



STUDY OF LOCAL
AUTHORITIES
ASSOCIATIONS OF
EUROPEAN UNION
PARTNER COUNTRIES –
AFRICA –
REGIONAL REPORT

Dialogue and capacity building of
local and regional authorities
in EU partner countries
in the fields of development
and local governance

2015



PLATFORMA

The European voice of **Local** and
Regional authorities for development



UCLG AFRICA
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**Study of Local Authorities Associations of European Union
Partner Countries – Africa Regional Report**

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BACKGROUND

In the 1990s, the policy of decentralization emerged in most countries of Africa as the best approach to manage political change. Most African countries adopted the policy of decentralization as their reform policy. Constitutions were drawn and adopted. Local Authorities were created and responsibilities transferred to these entities. The provisions of legislations were that resources should also be transferred from national to local governments to enable the local authorities to function. In most of the countries, decentralization was a process to be implemented *progressively*. In some cases this implied that the transfer of responsibility and resources could not strictly respect prescription of the law. Also, those to transfer the responsibility especially at the level of the national government showed reluctance to do so under the pretext that it is progressive.

The Local Governments were faced with enormous challenges such as ineffective transfer of responsibility, inadequate resources to carry out the new responsibilities transferred, lack of sufficient and skilled human resources. To face the difficulties they were encountering the local governments needed to come together in unified voice to lobby and advocate to the national government for it to review the conditions under which the decentralization policies were being implemented. The creation of national associations of local authorities emerged therefore as strong lever for supporting the decentralization process.

Local Governments Associations now face even more problems than the local governments (members of the association) because the members they depend on lack adequate resources. Most of the associations depend on membership contributions difficult to collect. In most cases the consequence is inadequate and inefficient provision of needed services to the members.

Despite their difficult situation, it should be recognized that it is thanks to the existence of national associations of local governments and their regrouping within the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A) as well as to their collective advocacy action, that many national governments are now considering with a more positive perspective the role of local governments in development, to the extent that the Heads of State and Governments of the African Union went on adopting in June 2014 an African Charter on Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development; and creating a High Council of Local Authorities among the African Union institutions.





COUNTRY BY COUNTRY ANALYSES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS

1. Benin

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS OF BENIN (ANCB)

INTRODUCTION

In February 1990, the Republic of Benin organized a National Conference that created the basis for the process of democracy and decentralization. The Constitution that was adopted by referendum affirmed Benin as a unitary State with a Presidential regime. Decentralisation was inscribed in the Constitution and local councils were to be created and local elections held. Law No. 97-028 of 15 January 1999 organised the Administration of the Republic of Benin. The territory is administered by deconcentrated authorities and services of the State as well as decentralized authorities. Benin has one level of decentralization and that is the municipalities. Local governments cover the entire country, which is divided into 12 departments and 77 municipalities ('communes'). There are 3 municipalities with special status and there are Cotonou, Porto Novo and Parakou (Law No. 98-005 of 15 January 1999 organising communes with special status). The 77 municipalities replaced the former sub-divisions. The first local elections were held in 2002. The executive head of each municipality is a Mayor.

Legal Status

The association is legally constituted and the adherence for membership is voluntary. The association is made up of all the 77 local councils of the country. The Constitution and other legal documents of the association exist but are not fully implemented. The association has a membership of 77 regional actors representing all the municipalities of Benin. It is registered under private law and it has a national coverage. It is recognized as an independent membership organisation adhering to a written constitution.

Objectives

The association has a strong constitution with a clear vision and a demand-driven mandate. The objectives are:

- To contribute in the strengthening of the policy of decentralization;
- To support local councils in implementing effective local governance;
- Promoting participatory local development in the local councils;
- To serve as interface between the local councils, central government and development partners to defend the interest of the local councils;
- To promote solidarity and partnership between the councils of Benin and those of other countries.

Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The annual budget of the association stands at US\$500,000. The revenue is obtained from the following sources:

- Local revenue
- Central Government transfer
- Cooperation Fund

The association is able to collect only 50% of membership fee that is mostly used to cover operational costs, while donors fund most of the programmes and capacity building. The association has no other source of self-generated revenue and there is no strategy for financial sustainability and independence.

Institutional organisation

The institutional organizational structure is appropriate for an association of local governments. There are 15 members of the Board who are elected through a democratic process to oversee the organisation. The Board understands they are responsible for ensuring that programmes are being carried out as planned and are consistent with the objectives, principles and values of the association. The Board acts in accordance with the statutes and ensures that the rest of the organisation does as well. Division of task and responsibilities between Board and Secretariat is clear but not fully adhered to. The General Assembly meets annually which provides some legitimacy to the association but with little real accountability.

Human Resource Management and Development

The secretariat of the association consists of a staff of eight (8). The secretariat does not have enough technical and administrative staff to carry out the activities of the association and they lack adequate financial resources to recruit more staff. The staff have a high professional profile and they know their task, responsibilities and are accountable to ensure results. There is a written organizational chart and job descriptions but not updated with changes in responsibilities. A written personnel policy and procedure exist but is out dated and not consistently followed.

There is no career plan for the staff and no training opportunities. The relevant staff have knowledge of basic project management but lack professional skills.

Financial Administration and Management

The association has no mechanism for conducting internal audit. Formal internal reports are required to respond to real internal change. There are an appropriate set of financial management, control and accounting procedures, rules and regulations which are not strictly adhered to and lack key provisions such as check and balance system of fund management. The association generally follows transparent financial control practices that minimize potential for misuse of funds but this is not fully institutionalised. The financial management staff has good understanding of the task and responsibilities but lack professional expertise.

Strategic planning/Monitoring and evaluation

The association has an effective elaborately written strategic plan developed in a participatory manner and demonstrates realistic extension of current activities. It includes vision/mission statements, mid-term and long-term objectives, strategies, programmes and financial plan. There are also some working committees on the priority themes. The monitoring and evaluation system is done internally and in an ad hoc manner without defined indicators and procedures.

Service delivery

The association does not master the needs of the members. It offers only a few services to its members, but which are not in line with the objectives and goals of the association. This is due to the fact that this association doesn't reach out to the members to find out what their needs are.





Work environment

The secretariat is small for the number of staff and the activities carried out there. The association does not have a building of its own and is renting space which is not enough for the staff. The association has a library with 2000 titles. There are 11 computers in the association and all are connected to Internet.

Communication policies

The association does not have a communication strategy and suffers from ineffective internal and external communication flow. It also lacks a good media strategy. However it makes good use of IT in communications with local authorities. It has a website www.ancb.org though not frequently visited. It also has a Facebook page with 1717 likes but has not yet created a twitter account. Although there is access to Internet, there is no virtual library at the association. The association also has an electronic newsletter.

Networking

The association makes informed choices on which type of networks to enter into on the basis of clearly specified priorities, goals and objectives and it has a good international standing. The association is a member of UCLG – Africa, Conseil des Collectivités Territoriale de L'UEMOA, Member of "Association Internationale des Maires Francophones" (AIMF) and several others. There is evidence of active participation, contribution and synergy building with relevant local, regional and international networks. Participates actively in matters concerning these organisations like the Africities, Francophone Mayor's Conference etc...

Lobbying and Advocacy

The main roles of the National Association of Councils of Benin is to support local councils in implementing effective local governance as well as to defend the interest of the local councils. It does this through lobbying and advocacy. Although some lobbying and advocacy activities are undertaken based on a written strategy, resources required for implementing are lacking. The key lobbying and advocacy positions are presented in a credible, coherent, defensible and persuasive manner using empirical information and providing viable alternatives, suggestions and concrete solutions for improvement. The relation with stakeholders is good. It participates actively in National Commissions and engages a strong dialogue with Government, Parliament, NGOs and the Business Community. The association depends on central government and other organisations for some activities and operations. It does not have any cooperation agreement with the Government.

Conclusion

The technical and administrative staff of the association are not sufficient to carry out the activities of the association. Moreover their salaries are not competitive. They have the competence to carry out their duties but they need some capacity building. They do not have the opportunity to be trained due to lack of funds. Also there is no career plan for the staff of that association. Procedure manual is not up to date with the operations of the association.

The organizational chart is outdated making their task not to be in conformity with their role. These demotivates the staff.

The role of the Board and the secretariat is not quite clear. There are conflicting roles. The committees are not functioning well leaving most of the work to be done by the secretariat.

The association plays a representative role for the members and can lobby and advocate for the interest of the member. It is a strong association that defends the interest of the members.

2. Burkina Fasso

ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF BURKINA FASO (AMBF)

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Burkina Faso is a unitary State. The adoption of the Constitution of 02 June 1991 marked the beginning of Decentralisation in Burkina Faso. Article 143 of the Constitution states that Burkina Faso is organized in Local Authorities (Collectivités Territoriales). In 1993 the National Assembly adopted 5 other Decentralisation Laws. The first multi-party local elections were held in 1995, which brought in local democracy. In 1998, there was the text for the Orientation of Decentralisation which was modified in 2001. Law No. 2004-055/AN of 21 December 2004 brought to light the General Code for the Local Authorities. There is also a system of Deconcentration that works perfectly alongside decentralization. Burkina Faso is composed of 13 regions and 351 communes. Burkina Faso is implementing Decentralisation progressively so as to correct the weaknesses that will be encountered in the implementation and make sure that the system takes poverty alleviation and citizen participation into account.

Legal Status

The Association of Municipalities of Burkina Faso (AMBF) was created in 1995 and registered under public law. Adherence for membership in this association is voluntary. Members of the association are all the 351 municipalities of the country, which implies it is an association of institutions and has a national coverage. It is recognized as an independent membership organisation adhering to written constitution.

Objectives

The association has a good constitution with clear missions and vision. The various roles of the structures are well defined in the constitution.

The objectives are:

- Articulate local government needs and expectations to the Government.
- Provide a national platform for local government.
- Provide services to strengthen local authorities.
- Negotiate the on-going decentralisation of functions and resources.
- Provide a place to network with peers.

Annual Budget and other sources of revenue

The annual budget of the association is US\$384,000. The revenues is obtained from the following sources:

- Membership fees
- Central Government transfer
- Cooperation Fund

The association collects only about 50% of membership fees, which are mostly used to cover operational costs, while donors fund most of the programmes and capacity building. The association has at least one other source of self-generated providing some additional revenue to the association. There is a Municipal Guest House that generates revenue for the association. The association is aware of financial sustainability though there is no written financial sustainability strategy in place.



Institutional organisation

The association has 66 Board members elected in accordance with the statutes currently in effect and oversee the organisation. The institutional organizational structure is appropriate for a local government association. The Board is responsible for ensuring that programmes are being carried out as planned and are consistent with the objectives, principles and values of the association. The Board acts in accordance with the statutes and ensures that the management of the association is effective. There is also a system in place that give balance of power between the Board and the Secretariat. The task and responsibilities are also quite clear that there is no conflict in roles. The Board makes decisions on key policy issues, advisory role, guidance, evaluating, fundraising, providing expertise, supporting, setting policies, monitoring and supervising. The Executive Secretary's role is advising Board on decision-making, enabling and informing, proposing policies and actions, supporting policies and direction of Board, leadership and strategic management, implementation of Strategic Plan.

The Board quarterly meetings are regular and well prepared to monitor management; prompt follow-up is done on the key issues in accordance with rules and regulations, especially regarding agenda and minutes. Real issues are discussed fully and openly and each Board member has equal chance to freely express opinion and contribute. Sometimes there are extra-ordinary Board meetings if there is an upcoming event or pertinent issues to be discussed.

Human Resource Management and Development

The secretariat of the association consists of seven technical staff. The staff is considered sufficient to man the activities of the association though they lack material to perform their duties efficiently. Capacity building activities are undertaken but not properly coordinated and are dependent on donor funding. Donors will propose and the association does not have the right to change the concept of the training. The association has a written organizational chart with job descriptions but not updated with changes in responsibilities. There is also a personnel status that defines staff procedures. This makes it difficult to appraise the staff. Recruitment in that association is done in several ways: some are seconded by the central government; some are seconded by some councils while others go through the recruitment test. This implies that some of the staff are recruited on merit while others are not. The level of motivation is limited and does not include fringe benefits. Also the salaries are not competitive, which affect the level of motivation of the staff. There were 9 training events organized last year and 348 people participated. The relevant staff have knowledge of basic project management but lack professional skills.

