



*Building Towards*  
the **FUTURE**

*An Asia and Pacific Islands governmental and non-governmental organization capacity building and resource mobilization initiative of the Asia Pacific Alliance and Face to Face International*

### **Executive Summary**

In 2000, 189 countries adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the new global development agenda. The MDGs set targets for reducing poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease, discrimination against women and environmental degradation by 2015.

Critical to the achievement of the MDGs will be the realization of the International Conference of Population and Development (ICPD) Program of Action goals related to reproductive healthcare and the empowerment of women. Critical to the achievement of both the MDGs and the ICPD PoA will be the work of local environmental, population and development non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In the Asian and Pacific Island regions, many local NGOs have the capacity to do bigger, more integrated or holistic programs but lack the resources to do so. Face to Face International and the Asia Pacific Alliance decided earlier this year that it was time to do something significant about it.

On August 13, 2004, Face to Face International and several APA members brought together 35 NGO directors, parliamentarians, donor development officers, celebrities, documentary filmmakers and professional facilitators from 14 Asian and Pacific Island countries for two days of knowledge sharing and brainstorming in Auckland, New Zealand. The joint Face to Face/APA *Building Towards the Future* regional capacity building and resource mobilization initiative was officially underway.

On August 14, 2004, 45 Asian and Pacific Island development stakeholders agreed to the following:

- Government and civil society cooperation is critical to achievement of the MDGs in the regions.
- Parliamentarians and other policy makers in the regions need to be more informed about the interactions between sexual and reproductive healthcare (S&RH) and the MDGs.
- The environmental, population and development needs of NGOs in the regions and the people they serve are enormous.
- A large-scale governmental and non-governmental organization capacity building and resource mobilization initiative in the regions is necessary, possible and worth further exploration.
- A large-scale initiative such as *Building Towards the Future* should harmonize with other regional development networks and initiatives.
- A workshop such as this should be conducted in each target country to identify/bring together key population, environment and development governmental and non-governmental organizations to discover on a local basis the critical challenges facing and opportunities inherent in large-scale development programming.
- Face to Face and APA will continue to research and develop the *Building Towards the Future* initiative on behalf of and with the continued involvement of all Auckland workshop participants.

The target countries of the *Building Towards the Future* initiative are: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

## **Introduction**

In 2003, the Packard Foundation awarded Face to Face International a two-year grant to identify, develop and facilitate the implementation of three large-scale population assistance programs worldwide and mobilize the resources for same. In the process, Face to Face would be exploring new, more effective ways of securing a larger portion of total donor country overseas development assistance for family planning and sexual and reproductive healthcare – key to the achievement of the MDGs.

One of the three Face to Face S&RH resource mobilization initiatives is *Building Towards the Future* (referred to in the Executive Summary), collaboration between Face to Face International and the Asia Pacific Alliance (APA). APA is a Packard and Hewlett Foundation-supported network of development agencies and other governmental and non-governmental organizations dedicated to population assistance advocacy and resource mobilization in Asia and the Pacific Islands.

*Building Towards the Future* is a response to large population and development assistance donors who observe that there is plenty of money available but not enough governmental and non-governmental organizations in the Asian and Pacific Island regions capable of co-designing and co-managing large-scale population assistance programming.

The *Building Towards the Future* initiative is designed to increase the capacity of appropriate, leading governmental agencies and NGOs in 13 developing Asian and Pacific Island countries to build the large-scale partnerships, programs and resources necessary to meet the ICPD PoA goals within the context of the MDGs in their respective countries.

The long term goal of the initiative is to bring about in the regions the following:

- universal access to family planning and S&RH;
- a reversal in the spread of HIV/AIDS (Asian and Pacific Island youth are becoming increasingly susceptible to HIV as they become sexually active at a younger age and shirk conservative “Asian values”);
- a decrease in infant mortality;
- a decrease in maternal mortality;
- a reduction in poverty and hunger;
- a halting of environmental degradation; and
- the formation of the partnerships necessary to accomplish the aforementioned objectives as well as help ensure that the results are sustainable.

The immediate objective of the initiative is to develop (or further develop) the capacity of target country governmental agencies and NGOs to:

- build or strengthen social service program partnerships between relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- co-design population assistance programs that are larger in scale than traditional pilot programs and that dramatically increase number of people served;
- design sector-wide and multi-sector (i.e., health, education and employment) social service programs that are more deeply rooted in the community in order to improve efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability;
- develop S&RH programming that contributes to the achievement of the MDGs;
- build institutions and coalitions capable of securing and managing larger development fund budgets; and
- develop or improve financial reporting, monitoring and evaluation systems.

### **The Auckland Workshop**

On August 13 and 14, 2004 in Auckland, New Zealand, members of the Asia Pacific Alliance and Face to Face International convened a resource mobilization and capacity building workshop attended by 35 governmental and non-governmental organization

representatives from the Asian and Pacific Island regions. This was the first major step in securing “local ownership” of the *Building Towards the Future* initiative.

The workshop was led by Mary Jane Rivers, a professional facilitator, Gill Greer, Executive Director of the Family Planning Association of New Zealand (workshop host) and Walter Coddington, Executive Director of Face to Face, International.

