorable;
- Easy to read and understand;
- They capture the spirit of an organization;
- Compact (can be used to guide decision-making);
- Get people's attention and give people goose bumps when they hear it;
- Describes a preferred and meaningful future state;
- Give people a better understanding of how their individual purpose could be realized in the group;
- Provide a motivating force, even in hard times.
Strategic plan – Mission Statement

- **WHAT?** A brief expression of the organization’s purpose. “Why do we exist?” and “What, at the most basic level, do we do?”

- **WHY?** The mission is the basic justification for the organization’s existence and outlines the problems and needs it responds to. It describes what the organization does to achieve its vision.

- **Example:** “To meet urgent human needs and improve social conditions by mobilizing the community’s volunteer and financial resources.”
Strategic plan – Mission Statement

Good missions are

• Compatible with legal purposes;
• Concise and precise;
• On target with today’s operating environment;
• Identifies the organization’s key stakeholders;
• Demonstrates the organization’s uniqueness, distinctiveness or added value;
• Does not duplicate the mission of another organization;
• Use words such as support, involve, assist, contribute, provide, promote, etc.
Strategic plan – further content

- **Values** reflects the principles on which an organization is built, and that guide its planning, operations and programs. It answers the question “What do we believe in?”
- **Goals (overall objectives)** are broad statements of what the organization hopes to achieve, focusing on outcomes or results and qualitative in nature.
- **Objectives (sub-goals)** are specific, concrete, measurable statements of what will be done to achieve a goal. Objectives include what will be accomplished, by when and by whom.
- **Strategies** consist of approaches or activities needed to achieve the goals and objectives. “How will we actually accomplish our work?”
ACTIVITY I: STRENGTHEN YOUR MISSION AND VISION

Exercise:
Write the missions and visions of some voluntary participants on flip charts and discuss in plenary based on the following questions:

Vision:
• Does the vision statement respond to the challenges and issues expressed in the form of critical issues? What are the key words?
• Does it express what contributions the UNA wishes to make?
• How, if at all, should the vision statement be changed?
Mission:

- Is the mission statement clear in today's operating environment? What are the key words?

- Does the mission statement duplicate the mission of any other organization?

- How, if at all, should the mission statement be changed?
A Strong UNA

- Should have a democratic structure and be open to insight
- Has a vision and a mission and knows what it wants to achieve and how it should do it
- Should have a structure that demonstrates clear division of duties and responsibilities and should not be dependent on individual leaders or members
- expresses its basic values and has articulated the reason for its existence
UNA – Mission and Vision

UNA’s identity describe the reasons for the establishment, the objectives the UNA wishes to achieve (vision), and the contributions the UNA wishes to make (mission)

The UNA should endorse formally the mission and purposes of WFUNA and the UN
3. BEST PRACTICES

UNA – Mission and Vision

✅ **A strong UNA** will have their vision and mission documented in writing by leadership. They are known and accepted by all members, leadership and staff and have been spread outside the UNA. UNAs must accept the objectives in Article 1 of WFUNA’s Constitution.

❌ **A weak UNA** has not defined the purpose of its activities, the objectives it wishes to achieve or its mission.
UNA – Organizational Strategy

Essential for the development UNAs have well defined strategies that work towards the realization of vision and mission.

A UNA working towards being a strong UNA will have started drawing up strategies.
UNA – Organizational Strategy

- A strong UNA has written strategies decided by its leadership, discussed amongst members and staff and reflect what the UNA is working for. The UNA’s devised strategies are clearly linked to the UNA’s vision.
- A strong UNA has also formulated sub-goals that shall be achieved in order to realize the vision and overall objectives

- A weak UNA has not defined the purpose of its activities, the objectives it wishes to achieve or its mission
UNA – Communication

• Your mission and visions help communicate to others what your organization values, believes in and is working for. It helps explaining the future you hope to see and the reason you exist. As such, they are the foundation of your communication and marketing activities.

• Make sure that your communications to others (staff, members, partners, donors and any other stakeholders) should always relate to your mission and vision.
ACTIVITY II: LINKING M&V TO THE OVERALL STRATEGIC PLAN

**Mission**

We work to build a better world by strengthening and improving the United Nations through the engagement of people who share a global mindset and support international cooperation—global citizens.

**Vision**

A United Nations that is a powerful force in meeting common global challenges and opportunities

**Objectives**

- Contribute to Peace and Security
  - Mobilize public & political will for R2P

- Contribute to Development
  - Mobilize public & political will for nuclear disarm.

- Contribute to Human Rights
  - Promote HR education
  - Promote UNA interaction with UN HR system

**Strategies / Activities:**

- Education and Awareness Raising
- Policy Development and Advocacy
- Multilateral Cooperation and Development Projects

**Stakeholders**

**SWOT Analysis**
ACTIVITY II: LINKING M&V TO THE OVERALL STRATEGIC PLAN

Timeline:

- **Mission**: General purpose, Forever
- **Vision**: Future direction, 5 years
- **Goals**: Broad statements, 3 – 5 years
- **Objectives**: SMART statements, 1 year
- **Strategy**: Activities, 1 – 5 years
Exercise:

In groups of five participants, write down and discuss examples of your own strategic plans. Provide feedback to others on the relevance and connectedness of their mission, vision, goals, objectives and strategies / activities.
4. UNA M&V ACTION POINTS

1. Review your mission and vision internally and determine whether you think it is strong by running through WFUNA's checklist and by researching online some strong statements published by other organizations.

2. Think about how you can distinguish your UNA from other organizations working in the same sector. Define your added value and comparative advantage.

3. Deliberate with your staff and confirm if they are aware of your mission and vision. If not, discuss your M&V with them to ensure a harmonized communication to outside partners and other stakeholders.

4. Evaluate whether your M&V relate to your overall strategic plan and review your strategic plan at least every 5 years by using a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).

5. Review how you currently communicate your mission and vision to external partners, beneficiaries, donors, etc. Do you publish it on your website and is it included in programmatic material? If not, start including and promoting your M&V more efficiently and more broadly.