Financial Administration and Management

The association has a mechanism for conducting internal audit. The internal audit reports to the highest level of the association. On the basis of the internal reports the association improves on its management and performance. There is also an appropriate set of written financial management, control and accounting procedures, rules and regulations, but not strictly adhered to and lack key provisions such as check and balance system of fund management. Financial management and accounting staff have requisite professional skills of financial planning, analysis and comparison of actual accounts against budgets, providing specific management information, analysis of financial performance against quantified objectives/targets. The association generally follows transparent financial control practices that minimize potential for misuse of funds but this is not fully institutionalised. There are 2 'commissaire aux comptes' who go through the accounts as well as the treasurer of the association.

Strategic planning/Monitoring and evaluation

The association has a well-developed multi-year strategic plan elaborated in a participatory manner describing what a local government association does. This strategic plan runs from 2012-2018. Although there are working committees on the priority themes, the monitoring and evaluation system is done internally and in an ad hoc manner without defined indicators and procedures. This situation affects the management of the association that needs the report on monitoring and evaluation to make decisions and improve performance. An effective and well developed strategic plan must have well defined monitoring and evaluation indicators.

Service delivery

The association offers a number of services targeted for a selected number of local governments, which are not properly coordinated, and depends largely on donor funding. The association does not know all the needs of the members. It does not carry out need assessment for the members and selects a few members to propose services when a development partner proposes a service.

Working environment

The association has an adequate office to carry out its activities. The association owns the office building. The staff have enough space in the offices. The association does not have a library. There are 14 computers in the association and all are connected to the Internet.

Communication policies

The association has a website www.ambf.bf but is not connected to any social media. There exist a printed newsletter but no electronic newsletter. The association has an unwritten communication strategy with inadequate resources and capacity for communication function. The association makes interacts with it members with the use of IT applications. It also has a good media policy.

Networking

The association is an active participant in various national and international networks with a variety of partners and stakeholders. The association contributes and proactively uses networks to improve chances of achieving its goals and objectives. The association values exchange and learning though the results are not documented. It has a good international reputation as a local government association. The association is member of UCLG – Africa, Conseil des Collectivités Territoriales de L'UEMOA, Member of Association Internationale des Maires Francophones" (AIMF) and many others.

Lobbying and Advocacy

The AMBF has a strong lobbying and advocacy activity. It organizes each year a Local Government Open Day that culminates with the presentation of a Memorandum on the implementation of the decentralization policy to the Head of State. The key lobbying and advocacy positions are presented in a credible and persuasive manner: The association is systematically consulted for any new legislation that has an impact on local governments mandates or on the people on the ground. It participates actively in National Commissions where it is able to make an impact in policies and otherwise and engages a strong dialogue with Government, Parliament, NGOs and the Business Community.





Conclusions

The Association of Municipalities of Burkina Faso can be classified as a strong association. It is considered exemplary in West Africa with its management and the involvement of the Board members in the management of the affairs of the association. The association has sufficient staff to carry out the activities of the association. The association is privileged to have some support from the development partners and has a number of tools but is incapable of implementing most of them. It has some staff policies in place and organizes training for the staff and members of the association. The association only has challenges in personnel appraisal. The association is very influential and adequately represents the members and defends the interest of the members especially during the Municipal Open Day. The Municipal Open Day is considered one of the main days for lobbying. This day is organized annually. The President is very daring. This is one of the associations of West Africa that carries out open dialogue with the central government on issues that has to do with the interest of their members in an open manner. Ministers are invited to answer questions on what their Ministerial Department has failed to do concerning the transfer of responsibilities.

3. Cape Verde

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF CAPE VERDE (ANMCV)

INTRODUCTION

The 1999 Constitution states that The Republic of Cape Verde shall, in the organisation of political power, recognize and respect the unitary nature of the State, the republican form of the government, the pluralist democracy, the separation and interdependence of powers, the separation between the Church and the State, the independence of the courts, the existence and the autonomy of local power and the democratic decentralization of Public Administration. Art. 253 states that the local administration shall consist of municipalities. Art 255 states that the local administration shall have their own finances and assets. Art 254 of the law states that for solidarity reasons and while respecting the autonomy of the local administration, shall guarantee technical and material support as well as support in the field of human resources. There is one level of decentralization in Cape Verde, which is made up of the 22 municipalities.

Legal Status

The association was created in 1995 and registered under public law recognized as an independent membership organization with a written status. Adherence for membership is voluntary. The association is that of institutions and all the 138 municipalities of Cape Verde are members. This implies that the association has a national coverage. The association sometimes does not respect certain clauses in the constitution that it should be apolitical. It still works in the association on political lines.

Objectives 5

The constitution and other important documents of the association exist.

The objectives are:

- To represent and defend the interest of Municipalities;
- To support local councils in implementing effective local governance;
- Development the capacity of the members and the staff of local government;
- Exchange of experiences and information in all areas of decentralisation;
- Represent its members at national and international fora.

Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The annual budget of the association is US\$377,897. The revenues is obtained from the following sources:

- Local revenue
- Central Government transfer
- Cooperation Fund

The association is capable of collecting about 50% of membership fees. The funds are used to cover operational costs. Since the association lacks adequate resources to implement programmes, it has to depend on donor funding. The association focuses on sustainability and income generation but without a proper strategy. It has at least two other sources of self-generated income that together provide a minimum of 10% of revenues.

Institutional organisation

The institutional organizational structure of the association is not appropriate for the institutional purposes. There are 22 regions and 138 members. The Board is composed of 7 members who are elected in accordance with the statutes currently in effect and supervises the activities of the association. The Board understands that they are responsible for ensuring that programmes are being carried out as planned and are consistent with the objectives, principles and values of the association. The Board also acts in accordance with the statutes and ensures that the association is effectively managed.

The task and responsibilities between Board and Secretariat is well defined but not fully respected. The Board meets regularly that is three times in a year with good preparation. There is no evidence of follow-up on key issues.

Human Resource Management and Development

The secretariat of the association consists of a staff roll of 26 of which 5 are technical and 2 are administrative staff. The association provides training for the staff though ad hoc and not properly coordinated. The staff members know and agree on their task, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities. The association has a written organizational chart but not updated.. All staff have written job description and clear roles and responsibilities. The staff policies and procedures are also out dated with the reality of the office. The staff have the necessary capacity to carry out their duties but need training.

Staff recruitment is done purely on merit, professional expertise and experience. Training and development plans take account of personal development plans and each staff member has equal chance of being trained to improve skills and performance. The relevant staff have knowledge of basic project management but lack professional skills. Staff are highly motivated to achieve results and productivity is high.

Financial Administration and Management

Internal auditing is a very important component of management in that association. Internal audit reports are used in influencing management performance.

The association implements and follows a comprehensive set of written policies for administration of funds. The management system ensures timely monitoring, management of cash flow, budgeting, financial statements, financing operations, auditing, insurance management taxation, solvency planning. The financial management and accounting staff is trained with a University degree in finance and accounting. The financial staff has the requisite degree but there was no evidence of financial planning, analysis and specific management information. The association does not have a software for financial management.



The association exercises internal financial control rules and regulations, ensuring compliance with financial management policies and procedures. The association carries out financial control every year. Financial control is systematic in the country. The financial documents are sent to the Administrative Bench for auditing. The results are presented to the members for discussions during the general assembly meeting.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association has an excellent strategic plan with long-term objectives and financial plan that covers the mandate of the executives. It has a written multi-year strategic plan developed in participatory manner describing what the association does. There are working committees on the priority themes. Planning is organized in such a way as to cover the mandate of the elected officials.

The association also carries out strategic reviews, feedback, monitoring and evaluation periodically with clear and updated qualitative/quantitative indicators taking into consideration and inputs from experts, the Board and relevant committees of membership. The findings of such activities are presented and openly discussed by membership and used for decision-making.

Service Delivery

The association offers services like capacity building to staff and Mayors of the municipalities. It provides information on Decentralised Cooperation/Twinning, government text reforms sent in by the government and other advisory services as well as technical assistance in different domains. The association has the possibility are rendering more services to the members but the association is political. Funding proposals are no longer developed and the association is not regular at donor meetings where development orientation is discussed.

Work Environment

The association has a library with 1500 titles. There are only 5 computers in the association and all have access to Internet. The association has good office space and staff comfortable to work effectively.

Communication Policies

The association has a website www.anmcv.org but not connected to any social media. It has a printed newsletter. It has written communication strategy identifying information required by membership; specifies how information will be sourced and processed prior to dissemination; outlines best methods of disseminating different categories of information. The association uses mainly the emailing system to disseminate information to members.

Networking

The association is a member of national, regional and international organisations like National Agency for Portuguese Municipalities The association is member of UCLG – Africa and Association of the Municipalities of Galiza-Spain, Association of Mayors of Francophone Countries. It is active in all these associations

Lobbying and Advocacy

The association does not make proposals for new legislations. All government texts are systematically sent to the association for review before it goes to Parliament.

This is a constitutional prerogative. This method is therefore used as a framework for lobbying. The General Secretary coordinate the text reform activity based on a strong policy research. The Board is quite involved in this activity. The position

The key lobbying and advocacy positions are presented in a credible and defensible manner. The relation with stakeholders is good.

Conclusion

The National Association of Municipalities of Cape Verde is a strong association, which renders diverse services to the members. It handles strategic planning well and is able to monitor and evaluate though without defined indicator. The association has competent staff and sufficient to carry out the activities of the association. The association is quite influential. It also represents the members nationally and internationally. The members of the Board are democratically elected at the national congress. It should be noted that all national text and laws are systematically sent for review by the association before it goes to Parliament and their inputs are considered. The challenge with the association is that the members still hold on to their political parties and their ideologies. This destroys the progress and the quality of services of the association.

3. Côte d'Ivoire

UNION OF TOWNS AND COUNCILS OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE (UVICOCI)

INTRODUCTION

Côte d'Ivoire is a unitary State. The Decentralisation process in Côte d'Ivoire started since 1978 with Law No. 78-07 of 09 January 1978 creating 26 local councils. This law was applied in 1980 in order to promote local development. The communes were created with the power to conceive their own development in their various localities.

In 2000, new decentralized entities were set up called General Councils. Law No. 2001-476 of 9 August 2001 was based on the reorganization of the national territory. Act. No. 2001- 447 of 9 August 2001, the local entities were empowered to promote local development.

In 2003, the law transferring various domains of competence from the State to the Local Councils was adopted (Law No. 2003-208 of July 2003).

Legal Status

UVICOCI was created on the 06 of August 1983 following Law No. 80-1180 of 17 August 1980 on the organisation of municipalities of Côte d'Ivoire. The members of the association are the cities and towns of Côte d'Ivoire, which implies that it is an association of institutions. Adherence to the association is voluntary. It has a national coverage. This association is considered as an independent membership organisation adhering to a written constitution. The association has good relations with stakeholders.

Objectives

UVICOCI has a strong constitution with a clear vision mission statement. The structures are well defined as well as functions.





The objectives of the association are:

- To establish and develop solidarity between the cities and the municipalities of Côte d'Ivoire in order to harmonize their actions,
- To articulate local government needs and expectations to the Government;
- To exchange information and experiences;
- To provide a national platform for local governments;
- To provide services to strengthen local authorities;
- To promote Decentralised Cooperation;
- To provide a forum to network with peers.

Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The annual budget of the association is US\$400,000. The revenue is obtained from the Local revenue and cooperation funds.

The association collects less than 10% of membership fees and this is not enough to cover operations and programme costs. The association does not have any income generating activities. It does not have a financial sustainability strategy. This makes it difficult for the association to pay salaries for staff. Most often the association cannot maintain the staff that have to leave for non-respect of contractual obligations.