Face to Face International arranged to have the workshop videotaped and recorded by Marc Westhof (videographer) and Don Hinrichsen (writer) to provide the Packard Foundation and other interested parties with an audiovisual overview of the two days’ activities and outcome.

The two-day work shop was organized into a series of brainstorming sessions on the following topics:

- what do regional donors want;
- what are the target country governmental and non-governmental organization capacity building needs;
- what are the relationships/interactions between S&RH, the MDGs and the local poverty reduction strategies (PRS) in the region;
- how should a regional initiative such as this be managed;
- what are the antecedents and justifications for the initiative;
- what should the success indicators be;
- what are the risks and assumptions associated with the initiative; and
- what are critical success factors?

### **Workshop Output**

The workshop organizers set out to gain the following output:

- identification of the specific governmental agencies and NGOs in the 13 developing countries that could benefit from development program design and resource mobilization capacity building;
- identification of the interactions between S&RH and the MDGs;
- identification of specific partnership development, program design and resource mobilization capacity building needs;
- identification of case histories, success stories, trainers and other consultants that can contribute to the capacity building;
- identification of potential donors and their requirements; and
- formation of two permanent initiative advisory groups: one for the Asian region and one for the Pacific Island region.

Several of the topics above were deferred to follow-up target country-by-country workshops (namely topics 1, 4 and 6 above) and some new topics were discussed as per below.

The following summarizes input from workshop participants on the various issues and topics discussed. As planned, the input will help in the development of a large-scale regional capacity building resource mobilization/grant proposal.

*Large international population and development assistance donors want:*

- Larger-scale projects serving more people
- Sector-wide, multi-sector projects
- Locally designed and implemented projects
- Projects developed by multi-stakeholder coalitions (consisting of governmental and non-governmental organizations)
- Sustainable projects after 3 to 5 years
- Projects that tie into and help achieve the MDGs and/or PRS
- Project donor cooperation/harmonization

*Concerns about and linkages between sexual and reproductive healthcare, MDGs and PRS include, but are not limited to:*

- How HIV/AIDS impacts all MDGs
- Men's involvement/responsibilities in all MDGs
- The need to inform politicians, policy makers and the public about the S&RH, MDGs and the linkages
- Literacy and the education level of the public
- S&RH service needs and the relationship of same to the MDGs
- Human rights and the MDGs

*Regional country governmental and non-governmental organization capacity building needs include, but are not limited to:*

- Mainstreaming issues
  - Capacity to integrate HIV/AIDS, for example, into sector-wide and multi-sector programming
- Organization and program development
  - Fundraising, income generation
  - Strategic planning (e.g., aligning programming with MDGs)
  - Management/implementation
  - Advocacy/communication/marketing
- Partnering and relationship building
- Data collection
- Donor capacity building (i.e., local education and harmonization of donors)

*Project management:*

All participants agreed that the *Building Towards the Future* capacity building initiative would need to be managed at a number of levels, from grassroots to regionally.

*Risks and assumptions. The working group was asked to consider two questions: “What could go wrong?” and “What conditions are we taking for granted?” With regard to the first question, concerns were organized in four categories: (i) resources; (ii) culture; (iii) capacity; and (iv) political and business environment.*

Resources

- Poor accounting of funds/corruption/lack of transparency
- Changes in donor priorities/risk of de-funding
- Under-budgeting the project
- Too slow a release of funds
- Insufficient resources for on-ground activities

Capacity

- The risk of creating something that is not sustainable
- A breakdown of project management and/or high turnover of project staff
- Inadequate management system to support a large-scale initiative
- Lack of skilled personnel at the grassroots level

Culture/Tradition

- Ignoring local cultural practices
- Misunderstanding (due to cultural barriers) about S&RH products and services, especially in regard to the use of birth control and condoms
- S&RH is not the government’s priority
- Alienation of the church
- The proposal does not take sufficient account of the differences between each country in each region

Political and Business Environment

- Changes in government/ruling party
- Economic instability/stock market crash
- Corruption
- Conflicts/government instability

*With regard to the second question (“What conditions are we taking for granted?”) workshop participants noted the following:*

- That government and NGOs are working together
- That Asian and Pacific Island issues are the same
- That the Pacific Island states will still exist in 10 years
- Ongoing government support and political will

- Stable governments
- Ongoing momentum

*Participants grouped initiative critical success factors under three categories: (i) partnerships; (ii) capacity; and (iii) project design.*

#### Partnerships

- Work through existing well-functioning agencies and in collaboration with the government
- Needs local ownership and design
- Have the initiative accepted as a national priority
- Relationships are based on trust, respect and WIN WIN program design
- Coherence among administrators and managers

#### Capacity

- NGO beneficiaries share their learning with others and/or train others
- NGO beneficiaries establish adequate project management and monetary controls

#### Project design

- Country specific project with a regional oversight
- Synergy between the new initiative and existing projects/policies (add new mechanism)
- Agreement on very specific outcomes for the project
- Operations are guided by principles of transparency and accountability
- Documentation of project activities for advocacy and knowledge sharing
- Use an appropriate country-specific language for the project

*Antecedents and Justifications:*

- Some pockets of civil society are not currently being reached.
- Most countries in the Pacific are too small to raise much money.
- Population assistance is more achievable these days because of technology.
- There is a need to examine what poverty means in the Pacific context.
- ABC isn't working, there is a need for new innovative approaches.
- Needs to fit in with PRSs and other national plans.