Institutional Organisation

The institutional organisation is appropriate for the work of the association. There is a Board in place and a Secretariat. The Board is made up of 18 members. The Board members are elected in accordance with the statutes currently in effect and effectively oversees the activities of the organisation. The Board understands that they are responsible for ensuring that programmes are being carried out as planned and are consistent with the objectives, principles and values of the organisation. The Board also acts in accordance with the statutes and ensures that the performance of the association is of high standards.

The Board and Secretariat understand their tasks and responsibilities, but these are not respected. A General Assembly meeting was held on the 13th of April 2002 and for 12 years there was no general assembly meeting because of the successive crisis that Côte d'Ivoire experienced. During the crisis, there was a general dysfunctioning of all the national and local institutions. By April 2013, all local elections had been held and a general assembly meeting took place in November 2013; it provided some legitimacy to the association and its function and importance recognized in high places like the Presidency. The Minister in charge of local government affairs attended the Board meeting. From thence the Board meetings are regular and well prepared to monitor management.

Human Resource Management and Development

There are a total of 21 staff members in the association. 2 are at the high managerial position, 6 are technical staff, 2 are service staff and 11 are unclassified. The staff are considered few to carry out all the activities of the association but the association lacks financial means to recruit more staff. The technical staff have adequate capacity to perform their duties. The administrative staff are not sufficient and the association lacks the means to recruit more.

The association organizes *ad hoc* capacity building activities, which are not properly coordinated and dependent on donor funding. The association trained the technical staff last year in the area of mobilization of resources and participatory budgeting.

There is a written organizational chart and job description but does not reflect the changes in the association. The staff is recruited on an ad hoc basis depending on the nature of work. Training opportunities are usually restricted to professional staff and staff productivity is low due to low staff motivation. Two (2) training events were organized last semester and 153 people participated.

The association has the capacity and resources to develop high quality project proposals and win additional funding and implement activities in line with strategic objectives. In 2013, it managed a European Union funded project.

Financial Administration and Management

There is no mechanism for conducting internal audits in the association. A set of written financial management, control and accounting procedures, rules and regulations which are not implemented. The Permanent Secretary performs the responsibility of financial officer in addition to his other duties. There are ad hoc internal control and transparent mechanisms in place.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association has a strategic plan and working committees on priority themes. It has *Ad hoc* departmental work plans developed internally and usually based on previous year's plans and the findings of such activities are presented and openly discussed by membership and used for decision-making.

Service Delivery

The association was unable to offer high quality services to the members for over 10 years due to the crisis situation in that country. Things only came to normalcy a few years ago and the association is vowing to offer high quality services to members. The new Board that took over during the general assembly, which held in 2013, made this pledge. The Board reaffirmed this position during the 2014 extra-ordinary general assembly meeting.

Work Environment

The structure for the activities of the association is quite adequate. The head quarter is a building with 23 offices. The association has a library with 460 titles. There are 12 computers in the association and all have access to the Internet. The association owns the building.

Communication Policies

The association does not have a website. It has no Facebook page and does not produce any newsletter. There is no written communication strategy. The internal and external communication flow is ineffective. The association makes good use of IT in communications with the local authorities.

Networking

The association participates actively in national, regional and international networks. It is a member of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A) and the International Association of Francophone Mayors. It is also a member of Conseil des Collectivités Territoriales de L'UEMOA and others. It is recognized at the international level as an association that is networking to achieve its objectives.





Lobbying and Advocacy

The association undertakes a little lobbying and advocacy without a proper strategy. The local government entities were not functioning during the crisis period and there was no lobbying and advocacy carried out for a long time. The association will now have to put up a good lobbying and advocacy strategy now that the crisis period is over and they are starting anew with offering services to members.

Conclusions

UVICOCI has now become very active after the crisis period and the holding an extra-ordinary general assembly on the 20 January 2014. During the crisis period in Côte d'Ivoire, the national and local institutions could not function therefore UVICOCI could not offer services to the members. With the extra-ordinary congress, a new bureau voted into office, the new bureau has pledged to support members of the association. The relationship between the new bureau and the central government makes one to imagine how independent it will be and how influential it can be.

The human resources of the association are 21 in number but the Executive Director performs the role of financial officer including his own role. This situation makes one to question the description of tasks and responsibilities of the other staff members. The fact that the association has now started on a new footing, it is advisable to restructure the administration, coming up with a new organizational chart that will be implemented..

5. Gambia

GAMBIA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AUTHORITIES (GALGA)

INTRODUCTION

In 1997, The Gambia adopted a National Strategy for Decentralization and Local Government Reforms as enshrined in the 1997 Constitution. Section 193 of the 1997 Constitution stipulates, "that local government administration shall be based on a Democratically Elected Council with a high degree of Local Autonomy". The Government instituted a programme of Decentralization and Institutional reforms consistent with the constitution. Current local government legislation in the Gambia provides for the self-administration of local government by elected councils. The Local Government Act of 2002 prescribes that local governments are responsible for the economic, social, and cultural development of the population and territories they administer. The decision-making concerning the acknowledgement of these competences in favour of the local governments is also in the 1997 Constitution and Local Government Act 2002. The constitution defines the distribution of competences and resources between central and local governments integrating local governments effectively into the system of governance alongside of central government, under decentralization; the organic and fundamental legitimacy of local governments has been made more glaring and is better defined. Central Government is in charge of overseeing the implementation of the decentralization activities through the Ministry of Lands and Regional Governments.

The Gambia is a unitary State. It is divided into 8 Local Government areas of which two are the City of Banjul (the capital) and the Municipality of Kafining. Each Local Government Area is administered by a Council to provide services and a Governor appointed by the Head of State in 5 Regions. Elected Mayors head the two other Regions. Chief Executive Officers who are appointed by the councils technically head each of the eight Councils.

Legal Status

GALGA was created on the 7 September, 2002 and registered under private law. It has a strong constitution. Adherence to the association is voluntary and all municipalities are members meaning it has a national coverage. It is an institutional association that is recognized as an independent membership organisation.



Objectives

GALGA has a clear vision. The constitution has well-structured organs and clear mandate for the Board and the Secretariat.

The objectives of the association are:

- To articulate local government needs and expectations to the Government;
- To provide a national platform for local government;
- To provide services to strengthen local authorities;
- To negotiate the on-going decentralisation of functions and resources;
- To provide a place to network with peers.

Annual Budget and Financial sustainability

The annual budget of the association stands at US\$137,913. It gets revenue from Local revenue. About 30% of members pay their membership fees, which is mainly used to cover operations cost while donors fund most of the programmes and activities. There are just a few municipalities in the Ghana. Non-payment of the membership dues can render the association non-functional. The lack of adequate revenue has made the association not to have adequate and qualified staff to man the activities of the association. The association has no other source of income except the membership contributions. It does not have any income generation strategy and does not focus on financial sustainability.

Institutional Organisation

The institution is organized in a manner that it can meet the objectives of the association. There is a Board that supervises the activities as implemented by the Secretariat. The Board is made up of 25 elected members. The Board works in accordance with what is inscribed in the constitution. The Secretariat implements the activities in accordance with the goals and objectives of the association.

The Board understands that it is responsible for policy making and overseeing the general performance of the association. The Executive Director does the day-to-day administration and management of the association.

The Board meetings are generally irregular and informal meetings though well prepared with adequate follow-up of actions. The Board members are quite knowledgeable of the activities of the Board.

Human Resource Management and Development

There are six (6) technical staff in the association and eight (8) service staff. There is only one (1) administrative staff. The technical staff lack capacity to carry out the activities of the association. The administrative staff has the capacity to drive the activities but are also not sufficient. The association lacks the means to organize capacity building for the staff therefore there was no staff training last year.

There is a written organizational chart and job description not updated with the changes that go on in the association.

Recruitment is done on Ad hoc basis. The association has capacity to develop high quality project proposals and win additional funding and implement activities in line with its strategic objectives. Presently the association is implementing a programme funded by the European Union for Non State Actors in partnership with Ghana and Zimbabwe (STRAP Project).



Financial Administration and Management

The association implements and follows comprehensive set of written policies for administration of funds, covering expenditure authorization and other financial management and accounting procedures. Independent auditing takes place once every year but the challenge remains the availability of the audit reports. The reports do not come back to the association in time to permit discussions on expenditure during Board meetings. This unfortunate situation prevents the Board from making advisory decisions to make improvements in the management of the association. However, the Secretariat exercises internal financial control rules and regulations, ensuring compliance with financial management policies and procedures.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association has developed a multi-year strategic plan developed in a participatory manner and based on the objectives of the association. The plan has a budget but there are no indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Also there are no committees working on priority themes to ensure the activities are in line with the objectives of the association.

Service Delivery

GALGA is considered a gateway to the local authorities of The Gambia. To meet and work with any local government in the Gambia, you have to pass through the association. This phenomenon is particular of the Gambia. The association offers and delivers high quality services to membership (both individually and collectively) in the major local government fields.

Work Environment

The association has an adequate office space to carry out its activities. There is no library. There are only 2 computers and all are connected to Internet.

Communication Policies

The association does not have a written strategy for interacting with the members

The association does not have a website. There is no newsletter. The association is not connected on the social media. The association gets to its members through emails and telephone calls.

Networking

The association is active in several national, regional and international groupings. It is a member of the Board of several organisations in the country working in the domain of local development. GALGA is member of the regional associations like the United Cities and local Government of Africa (UCLG-A). It participates in summits and this helps the association in experience sharing and peer review.

Lobbying and Advocacy

The association undertakes some lobbying and advocacy based on a written strategy. There is no policy research that accompanies lobbying. The association lacks the resources to implement lobbying. The spokesman of the association is independent. The association engages a strong dialogue with the government, and participates actively in national commissions.



Conclusions


GALGA is a weak association in terms of administration and services to members. It does not have adequate staff to carry out the activities of the association. The staff lack the necessary capacity to perform their duties. The Board meetings are generally side events for other meetings though well prepared with adequate follow-up of actions. The association is incapable of organizing Board meeting. This makes the Board meeting irregular and if there happen to hold, there is generally no ample time allocated for the meeting. This situation makes it difficult for issues to be addressed in a serious manner.

GALGA is strong and efficient when it comes to networking with peers. Despite the challenges of lack of adequate staff, GALGA is able to write and win a European Union funded project in partnership with other countries.

6. Ghana

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF GHANA

INTRODUCTION



The local government units in Ghana are called District Assemblies. The decentralisation law is provided in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, which provides that a *District Assembly* is the highest political authority in the district, and that the District Assembly has deliberative, legislative and executive powers. The Constitution prescribes that Ghana shall have “a system of local government and administration which shall, as far as practicable, be decentralized” State “to take appropriate measures to ensure decentralization in administration and financial machinery of government and to give opportunities to people to participate in decision-making at every level in national life and government”.

The main legislative texts pertaining to local government are:

- Civil Service Law 1993 (PNDCL 327) Local Government Act No. 462 of 1993
- National Development Planning (System) Act 480 of 1994;
- National Development Planning Commission Act 479 of 1994;
- District Assemblies' Common Fund Act 455 of 1993;
- Local Government Service Act 656 of 2003, (and other legislation pertaining to administration of local government and central government personnel at local level);

Ghana is a unitary State with a Presidential regime. The District Assemblies' autonomy is limited by the presidential appointees: 30 per cent of the members of the Assembly and the District Chief Executive are appointed by the President. The District Chief Executive heads the executive committee of the Assembly and is the chief representative of the Government in the district, allowing the central government to exercise considerable control over the affairs of the local government.

Legal Status

The 18th of November 1997 was a historic day for NALAG when it saw two (2) associations that use to exist come together. NALAG is registered under public law and all the 216 district assemblies (metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies) of Ghana and members, which implies that it has a national coverage. Adherence to the association is compulsory. The association continued to evolve in structure and systems. In 1998, NALAG deliberately opted out of government subvention so as to get the independence and autonomy it deserves to play its role effectively.



Objectives

NALAG has a constitution with a clear vision and a demand-driven mandate.

The objectives of the association are:

- To promote the development of local government and decentralization;
- Assist the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies and lower local government bodies in the performance of all functions assigned to them in the Constitution or any other law;
- Advocate and lobby for good and effective policies for local government sector as well as the creation of an appropriate enabling environment for the effective and efficient performance of local authorities;
- Propose alternative policy and legislative options for the local government sector that will ensure a more effective implementation of the 1992 Constitutional provisions on Decentralisation and Local Government;
- Assist in maintaining high standards of local government administration, local level development, local economic development and local service delivery;
- Provide a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas and information on matters of mutual interest related to local government as a means of solving problems of the members.

Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The revenue is obtained from the Local revenue and development cooperation funds. 100% of the members pay membership fees thanks to the system in place for the collection whereby the fees are transferred directly from the District Assembly Common Fund to the association. The funds cover both the operations and programmes. The system is possible because NALAG membership is compulsory and same principle can be applied to every member.

The association focuses on financial sustainability and income generation. One of the sources of self-generated income is the sales of dairies. This constitutes only about 1% of the revenue of the association. Another source of income for the association is the office space that it is leasing out.

Institutional Organisation

The constitution of NALAG clearly defines its structures. There is a Board and a Secretariat in place with sub-committees. The Board is made up of 18 members. Although some members of the assembly are appointed, the Board members are democratically elected at the National Delegates Congress. The Board members are quite knowledgeable of the issues and activities of the association. NALAG opted out of government subvention in the 1990s to be independent in actions of lobbying. But the contradiction is that some of the assembly members are appointed which makes them unable to be quite independent. The President of NALAG who chairs the National Executive Council is appointed by the President. The role of the two structures (the Board and the Secretariat) is quite clear. The Board is structured into sub-committees according to some priority themes. The Board meets regular and the meetings are well prepared to monitor management. The Board follows up on the implementation of the resolutions taken. Various stakeholders attend the National Delegates Council including Ministers. This is considered an important event by the local government association.

Human Resource Management and Development

There are a total of 12 staff members in the association. 4 of them are at the high level managerial position. These 4 are equally considered as the technical staff. The staff are considered few but the association lacks financial means to recruit more staff. The technical staff does not have adequate capacity to perform their duties. They need training to enhance capacity. The association organizes ad hoc capacity building activities which are not properly coordinated and dependent on donor funding.

The main training that was conducted last year was on team building. 17 people attended. The staff know and agree on their task, responsibilities, authorities, and accountability to ensure results. Staff members are recruited on merit while others are not. Staff motivation is limited and does not include fringe benefits. The relevant staff have knowledge of basic project management but lack professional skills.

Financial Administration and Management

The association has no mechanism for conducting internal audits. It implements and follows comprehensive set of written policies for administration of funds, covering expenditure authorization and other financial management and accounting procedures. The finance and administration staff have a good understanding of tasks and responsibility but lacks professional experience. There is no internal financial control system in place.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association does not have a strategic plan. There is a short term planning in place which is done by staff and depends on funds available in the association. The plan does not contain monitoring and evaluation indicators. The association has sub-committees that work on the priority themes but there is hardly any follow-up to their work.

Service Delivery

The association offers a number of services targeted for a select number of local governments but not properly coordinated and are largely donor dependent. The association does not carry out membership service satisfaction survey and can hardly identify the real needs of the members.

Work Environment

The association has an adequate structure to carry out its activities. The Secretariat is hosted at an ultra modern building in Accra. There is one room that can take more than 50 people. The association does not have a library. It has 5 computers and all are connected to the Internet.

Communication Policies

NALAG has a website www.nalag-ghana.org and a Facebook page with 17 likes. There is a printed newsletter called the *NALAG Voice*. There is neither a communication strategy nor a media strategy in place and internal and external communication flows are ineffective. NALAG uses some basic communication mechanisms like emails, postal system and telephone system to reach its members.

Networking

NALAG is affiliated to several local, regional and international networks and participates actively. NALAG is a member of United Cities and Local Government, United Cities and Local Government of Africa, Commonwealth Local Government Forum, and several others.

Lobbying and Advocacy

The association undertakes some activities of lobbying and advocacy from time to time without a proper strategy. The association makes proposals for new legislation and has good relations with stakeholders.

Lobbying and advocacy is largely reactive through passive participation in task force meetings and commenting on ready-made legislative and policy documents without having impact on their initiation and outcome.





It engages strong dialogue with government, parliament, NGOs and businesses. There are no cooperation agreements with government and no active participation in national commissions.

Conclusion

It is challenging for NALAG to offer high quality services to its members though NALAG is able to collect 100% of membership fees. Most often the District Assembly Common Fund is released late. This affect planning and the services to be provided may not be as expected.

NALAG is doing quite well when it comes to financial sustainability. It has income generating projects. The association still plans to continue to develop income generating projects. This enables the association to continue carrying out activities even when the District Assembly Common Fund is delayed. The fact that there is no communication strategy in place makes it difficult for members to know what is happening in the association and also sometimes getting information to their members become a challenge. The development of a communication strategy becomes imperative.

7. Guinea Bissau

ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF GUINEA BISSAU (CI-AALGB)

INTRODUCTION

In April 1991, a new constitution providing for multiparty system was adopted in Guinea Bissau. The government engaged the decentralization process as a respond to increasing political pressure to democratize national institutions. The 1984 Constitution of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, (as amended in 1991) states in Article 7 that *based on its unitary structure and to realize the national interest, the State of Guinea-Bissau shall encourage the creation of and support the activities of decentralized territorial collectives [colectividades] which are endowed with autonomy by law.* Presidential and legislative elections were organized in July 1994 and the Decentralisation process started in December 1994. The decentralization law only came into effect in 1997. The decentralization law assigned the regions and sectors new decision-making, implementation and control functions while leaving the financing of development to the central government.

The decision to decentralize proved to be purely formal to the extent that neither the intermediate nor the local level received any new resources to carry out the new functions that were assigned them under decentralization. No support policy was adopted to facilitate decentralization and there was lack of information concerning the process. The powers of the authorities in charge of the decentralized entities are thus almost non-existence. The executives of the local authorities are appointed by the President of the Republic. In 2010, the Installation Commission for Local Authorities was created with the aim of organizing the 2012 local elections. The 2012 elections never took place because of the Coup d'Etat. Since 2014, there is a legitimate government in place and local elections are scheduled for 2017. In Guinea Bissau, there are 8 regions, 38 sectors and one autonomous sector, that is Bissau.

Legal Status

The Installation Commission for Local Authorities of Guinea Bissau is a legal body that was created to organize local elections. It groups up all the local authorities but it is different from other local government associations in Africa. It was created by law therefore it is legally constituted. It may not be correct to state that adherence is voluntary because it is the law that makes all the local authorities to belong to the institution and since it is concerns all the local authorities, one may say it has a national coverage.



Objectives

This body was created to organize election and it

The objectives are:

- To organize local elections;
- Provide a national platform for local government;
- Provide services to strengthen local authorities;
- Negotiate the on-going decentralisation of functions and resources;
- Provide a place to network with peers.

Guinea-Bissau has never held local elections, not even since the launch of the decentralisation policy with the constitutional amendment of 2001. Local authorities are appointed by the President of the Republic.

Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The annual budget of the association is US\$350,000. The revenue is obtained from the Local revenue only. There are hardly any financial transfers from the central government to the local governments, and the ones that exist are erratic and occasional.

The organisation is only capable of obtaining about 10% of the funds which is not enough to cover operations.

Institutional Organisation

There are 12 Board members. The Board members are elected in accordance with the statutes currently in effect and really oversees the organisation. The Board also acts in accordance with the statutes and ensures that the rest of the organisation respects the constitution. The Board meetings are irregular though well prepared. The agenda and decision-making are largely dominated by the Executive Director which implies that the Board is not knowledgeable of the activities of the organisation.

Human Resource Management and Development

There are only 2 technical staff members working at the secretariat of the organisation. The number of people working in the organisation is not sufficient to man the activities. Also they lack the necessary capacity to implement decisions. The association provides *ad hoc* training for the staff and it is not properly coordinated. The task and the responsibilities of the staff and the Board is not clear and this may create some conflict in roles. Recruitment of staff is based on favouritism and corruption other than merit. There is lack of training for the staff and lack of equipment to carry out their duties. This situation demotivates the staff.

Financial administration and management

The financial management system is operated on a rudimentary cash accounting system with incomplete financial records. Also the financial management staff has only basic skills. There is no internal financial control system in place.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association has a plan with short-term planning objectives done internally by staff. There are no monitoring and evaluation indicators in the plan and there are no formal monitoring and evaluation systems in place.



Service Delivery

The association does not offer any services to members. The resources are not available, making it a challenge for them to render services to members.

Work Environment

The organisation does not have an adequate structure to carry out its activities. There are no computers in the association. There is no library. The office space is provided by the Conseil des Collectivites Territoriales de L'UEMOA.

Communication Policies

The association has neither a website nor a printed newsletter. It is not connected to any social media. There is no communication strategy and there is no adequate communication system in place.

Networking

The organisation participates in some networking activities organized by the United Cities and local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A) but does not pay membership dues. It also has some cooperation ties with the Union of Lusophone Capital Cities as well as National Association of Portuguese Municipalities.

Lobbying and Advocacy

Some lobbying and advocacy is undertaken based on superficial mouth-piece talking to reiterate government position, opinion and ideology without independence. The association however enjoys good relations with stakeholders. At times it also engages strong dialogue with the government, parliament, NGOs and businesses. It has no cooperation with the government and does not participate in national commissions. The fact that it does not cooperate with the government and does not participate in national commissions may be because of their role as the organisation is created to organize local elections.

Conclusion

This organisation is very weak to stand in the place of a local government association. The main objective of its creation as defined by text was not to defend the rights of local governments. The main role of lobbying and advocacy is not quite development in this association. The association does not offer services to the members. Also it is not independent in its position when lobbying. This has a serious effect on the main role. Also the Board does not meet regularly making it passive in the activities of an association. In this situation, the Board will not be able to make decision to offer services to members since it is not a knowledgeable Board. There are no computers in the association making it almost impossible for the staff to work.



8. Guinea

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS OF GUINEA (ANCG)

INTRODUCTION

From 1958 to 1984 Guinea was administered by a strictly centralized system of governance with one party rule. From 1985, the Head of State announced some reforms that were based on citizen participation in the management of public affairs of the State. Decentralisation was introduced in 1986 and several texts were promulgated on the organisation and functioning of local authorities.

Urban and Rural councils were created from 1986 -1991. Local councils were created *progressively* and today all whole country is covered by local councils both Urban and Rural councils. The local authorities are:

- The City of Conakry;
- 38 Urban Councils
- 303 Rural Communities

There are many texts on the organisation and functioning of these entities. During the implementation of these dispositions, it was realized that there was confusions and contradictions. Some of the texts were impossible to apply. For example there was no decision-making organ at the local council level. Most of these weaknesses paralysed the smooth running of the decentralization process and there was the need for correction. On the 15 May 2006, a Local Government Code was adopted. The Republic of Guinea is a unitary State. The 2010 Constitution stipulates that the territorial organisation of the Republic consist of Territorial Circumscriptions and Local Authorities. The territorial circumscriptions are Prefectures and Sub-Prefectures. The Local Authorities are regions, urban communes and rural communes.

Legal Status

ANCG was created in 2010 and membership is voluntary. The association is registered under private law. It is an institutional independent organisation with a national coverage.

Objectives

ANCG has a strong constitution. The vision and missions are very clear with well-defined tasks and responsibilities for all the structures.

The objectives of the association are:

- To serve as a platform between local councils and the government and local councils and development partners
- To represent and defend the common interest of the members;
- To promote the development of local government and decentralization;
- To promote decentralized cooperation and inter-municipality;
- To assist the local authorities in the performance of all functions assigned to them in the Constitution or any other law;
- To assist in promoting local government administration and local level development;
- To provide a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas and information on matters of mutual interest related to local government as a means of solving problems of the members.
- To create a forum for exchange of experiences and promote solidarity;
- To unite members in one voice to have same understanding and create partnership;
- To participate in municipal movement and networking in Africa and the World.



Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The revenue of the association is obtained from the Local revenue and transfer. The annual budget is US\$119,000. Membership fees stands at 50% collection and the funds are used for operations. Donor funds are used for programmes.

The association does not have any other source of revenue and has no income generation strategy.

Institutional organisation

The organisation of the association is excellent for an association. The main structures are in place that is the Board and the Secretariat. The Board is made up of 58 members. The Board members are elected in a democratic process with the aim of directing the activities of the association. The general assembly meets annually with good preparation and open and frank discussions for adequate policies for the association. During the meeting, key stakeholders participate including Ministers. The meeting is seen as key event by local authorities.

The Board meetings are regular and direct and monitor management. Important issues concerning the association are discussed and every member has the right to give his opinion. The duties and responsibilities of the Board and the Secretariat are well spelt out to give a balance of power.

Human Resource Management and Development

The staff of the association are only three. This number is considered insufficient to implement all the activities of the association. The technical staff are competent but they need some capacity building to perform better on the job. For the administrative staff, they are considered enough for their job. The association organizes a few training for staff and members of the association. The staff know and understand their tasks and responsibilities and there is a written organisational chart which is regularly updated. The recruitment process is transparent and the best candidates are retained.

Financial Administration and Management

The Executive Director performs the function of financial management staff in addition to his other responsibilities. There are financial management, control and accounting procedures in place. The association generally follows transparent financial control practices that will reduce any misappropriation of funds but not fully institutionalized.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association has an effective multi-year strategic plan developed in a participatory manner but which is not too linked to long-term goals and ongoing activities. There are committees working on priority themes. The staff does the monitoring and evaluation but without defined indicators and procedures.

Service Delivery

The association offers only a few services to members. The services are generally offered and funded by a donor and the association does not have the possibility of reviewing the offer. This implies that the services will not be in line with objectives and goals of the association.

Work Environment

There is no library at the association. The association has an adequate structure to carry out its activities. There are 3 computers and all 3 have access to the Internet.

Communication Policies

The website address of the association is www.ancg-guinee.org. There is also a Facebook page. The association has a printed newsletter called “Le Bulletin des Communes” and an electronic newsletter. There is a written communication strategy identifying information required by membership; specifies how information will be sourced and processed prior to dissemination; outlines best methods of disseminating different categories of information.

Networking

The association networks at the national, regional and international levels for the benefit of their members. It is a member of the United Cities and Local Government of Africa, a member of the International Conference of Francophone Mayors and the ‘Collectivités Territoriale’ de L’UEMOA.

Lobbying and Advocacy

Although the association has a written lobbying and advocacy strategy, it lacks resources to implement it. Lobbying and advocacy is generally undertaken during meetings and participation in some national committees. This hardly has an impact to change issues. Sometimes the association makes proposals for new legislation and they engage strong dialogue with government.

Conclusion

The Association is weak. It is incapable of offering services to the members. Also lobbying and advocacy that is its main objective is not quite developed. There is a written lobbying and advocacy strategy but not well implemented. Most often it does participate passively in task force meetings and comments on ready-made legislative and policy documents. Commenting on ready-made legislative and policy documents will not take the interest of their members into account since it may not change the outcome. The association does not also seem to take staff training seriously. The staff have the capacity to perform their duties, they need some training. The association will have to start engaging in more serious lobbying and advocacy because this is the main role and should have a strong technical and administrative team to man the activities of the association.

9. Mali

ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF MALI (AMM)

INTRODUCTION

In Mali, the process of democratization and decentralization began in 1991. The Government of Mali’s goals for decentralization included strengthening local government, promoting development and fostering political stability. The decentralization process got some impulsion from 2 major events:

- The 1990 Rebellion from the North of the country;
- The 1991 Revolution.

The democratically elected Government of Mali adopted a series of laws and policies designed to guide decentralization. The Constitution of 25 February 1992 form the bases of the Principle of Decentralisation while the law on decentralization (law No. 93-008/AN-RM of February 1993), adopted in 1993, provides a general framework for decentralization. It stated that “Local Authorities are created and managed under conditions defined by the law” Article 97. The law also calls for elected assemblies or councils to manage the municipalities. ‘The Local Authorities will be managed freely by elected councilors and under conditions fixed by the law’ (article 98).



The main decentralization law is Law No. 96-059 of 04 of November 1996 creating Municipalities. The country is divided into 8 regions and the capital district Bamako. The region and capital district are divided into 49 cercles (district) which are further subdivided into 703 municipalities.

Legal Status

AMM was created in November 2000 and registered under private law. It is an association of institutions whereby adherence is free and voluntary. It has a national coverage and is recognized as an independent membership organisation.

Objectives

AMM has a constitution where the main structures are clearly outlined with their functions.

The objectives of the association are:

- To contribute to the strengthening of the policy of decentralization;
- To strengthen the capacity of members;
- To promote communal administration;
- To encourage the participation of all local actors in development in their councils;
- To promote cooperation between the councils of Mali and other councils with same objectives;
- To serve as an interface between local councils and the government, local councils and development partners to represent and defend the common interest of the members.

Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

Less than 10% of revenue is derived from membership fees and is not enough to cover operation and programme costs. The annual budget is US\$2,018,118. The revenue of the association is obtained from the Local revenue and transfer.

The association has only one source of income generation and that is the sale of sash. There is no income generation strategy for financial sustainability.

Institutional Organisation

The association is organized in an excellent manner to enable the activities to be carried out. There is a Board and a Secretariat in place. The Board is made up of 75 members. Democratic elections are held for the board to be constituted. Their mandate is for a period of 5 years. The main role of the Board is to orient the activities of the association. Both the Board and the Secretariat understand their role but these roles are not respected.

Board meetings are irregular though well prepared. The Board members do not undertake serious discussions on the issues of the association. All the Board members are unaware of ongoing issues of the association. The decision of the Board are not sent to the Board members in a systematic manner therefore members are not always abreast with the happenings of the association.

Human Resource Management and Development

There are 14 technical staff members in the association. The staff are considered few lacks adequate capacity to perform their duties. There is a written organizational chart and job description but not updated. Staff recruitment does not follow strict procedure. Staff productivity is low due to poor motivation.

The association has the capacity and resources to develop high quality project proposals and win additional funding and implement activities in line with its strategic objectives. The association organized one training event last semester where 120 people participated.

Financial Administration and Management

There is no internal audit mechanism in the association. There are appropriate set of written financial management, control and accounting procedures, rules and regulations exist but not strictly adhered. The financial management and accounting staff have the requisite professional skills of financing planning and analysis. The association generally follows transparent financial control practices but it is not institutionalized.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association has an effective multi-year strategic plan developed in a participatory manner. An annual work plan is developed from this strategic plan. The annual plan contains timeframes and budget.

There is a bi-annual monitoring and evaluation exercise done with strategic reviews and feedbacks. The report is elaborated and findings are presented and discussed openly by members and used for decision-making.

Service Delivery

The association offers a number of services to members like capacity building but since donors fund some of these activities, they do not reflect what the association wants for its members.

Work Environment

The structure of the association has a Board and a Secretariat. This structure enables the association to carry out its activities effectively. There is one hall in the association that can contain more than 50 people. There are 12 computers and all the 12 have access to the Internet. There is no library.

Communication Policies

The website address of the association is www.amm-mali.org with 4833 visitors last month. There is also a Facebook page with 843 likes. The association has a printed newsletter and an electronic version as well. There is no communication strategy and information circulation becomes a challenge. Members are not aware of what is happening at the level of the association.

Networking

The association is excellent in networking. The association has good international standing having many partners. It is a member of UCLG – Africa, L'UEMOA and AIMF. It cooperates with several development partners like VNG I, The Netherland Embassy, French Cooperation, Canada International Development Agency.

Lobbying and advocacy

The association undertakes some lobbying and advocacy based on a written strategy but resources to implement are lacking. The association carries out a lot of policy and documentation research before engaging in lobbying and advocacy. Key lobbying and advocacy positions are presented in credible, coherent, defensible and persuasive manner. Sometimes the association engages strong dialogue with government. Every year the association organizes a Municipal Open Day called 'Journée des Communes'. On this day the association presents a memorandum to the head of State whereby some of the issues affecting the municipalities are tabled for consideration by the government.





Conclusion

The staff of the association lack the capacity to perform their duties and they are few. The association needs to develop capacity of staff to enhance their performance.

The Association of Municipalities of Mali collects less than 10% of membership fees. This situation is not good for the association which will not be able to carry out activities due to lack of funds. It will have to depend on other organisations like donors for funding.

There is no focus on financial sustainability. This is risky because the day the members pay even less, the activities of the association may come to a stand still. Board meetings are irregular and if in session, the discussion is dominated by the Executive Director. This implies that the Board is not knowledgeable about what is happening in the association.

Communication is a very vital tool in any organisation. The lack of a communication strategy makes dissemination of information a challenge. The members of the association will not be aware of what is happening in the association and will not be able to take important decisions.

10. Mauritania

ASSOCIATION OF MAYORS OF MAURITANIA (AMM)

INTRODUCTION

In 1986, the policy of decentralization was introduced through Ordonance No. 86-134 of 13 August 1986 with the creation of municipalities. Local councils were legal entities with financial autonomy, territorial circumscription and population. Some competences were transferred to the local council. 216 local councils were created and one City council (Nouakchott) with district councils. The Constitution of 1991 with amendments in 2006 (Article 98) was the instrumental law on decentralization. The local elections of 2007 crowned the decentralisation process. Mauritania is a unitary State with one level of decentralization. It consists of 218 municipalities – 55 urban councils and 163 rural councils.

Legal Status

The association was created in 1986 and registered under private law. Membership is voluntary. It is an association of institutions with national coverage. It is recognised as an independent membership, autonomous from the central government and other organisations through taking independent positions or action on issues and activities.

Objectives

The association does not have a constitution. But it has a status and internal regulations.

The objectives are:

- Articulate local government needs and expectations to the Government;
- Provide a national platform for local government;
- Provide services to strengthen local authorities;
- Negotiate the on-going decentralisation of functions and resources;
- Provide a place to network with peers.



Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The annual budget of the association is US\$15,000. The revenue is obtained from the Local revenue and government grants. About 25% of membership fee is collected every year. The association has no other source of self-generated revenue and no financial sustainability strategy in place.

Institutional Organisation

The association has an excellent structure to carry on its activities. There is a Board in place and a Secretariat. There are 61 Board members. The Board and committee members are proposed and comparatively go through democratic elections. The elections take into account inclusion and representation. The Board oversees the performance of the organisation. The Board understands that they are responsible for ensuring that programmes are being carried out as planned and are consistent with the objectives, principles and values of the organisation.

The role of the Board and the Secretariat is well defined but not implemented.

The Board meetings are regular and well prepared to monitor management and there is prompt follow-up on the key issues. The General Assembly meets only once a mandate. This creates problems because the Board is unable to know the problems of their members.

Human Resource Management and Development

The association lacks sufficient staff but lacks means to recruit and even to train them. There are a total of 4 staff members in the association. No staff was trained last year. The association organizes a few capacity building activities which are not properly coordinated and dependent on donor funding.

There is no written organizational chart and job description in the association. The staff know and agree on their task and responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities to ensure results. There is no evidence of staff policies and office procedures.

Financial Administration and Management

The association no mechanism for conducting internal audits. There is no written financial management, control and accounting procedure in place. There is a cash accounting system in use with complete and up to date records.

The finance administration staff has some financial administration skills (though not of a University level) but is using basic registration of accounting information.

There is no internal control and transparent mechanisms in place. No independent review and financial auditing take place. During the general assembly, the bureau gives account of all expenditure.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association does not have a strategic plan but has an action plan. There are no working committees on priority themes. The short term planning is done by staff internally and there are no formal monitoring and evaluation systems in place.





Service Delivery

The association offers a number of services to members. It acts as intermediary between the government and the association, it provides technical and advisory support to members, it sensitizes partners of other problems of members, it represents members in meetings and events. It also makes sure that the interest of members are considered when text is prepared.