*Benchmarking. The working group proposed the following benchmarking measures:*

- Mapping
- Health and well-being indicators
- Measure against existing commitments (MDGs, PRSs)
- Time frame targets
- NGO sector growth
- Medical staff and volunteers trained
- Integrated plans (HIV/AIDS/S&RH)

- Data collection
- Reporting
- Sustainable core funding
- Levels of success

### **Observations**

One of the biggest challenges to capacity building and resource mobilization in the two regions is creating an enabling environment that encourages local organizations to think and act big. No one would argue that the population and development challenges in the Asian and Pacific Island regions are enormous, yet the organizations, programming and services developed to meet those challenges are typically small and grossly under-capitalized to meet the needs.

Prior to the workshop, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that helped the workshop organizers profile participant organizations and better understand their work-related interests and priorities. On the question having to do with organization service limitations, most respondents said that money (or the lack of it) was the most important determinant of their organization's growth and/or service delivery capacity. One might conclude from the workshop, however, that many NGOs are not seeking the amount of money they really need to do the job. They may be, in effect, not asking donors for what they need, they are only asking for what they think they can get.

When it comes to thinking big, it is not that managers within these organizations are unable to think big, it's more that they may have lowered their funding, development and service expectations in the process of coping with the limitations imposed upon them by poor economies, poor infrastructure, and fragmented and inconsistent local and international donor assistance. The tendency for local NGOs to begin and to continue to operate on a small scale has led to an underestimation of the local development need on the part of donors and a tendency for donors and local governments to underestimate the capacity of local NGOs to operate on a larger scale.

This conclusion is supported by another realization to come from the workshop. Most developing country governmental and non-governmental organization representatives said that it was not necessarily capacity building that their organizations needed to be more effective in managing larger programming and funding, but rather it was funding that they needed to staff properly to develop and manage larger programs and larger program budgets. Many workshop participants noted that increasing the ability of current staff or volunteers to do things better and/or to do more things wouldn't necessarily translate to an increase in organizational capacity. In most cases it just meant that a few already overworked individuals would be expected to do even more work and/or take on more responsibility. In many cases, highly trained individuals leave the organization that trained them and move on to higher paying, private sector jobs.

This is not to suggest, however, that once properly staffed and capitalized, organizations will not require technical assistance and training. It means that without the proper

resources and number of people to do the job in the first place, no amount of training will enable a few people to do the job of many people.

### **Next Steps**

As indicated in the Executive Summary of this report, the workshop participants agreed to the following:

- Government and civil society cooperation is critical to population assistance, development and achievement of the MDGs in the regions.
- Parliamentarians and other policy makers in the regions need to be more informed about the interactions between S&RH and the MDGs.
- The resource needs of S&RH and environmental NGOs in the regions and the people they serve are enormous.
- A large-scale governmental and non-governmental organization capacity building and resource mobilization initiative in the regions is possible and worth further exploration.
- A workshop such as this should be conducted in each target country to identify/bring together key population, environment and development governmental and non-governmental organizations to discover on a local basis the critical challenges facing and opportunities inherent in large-scale development programming.
- Face to Face and APA will continue to research and develop the *Building Towards the Future* initiative on behalf of and with the continued involvement of all Auckland workshop participants.

In addition to the above, the workshop participants agreed that it would be premature to establish an advisory group for each region comprised of volunteers from the workshop only. Many more stakeholders, including representatives from existing regional networks, would be contributing (time and expertise) to the initiative during its incubation stage, and one or more of them might make appropriate advisory board members. (In fact, all of the workshop participants and future participants are or will be serving in an advisory capacity.)

The next step is for Face to Face International to raise financing to hold one brainstorming workshop in each of the 13 target countries. The country level workshops will focus on identifying key country governmental and non-governmental organization beneficiaries, capacity building resource needs, potential donors and how to think big!

While many capacity building programs already exist, especially in the Asian region, the *Building Towards the Future* initiative will be different in that it will be an extremely large-scale, multi-sector, and multi-stakeholder program and it will focus on sexual and reproductive healthcare as critical to the achievement of the MDGs.

## **Workshop Output**

As indicated above, the next step in the *Building Towards the Future* regional capacity building and resource mobilization initiative is the execution of one workshop in each of the 13 target countries sometime in early 2005. Like the workshop held in Auckland, it will be organized by Face to Face International and one or more APA network members in closest proximity to each target country. Whereas the Auckland workshop considered environmental, population and development governmental and non-governmental organization capacity building and resource mobilization on a regional basis, each workshop in each target country will consider the same issues on a country-specific basis. Each country-level workshop will also identify the conditions necessary to design and implement large-scale organization capacity building and population assistance programming.