Work Environment

The association has a good structure to carry out its activities. An office structure exists but there is no library. There are just a few computers in the association given the fact that there are only a few staff in place. All the computers have access to internet.

Communication Policies

The association has a website www.amm.mr. It does not produce any newsletter. There is neither a communication policy nor media strategy in place. Internal and external communication flow is ineffective which is a challenge because members are not informed in a systematic manner of the happenings of the association.

Networking

The association is a member of many groupings at the national regional and international levels like the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, Association of Francophone Mayors etc...

Lobbying and Advocacy

The association undertakes a little lobbying and advocacy without a proper strategy.

The staff of the association is competent enough to carry out strong policy research. The President is a clearly designated, independent and daring spokesperson for the association. He is quite outspoken on matters that touch on interest of the members.

Because of the system in the country, not all members of the association are able to participate in lobbying but all the members of the Board participate. There is no effective communication system to alert all member when lobbying is needed.

The association is able to anticipate, prioritise and thoroughly analyse issues that are affecting the association.

Conclusion

This association is very weak. It lacks adequate resources to carry out its activities of providing services to the members. With the low annual budget, the association cannot be able to offer valuable services to the members. The association lacks the necessary technical staff to carry out the activities of the association and is unable to recruit more staff due to lack of resources. The staff are only 4 in number which is not sufficient to man the activities of a local government association. They however have the necessary capacity to carry out their duties. There is no training opportunity for the staff.

There is a new Board in place and the members of the Board are proposing actions to be taken by the association to support the members. The Board is quite knowledgeable and aware of the issues of the association.

11. Niger

ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF NIGER (AMN)

INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s, there was the need to make the population participate in the management of their own affairs and also to provide the population with basic social services, and that was the justification for the policy of decentralisation.

The main decentralization is Law No. 98 of 14 September 1998. This law provides for the free administration of local authorities. Also Law No. 2001 of 10 August 2001 that mapped out the various territorial administrative units for local authorities. In 2004, there was territorial reform and municipal elections were organised with the installation of 265 local council executives and deliberate organs. This consolidated the decentralisation process. There are 3 levels of decentralization in Niger: Regions, Departments and councils. Niger is a unitary State with a Presidential regime. It has 8 regions, 36 departments and 265 communes that is 52 Urban Councils and 213 Rural Councils.

Legal Status

Membership in L'AMN is voluntary. The association which has a national coverage is registered under the private law. It is an association of institutions recognized as an independent membership organisation adhering to a written constitution.

Objectives

AMN has a constitution with a clear vision and a demand-driven mandate.

The objectives of the association are:

- Articulate local government needs and expectations to the Government;
- Provide a national platform for local government;
- Provide services to strengthen local authorities;
- Negotiate the on-going decentralisation of functions and resources;
- Provide a place to network with peers.

Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The annual budget is US\$103,000. The revenue of the association is obtained from the Local revenue and transfer.

About 50% of members pay their membership fees which are mainly used to cover operations cost while donors fund most of the programmes and activities.

The association does not focus on financial sustainability and has no income generation strategy. There is no other source of income.

Institutional Organisation

The institutional arrangement of the association is good to carry out the duties of the association. There is a Board and a Secretariat in place. The Board is made up of 26 members. The Board members are elected democratically in accordance with the statutes currently in effect. The Board is in charge of directing the affairs of the association. The Board meetings are regular with poor preparation and no adequate follow-up on emerging issues.



Human Resource Management and Development

There are a total of 7 staff members in the association. The staff are considered few with inadequate capacity building. The association organizes ad hoc capacity building activities that are not properly coordinated and is dependent on donor funding. The association trained the technical staff last year in institutional management and in lobbying and advocacy. There is a written organizational chart and job description but does not reflect the reality of the association. Some staff members are recruited on merit while others are not. Staff motivation is limited.

Financial Administration and Management

No internal audit at this association. There are appropriate set of written financial management rules and regulations but not strictly adhered to and lacks key provisions such as checks and balance system of fund management. The association generally follows transparent financial control practices that minimizes potential for misuse and misappropriation of funds but not fully institutionalized.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association has an effective multi-year strategic plan developed in a participatory manner describing what the association does and not connected to long-term goals and ongoing activities. There are committees working on priority themes but there are no formal monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Service Delivery

The association offers a number of services targeted for a select number of local governments but not properly coordinated and are largely donor dependent.

Work Environment

The association has an adequate structure to carry out its activities. There is a library with 163 titles. There are 9 computers but only 2 have access to the Internet.

Communication Policies

The website address is www.amn-ne.org but has been suspended. There is neither a communication policy nor media strategy. There is no communication strategy in place.

Internal and external communication flows are ineffective making it difficult to keep members abreast of the happenings of the association.

Networking

The association participates in several grouping at the national, regional and international levels. The association is a member of the United Cities and Local Government of Africa and The Collectivités Territoriale de L'UEMOA.

Lobbying and Advocacy

The association undertakes some lobbying and advocacy based on a written strategy but resources to implement are lacking. Most often lobbying and advocacy is carried out through passive participation in meetings and commenting on ready-made legislative and policy documents without having impact on their initiation and outcome.



The association defends the interest of their members by engaging in strong dialogue with government. There are no cooperation agreements with government and no active participation in national commissions. A few times the association makes proposals for new legislation and this sometimes has effect.

Conclusion

The Secretariat of the association is not strong. It does not prepare adequately for Board meetings. The technical staff lack the capacity to perform their duties and the association is incapable of training them. There is confusion in roles between the Board and the Secretariat that needs to be clarified. The Constitution has to be clear on the role of the two bodies for proper management and coordination of activities. Also the members of the Board have to be involved in the activities of the association in order to be well informed and to be able to participate actively especially when it comes to dialogue with the Government and Parliament.

The association does not have the means to train staff. Training is not properly coordinated and depends on donor funding therefore the training needs of the staff is not be taken into consideration. The donors will propose what they like and what they can afford not what the association needs.

The communication strategy is not in place making it difficult for the association to disseminate information to members. If members are not informed of what is happening in the association, they will not be able to participate actively in manners of the association.



12. Rwanda

RWANDA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES (RALGA)

INTRODUCTION

On the 26 May 2000, the Government of Rwanda adopted a policy and strategy for decentralisation aimed at ensuring political, economic, social, managerial, and technical empowerment of the local population to fight poverty effectively at close range. The Decentralization Policy was approved in 2001 as a mechanism to achieve good governance principles (through improved participation, promotion of transparency and accountability, and setting up responsive decentralized structures), enhance local economic development (through efficiency and effectiveness in implementation of development programs) and bringing quality and accessible services closer to the citizens. Rwanda is a unitary State with one level of decentralization. It has 31 local governments.

Legal Status

RALGA is an institutional membership organization whereby adherence is voluntary. It was established in 2002 and registered under private law. All local governments of Rwanda are members making it have a national coverage. The association is recognized as an independent membership organisation adhering to a written constitution. It is autonomous from the central government and takes independent decisions.

Objectives

The functions and mandate of all the structures of the association are well spelt out in the constitution.

The main objective of RALGA is to assist local Government entities in achieving their mission, complying with principles of good governance and decentralization.



RALGA's responsibilities are:

- To represent the interests of members and give them efficient and effective services;
- To strengthen local governments through effective lobbying and advocacy for pro-local governments interests within the policy and legal frameworks as well as operational issues ;
- To champion accountability and transparency for improved and efficient service delivery ;
- To offer technical and professional advisory services to local governments on issues of policy and regulatory framework for decentralization ;
- To improve communication and information sharing in local governments;
- To carry out research and policy analysis for evidence based interventions.

RALGA is responsible for strengthening collaboration between Rwanda local government entities among themselves and with foreign local government entities.

Annual Budget and financial Sustainability

The annual budget of the association is US\$1,880,000. The revenue is obtained from the Local revenue and transfers.

The financial resources of the association makes a good balance between the local government associations self-financed and donor-funded activities. The association focuses on sustainability and income generation. It has at least one other source of self-generated income providing minimum of 5% of revenues. There is an *Ad hoc* financial sustainability strategy in place.

Institutional Organisation

The association has two structures that give a balance of power in the association. There is a Board in place and a Secretariat. The one supervises the activities of the association and the other manages. The Board is made up of 17 members. The Board members are elected in a democratic process in accordance with the statutes currently in effect and effectively oversees the organisation. The Board understands that they are responsible for ensuring that programmes are being carried out as planned. The Board also acts in accordance with the statutes and ensures that the rest of the organisation does as well.

The Board is responsible for decision-making on key policy issues. On the other hand, the Executive Director's role is to advise the Board on decision- making, leadership and strategic management as well as the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Board meetings are regular and well prepared to monitor management. Also the Board meetings discuss real issues fully and openly, and make decisions; each Board member has equal chance to freely express opinion and contribute.

It meets annually with good preparation and open debate leading to clear policy positions and priorities for the association. This is a major event by local authorities.

Human Resource Management and Development

There are a total of 19 staff members in the association. 7 are at the high level managerial position, 13 are technical staff, 4 are service staff and 2 are unclassified. There are a few staff in the association. These staff have the capacity to carry on the affairs of the association but they still need capacity building to enhance their skills. The association organizes regular capacity building activities targeting the various cadres of staff and categories of local authorities, based on self-financing and cost-sharing. Training and development plans take account of personal development plans and each staff member has equal chance of being trained to improve skills and performance.

The staff members know and agree on their tasks and responsibilities. There is a written organisational chart and job descriptions reflect roles and are regularly updated.

The staff are recruited on merit, professional expertise and experience. The staff are highly motivated to achieve results and productivity is high. The association has capacity and resources to develop high quality project proposals and win additional funding and implement activities in line with its strategic objectives.

The association organized 4 training events last semester and 125 people participated.

Financial Administration and Management

The association has a mechanism for conducting internal audits. The Internal Audit reports to the highest level of the association and the association responds to these reports with real internal change.

RALGA implements and follows comprehensive set of written policies for administration of funds, covering expenditure authorization and other financial management and accounting procedures. Evidence of mechanisms ensuing timely liquidity monitoring, management of cash flow, budgeting, financial statements, financing operations, auditing, insurance management taxation, solvency planning.

The financial management and accounting staff have requisite professional skills of financial planning, analysis and comparison of actual accounts against budgets, providing specific management information, analysis of financial performance against quantified objectives/targets.

The association exercises internal financial control rules and regulations, ensuring compliance with financial management policies and procedures.

Strategic planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association has an effective strategic plan with working committees on priority themes. Strategic reviews, feedback, monitoring and evaluation is undertaken periodically with clear and updated qualitative/quantitative indicators taking into consideration inputs from experts, the Board and relevant committees of membership. The findings are presented and openly discussed by membership and used for decision-making.

Service Delivery

RALGA offers and delivers high quality innovative services to membership (both individually and collectively) in the major local government fields. Quality, affordable and self-financing services offered in line with the diverse membership needs and demands.

Work Environment

The association has an adequate structure to carry out its activities. There are 20 computers in the association and all have access to Internet.

Communication Policies

RALGA has a website www.ralgarwanda.org with 600 visitors last month. The association does not have a library. It has 700 followers in twitter. There is no communication policy but the association makes good use of the IT in communications with local authorities. It has no good media strategy.





There is a written communication strategy identifying information required by membership; specifies how information will be sourced and processed prior to dissemination; outlines best methods of disseminating different categories of information.

Networking

RALGA participates actively in network activities at the national, regional and international level. It is a member of UCLG-A. It also exchanges experiences with local government associations of other African countries like Ghana.

Lobbying and Advocacy

The association has an appropriate written lobbying and advocacy strategy being implemented with skills and resources.

The key lobbying and advocacy positions are presented in credible, coherent, defensible and persuasive manner, using empirical information and providing viable alternatives, suggestions and concrete solutions for improvement. It defends the interest of the members by engaging in a strong dialogue with government. It has cooperation agreements with government and participates in national commissions. It also makes proposals for new legislation and maintains good relations with stakeholders.

Conclusion

This association was only established in 2002 to assist local Government entities in achieving their mission, complying with principles of good governance and decentralization. It is a strong association which has another source of self-generated revenue. It focuses on financial sustainability though it does not have an adequate strategy in place. It has a knowledgeable Board which meets regularly. The association offers very high quality services to the members especially in the area of lobbying and advocacy where it engages strong dialogue with the government.

The working environment is adequate. The association is well connected to the social media.

13. Senegal

UNION OF LOCAL ELECTED ASSOCIATION (UAE)

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Senegal is a unitary State. Local Authorities are embedded in a comprehensive and well-defined framework of territorial governance. During independence, Senegal already had 34 communes, which were created to meet the needs of the population. The main Decentralisation Law is Law No. 96-06 of 22 March 1996 on the Local Authorities Code. Article 3 of the Local Authorities Code stipulates that, “the missions of the local authorities are conception, programming and implementation of actions related to economic development, education and socio-cultural activities”. The introduction of regionalization in 1996 gave a new dimension to decentralization. The 2001 Constitution stipulates, “Local governments constitute the institutional framework for citizen participation in the management of public affairs. They are administered freely by elected assemblies.”

In December 2013, the General Code for Local Authorities was adopted which changed decentralization with the following reforms:

- Suppression of regions as local authorities;
- The transformation of department as local authorities;
- Integral communalisation;
- Towns maintained their status.

In June 2014, local elections were organized with the creation of 559 local councils that is, 42 departments, 552 municipal councils and 5 towns.

Legal Status

UAEL is a legal entity created in 2003 by different local elected associations. Adherence for membership is voluntary. 3 associations came together to form the union. Membership is by the institutions that have grouped up to form the union which are:

- Association of Mayors of Senegal (Association des Maires du Sénégal)
- National Association for Rural Councillors (Association Nationale de Conseils Ruraux)
- Association of Regional Presidents (Association des Présidents de Région).

Objectives

The union has a strong constitution. The roles and responsibilities of the various structures are well defined in the constitution.

The objectives are:

- To promote constructive dialogue between member associations;
- To promote constructive dialogue between member associations, the State and development partners;
- To contribute to the promotion of decentralization, decentralized cooperation and local development;
- Contribute to the harmonization of development partners' actions;
- Provide technical and administrative support to members to enable them meet up with their mission and ameliorate local governance.

Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The annual budget of the union is US\$130,000. The revenue is obtained from the Local revenue and cooperation funds.

The association is only capable of collecting about 10% of membership fees and not enough to cover operations. The association focuses on sustainability and income generating activities. It has at least two other sources of self-generated income that together provide a minimum of 10% of revenues.





Institutional Organisation

The institutional organisation is appropriate for a local government association. There is a Board and a Secretariat. The Board is made up of only 3 members. The Board members are elected in accordance with the statutes currently in effect and effectively supervises the organisation. The Board understands that they are responsible for ensuring that programmes are being carried out as planned and are consistent with the objectives, principles and values of the organisation. The Board also acts in accordance with the statutes and ensures that the rest of the organisation is well managed. The Constitution of the union is clear with streamlined Committee structure. The General assembly meets annually with good preparation and open debate leading to clear policy positions and priorities for the union; participation by key stakeholders, including Ministers; holds Executive Board accountable; seen as key event by the members. The Board meets regularly with poor preparation and no adequate follow-up action on emerging issues.

Human Resource Management and Development

There are a total of 20 staff members in the union, 6 of which are technical staff. The technical staff are not sufficient to man the activities of the union. They have the necessary capacity to perform their duties but are not very motivated due to late payment of salaries and very few training possibilities. The union lacks the resources to organize training for the staff. Training tends to be ad hoc and for selected number of staff who take own initiatives to look for training opportunities. The capacity building activities is therefore poorly coordinated and sometimes dependent on donor funding. The staff are unclear about their respective roles and job description. This makes it difficult for them to come up with innovation or creative initiatives. Some of the staff members are recruited on merit while others are not. The union has capacity and resources to develop high quality project proposals and win additional funding and also to implement activities in line with its strategic plan.

Financial Administration and Management

The association has a mechanism for conducting internal audits. It requires formal internal reports but despite the availability of this mechanism, the internal audit does not report to the highest level of the union therefore the union does not responds to these reports with real internal change.

The union has an appropriate set of written financial management, control and accounting procedures, rules and regulations, but not strictly adhered to and lack key provisions such as check and balance system of fund management. The finance and administrative staff have good understanding of task and responsibilities but lack professional experience. The union generally follows transparent financial control practices that minimize potential for misuse of misappropriated funds but not fully institutionalised.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The union has a well-written multi-year strategic plan developed in participatory manner describing what the union does and is not closely linked to long-term goals and ongoing activities. There are working committees on the priority themes but monitoring and evaluation is done internally in an ad hoc manner and without defined indicators and procedure.

Service Delivery

A number of services targeted for a select number of local authorities, but not properly coordinated and are largely donor dependent.

Work Environment

The union has a good office building to carry out its activities though small. There is a library available at the union. It has 10 computers with all having access to the Internet.

Communication policies

The union has a website www.uel.info. It has a printed newsletter called '*la voix des élus locaux*'. The union also has other publications – 'Guide pratique approche et outil de gestion et de valorisation des ordures ménagères par les élus locaux' and another one is 'Rapport de synthèse de l'étude sur le profil genre des collectivités locales du Sénégal'. The union has a good communications policy and has a good media strategy. There is also the challenge of inadequate resources and capacity for communication function.

Networking

The union takes part in many conferences and seminar at the national, regional and international level. The union is also supported by many development partners who are interested in this initiative of several associations coming together. The union contributes and proactively uses networks to improve chances of achieving its goals and objectives. It has a good international standing.

Lobbying and Advocacy

UAEL carries out some lobbying and advocacy based on a written strategy, but lacks the necessary resources for implementation. It engages a strong dialogue with the central government and Parliament. Key issues are presented in a credible, coherent, defensible and persuasive manner. The union has cooperation agreement with government and participates actively in national commissions. It makes proposals for new legislation.

Conclusion

This is a strong association. It focuses on financial sustainability. It collects only 10% of membership fees. It has self-generated revenue that brings in at least 10% of the income. The association is quite concerned about the performance of the staff but lacks resources to train them.

Internal Audit is available but the results are not used to improve performance.

The association lacks a communication strategy. The information flow is ineffective. The association finds it difficult to disseminate information. The association offers high quality services to members.

14. Tanzania

ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF TANZANIA (ALAT)

INTRODUCTION

The United Republic of Tanzania is a unitary republic, administratively divided into 26 regions – 21 on the mainland and five in Zanzibar. Regions are divided into districts, which are then further sub-divided into divisions. The local government is divided into urban and rural authority both on the mainland and Zanzibar.



On the mainland Tanzania urban authorities consist of city councils, municipal councils and town councils, whereas included in the rural authorities are the district councils with township council and village council authority. In relation to the Local Government in the mainland the main legislative texts are:

- Government (Urban Authorities) Act 1982
- Local Government Finance Act 1982
- Urban Authorities (Rating) Act 1983
- Regional Administration Act 1997
- Local Government Law (Miscellaneous amendment Acts 1999)

The principal local government acts have been amended from 1999 as a part of the Local Government Reform Process.

On Zanzibar urban authorities are made up of town councils and municipalities, while rural authorities comprise of district councils.

In Zanzibar, the relevant part of the Constitution of 1984 is Article 128. The main legislation regarding local government is:

- Zanzibar Municipal Council Act 1995 establishment and the composition of Municipal Councils.
- District and Town Councils Act 1995 – an act to establish the district and town councils.

Legal Status

ALAT is an association of institutions which was registered under private law. It has a national coverage and membership is compulsory. It is recognized as an independent membership organisation adhering to a written constitution.

Objectives

The constitution of ALAT is well elaborated with clear roles and job description.

The objectives are:

- To foster and promote smooth Local Government Development;
- To maintain and further the interests, rights and values of local authorities;
- To represent Local Authorities views at national and international fora;
- To provide a forum for members to exchange views and experiences;
- To lobby and advocate for policy and legislative change on matters likely to affect local authorities;
- To disseminate relevant information to member;
- To represent and proposals to the Government on behalf of members;
- To provide services to members including technical advise, capacity building training, twinning.

Annual Budget and Financial sustainability

The annual budget of the association is US\$1,864,864. 50% of local authorities pay membership fees which is mostly used to cover operational costs while donors fund most of the programmes and activities. The association focuses on sustainability and income generation. It has at least one other source of self-generated income providing minimum of 5% of revenue. It has an ad hoc financial sustainability strategy.

Institutional Organisation

The institutional organisation of the association is quite good. There is a Board and a Secretariat. The Board is made up of 21 members. The Board members are elected in accordance with the statutes currently in effect and effectively supervises the organisation. The Board understands that they are responsible for ensuring that programmes are being carried out as planned and are consistent with the objectives, principles and values of the organisation. The Board also directs and orients the activities of the association.

Clear division of tasks and responsibilities between Board and Secretariat but not respected.

The Board meetings are regular and well prepared to monitor management. The Board meetings discuss important issues of the association fully and openly, and make decisions. Board members talk free

The general assembly has a clear constitution and streamlined Committee structure; meets annually with good preparation and open debate leading to clear policy positions and priorities for the association.

Human Resource Management and Development

There are a total of 9 technical staff members in the association. The staff are considered few but the association cannot increase the staff roll due to lack of funding.. The technical staff does not have adequate capacity to perform their duties. They need training to enhance capacity.

The association organizes ad hoc capacity building activities that are not properly coordinated because they principally depend on donor funding. Staff know and agree on their task and responsibilities. Recruitment of all staff is done purely on merit, professional expertise and experience. Training and development plans take account of personal development plans and each staff member has equal chance of being trained to improve skills and performance. The staff are highly motivated to achieve results and productivity is high. 3 events were organized last semester and 300 people participated.

Financial Administration and Management

The association has a mechanism for conducting internal audits. It requires formal internal reports. The internal audit reports to the highest level of the association. The association responds to these reports with real internal change.

The association implements and follows comprehensive set of written policies for administration of funds, covering expenditure authorization and other financial management and accounting procedures. The finance and administration staff have a good understanding of tasks and responsibility but lacks professional experience. The association exercises internal financial control rules and regulations ensuring compliance with financial management policies and procedures.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association has an effective multi-year strategic plan developed in a participatory manner describing what the association does. Planning is based on unrealistic resource expectation and without membership involvement.

Monitoring and evaluation is done as internal exercise by staff without involving Board and membership. The findings are not disseminated and used in future planning and decision-making. There are no formal monitoring and evaluation systems.





Service Delivery

The association offers a number of services to members but this is not properly coordinated and are largely donor dependent.

Work Environment

The association has an excellent structure to carry out its activities. The association does not have a library. There are 9 computers in the association and all are connected to the internet.

Communication Policies

ALAT has a website www.alat.or.tz with 20 visitors last month. There is also a Facebook page with 100 likes. It has a twitter page with 62 followers. There is a printed newsletter and an electronic one as well. There is a good communication strategy in place and a good media strategy The association does not make use of IT in communication with local authorities.

Networking

This association is an active member of several groupings like the United Cities and Local Government of Africa. It carries out some experience sharing and best practices with peers.

Lobbying and advocacy

The association undertakes some lobbying and advocacy based on a written strategy, but resources required for implementation are lacking. Lobbying and advocacy is largely reactive through passive participation in task force meetings and commenting on ready-made legislative and policy documents without having impact on their initiation and outcome.

The association engages strong dialogue with Government and Parliament.

Conclusion

This association is strong and carries out its main role in a satisfactory manner. However, there are a few challenges that need to be addressed. The task and the responsibility between the Board and the Secretariat are clear but not adhere to. This may be a source of conflict and demotivation in the association. The Board and Secretariat must be able to respect the constitution. The technical staff do not have adequate capacity to perform their duties and they need training. Training is not properly coordinated and dependent on donor funding.

Also there are no formal monitoring and evaluation systems in place in the association. Monitoring and evaluation is done as an internal exercise by staff and the finding are not disseminated and used in future planning and decision-making.

Although the association engages in strong dialogue with the government, they do not propose any new legislation.

15. Togo

UNION OF COUNCILS OF TOGO (UCT)

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Togo is a unitary State. The legal framework of decentralization and local governance arises from the Constitution of 14 October 1992 that enshrines decentralization as a cardinal principle of territorial administration. The decentralisation and local democracy bill was passed on 1 March 2006. It established the territorial government code, made official the free administration of local governments, and defined three levels of decentralisation: the municipality, the prefecture and the region. Two types of municipalities are stipulated: urban municipalities located in prefecture capitals, and rural municipalities whose territorial base is the canton. This law provides for a special status for the city of Lomé and the Gulf community. The legal framework evolved with the adoption of law No. 2007-011 of 13 March 2007 on decentralization and local freedoms. The law on decentralization and local democracy was adopted and established 3 level of administration: commune, prefecture and region. Today Togo counts 35 prefecture and 35 communes which are operational. Despite these legal frameworks, local elections have not been held in Togo. Appointed special delegates are at the head of territorial entities since November 2001. It can thus be noted that in the area of free administration, progress has not been made. Presently there are 5 regions, 30 Prefectures and 354 communes (21urban communes and 333 rural communes).

Legal Status

The association is registered under private law and adherence for membership is voluntary. It is an association of institutions and membership is open to all communes in Togo. Some of the local entities have come together in an association called “Union de Communes du Togo” This association has a national coverage and works for the interest of its members.

Objectives

The association has a constitution and the roles of the structures are clear.

The objectives are:

- To create a platform for discussion and exchange of experience;
- To empower local actors notably, the local elected representatives and the staff of the communes;
- To support the harmonious development of the communes for the welfare of the populations;
- To promote the policy of decentralization as well as permanent dialogue between the local actors
- To promote twinning and all forms of partnership,
- To Promoting participatory local development in the local councils.

Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The annual budget of the association stands at US\$225,943. The revenue is from the Local revenue and cooperation funds.

The association is only capable of collecting about 30% of membership fees and this is not enough to cover operations. The association does not have any financial sustainability and income generating activities.



Institutional Organisation

The institutional organisation is excellent. There is a Board in place and a Secretariat. The Board is made up of 18 members. The Board members are elected democratically for a period of two year renewable. The Board understands that they are responsible for ensuring that programmes are being carried out as planned. The Board also acts in accordance with the statutes and ensures that the rest of the organisation is well managed.

The Division of tasks and responsibilities between Board and Secretariat is clear, but not fully respected. The General Assembly meets annually; provides some legitimacy to the association but little real accountability. The Board meetings are regular and well prepared to monitor management. The members receive documents well ahead of the meeting and the discussions in the meeting are issues that have to do with the development of the association. The Board follow-up on the key issues in accordance with rules and regulations, especially regarding agenda and minutes.

Human Resource Management and Development

There are a total of 21 staff members in the association. The staff are considered few but no funding to recruit more staff. The technical staff have adequate capacity to perform their duties but still need some capacity building and tools. The administrative staff lack the necessary capacity to perform their duties and the association lacks the means to train them. The association organizes ad hoc capacity building activities which are not properly coordinated and dependent on donor funding.

The association has a written organizational chart and job description but not kept up to date following changes in responsibilities. The staff is recruited on the basis of the nature of work. Training opportunities are usually restricted to professional staff and staff productivity is low due to staff motivation. The association has the capacity and resources to develop high quality project proposals and win additional funding and implement activities in line with strategic objectives.

4 training events were organized last semester and 120 people participated.

Financial Administration and Management

There is no internal audit carried out in the association. The association has an appropriate set of written financial management, control and accounting procedures, rules and regulations, but not strictly adhered to and lack key provisions such as check and balance system of fund management. The finance and administrative staff have good understanding of task and responsibilities but lack professional experience.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association does not have a strategic plan but has a multi-year activity plan from which an action plan is prepared. There are working committees on priority themes. There are no formal monitoring and evaluation systems in place. The association lacks resources to elaborate a strategic plan.

Service Delivery

The association offers a number of services targeted for a select number of local governments but not properly coordinated and are largely donor dependent.

Work Environment

The association has an adequate structure to carry out its activities. The association has a library with 460 titles. There is a virtual library with 500 titles. There are 6 computers in the association and all have access to internet.

Communication Policies

It also has a website www.uct-togo.org. The association produces a newsletter called *L'UCT Mag*. There is a good communication policy and good media strategy in place. There is no communication strategy.

Networking

There is evidence of active participation, contribution and synergy building with relevant local, regional and international networks. The association contributes and proactively uses networks to improve chances of achieving its goals and objectives. The association has a good international standing.

Lobbying and Advocacy

The association undertakes a little lobbying and advocacy without a proper strategy. This is ineffective since the Mayors are appointed and are not independent. They are unable to engage strong dialogue with government or Parliament. The positions developed and presented are on ad hoc basis without adequate policy research. Positions developed with emphasis on asking questions without offering appropriate and viable alternatives. The association does not make proposals for new legislation. Some lobbying and advocacy is also carried out during the municipal open day 'Journée des Communes'. The association has good relations with stakeholders.

Conclusion

UCT is an association that is making a lot of effort to provide services to its member. There is a library and the association does a lot of networking with its peers and also at the international level. The members of the association are not democratically elected therefore they can't do a lot of lobbying since they are not completely independent. This will be seen as working against the ruling political party that appointed them to the executive positions at the local level. Despite this difficulty, the association still does some lobbying and advocacy during the Municipal Open Day. There is no other source of revenue for the association and no financial sustainability plan apart from membership due. The association needs an income generating activity in order to raise more revenue for the association.

Training depends a lot on the donor who does not consult the training programme of the association before financing the training. This makes the training not adapted to the needs of the association.

The lack of a mechanism for internal audit makes the association not to be able to get the real diagnosis of the association's challenges and to use the results of such actions to improve performance. Communication is another issue in the association that needs to be addressed. The association lacks a communication strategy. Information flow is ineffective. To disseminate information to members, the association needs a communication strategy in place.

16. Uganda

UGANDA LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (ULGA)

INTRODUCTION

Uganda is a unitary State that embarked on an ambitious decentralization path in the early 1990s, the country had just emerged from a series of brutal dictatorial regimes and civil wars and all structures related to local governance had been destroyed. A key policy objective of Uganda's decentralization policy has been named as "empowerment of local populations via democratization, participation, accountability, responsibility, efficiency and effectiveness" for the long-term goal of improving conditions of life for the population.



In March 1997 the Local Governments Act was enacted. The act aims to consolidate and streamline the law on local government. The Local Governments Act was amended in July 1997 to provide for the establishment and composition of interim local councils for newly created local government units. It was also amended in June 2001 to give more effect to the decentralization of powers and ensure the smooth implementation of the decentralization policy. The 2001 amendment was a major one to give more effect to the implementation of decentralization. The local government system is based on the district as a unit under which there are lower local governments and administrative units. Local government councils in a district are:

- the District or City Council
- the Municipal Council
- the City Division Council
- the Municipal Division Council
- the Sub-County Council
- the Town Council

Legal Status

ULGA is a legally constituted association that has a sub-national coverage. It is recognized as an independent membership organisation adhering to a written constitution. Membership to that association is voluntary. The members of the association are local governments therefore it is an association of institutions.

Objectives

The Uganda Local Governments' Association (ULGA) was formed in 1994 by the District Chairpersons as Uganda Local Authorities Association (ULAA) which was later re-named Uganda Local Governments Association (ULGA).

ULGA has a constitution with a clear vision and a demand-driven mandate. The objectives are:

- To unite Local Governments;
- To advocate and negotiate for the interests of the Local Governments;
- To provide members with Association member services;
- To create a forum through which to come together and give each other support and guidance to make common positions on key issues that affect Local Governance;
- To promote and build Democratic and Accountable Local Governments capable of delivering Efficient and Sustainable Public Services to the people.

ULGA carries out this mandate through lobbying, advocacy and representation of Local Governments at local, National and International fora.

Annual Budget and Financial Sustainability

The association is capable of collecting 50% of membership fees which are mostly used to cover operational costs. The association is focus about financial sustainability and income generation. It has at least one other source of self-generated income providing minimum of 5% of revenues. It has an *Ad hoc* financial sustainability strategy.

Institutional Organisation

The institutional organisation is appropriate for the institutional purposes. There is a Board and a Secretariat in place. The Board is made up of 22 members. The Board members are elected in accordance with the statutes currently in effect and effectively supervises the organisation. The Board understands that they are responsible for ensuring that programmes are being carried out as planned and are consistent with the objectives, principles and values of the organisation. The Board also acts in accordance with the statutes and ensures that the rest of the organisation does as well.

The division of tasks and responsibilities between Board and Secretariat is clear, but not fully adhered to.

The Board meetings are regular and well prepared to monitor management; prompt follow-up on the key issues in accordance with rules and regulations, especially regarding agenda and minutes. The Board meetings discuss real issues fully and openly, and make decisions; each Board member has equal chance to freely express opinion and contribute.

The constitution is clear and streamlined Committee structure. The general assembly meets annually with good preparation and open debate leading to clear policy positions and priorities for the association. Key stakeholders participate including Ministers. The Executive Board is held accountable and this is seen as key event by local authorities.

Human Resource Management and Development

There are a total of 9 technical staff members in the association. The staff are considered few but the association lacks funds to recruit more staff. The technical staff does not have adequate capacity to perform their duties. They need training to enhance capacity.

The association organizes ad hoc capacity building activities which are not properly coordinated and dependent on donor funding.

There is a written organizational chart and job description but not kept up to date following changes in responsibilities. Recruitment of all staff is done purely on merit, professional expertise and experience. Training and development plans take account of personal development plans and each staff member has equal chance of being trained to improve skills and performance. Staff are highly motivated to achieve results and productivity is high. The relevant staff have knowledge of basic project management but lack professional skills.

Financial Administration and Management

The association has no mechanism for conducting internal audits. It implements and follows comprehensive set of written policies for administration of funds, covering expenditure authorization and other financial management and accounting procedures. The finance and administration staff have a good understanding of tasks and responsibility but lacks professional experience. The association exercises internal financial control rules and regulations ensuring compliance with financial management policies and procedures.

Strategic Planning/Monitoring and Evaluation

The association has an effective strategic plan developed in a participatory manner and demonstrates realistic extension of current activities including vision/mission statements, mid-term and long-term objectives, strategies, programmes and financial plan. There are no formal monitoring and evaluation systems.





Service Delivery

The association offers a number of services targeted for a select number of local governments but not properly coordinated and are largely donor dependent.

Work Environment

The association has an adequate structure to carry out its activities. The head quarters is hosted at a building in Kampala owned by the association. The association also has a library. There are 20 computers and all are connected to the Internet.

Communication Policies

ULGA has a website www.ulga.org. There is also a Facebook page with 523 likes. It has a twitter page with 151 followers. There is a printed and an electronic newsletter.

There is neither a communication policy nor a media strategy. The Association has a written communication strategy identifying information required by membership. It specifies how information will be sourced and processed prior to dissemination and outlines best methods of disseminating different categories of information.

Networking

There is evidence of active participation, contribution and synergy building with relevant local, regional and international networks. The association contributes and proactively uses networks to improve chances of achieving its goals and objectives. The association has a good international standing.

Lobbying and Advocacy

The association undertakes some lobbying and advocacy based on a written strategy, but resources required for implementation are lacking. The key lobbying and advocacy positions are presented in credible, coherent, defensible and persuasive manner with concrete solutions for improvement. The association engages strong dialogue with Government, Parliament, NGOs and businesses. There are cooperation agreements with the Government and the association participates actively in national commissions. They make proposals for new legislation and have good relations with stakeholders.



Conclusion

This association can be considered as making efforts to cater for member interest. The association is not able to collect all membership fees from the member making it difficult for it to raise funds. The association has an income generating project but lacks a financial sustainability plan. The financial sustainability plan will enable the association to broaden the scope to raise revenue for the association.

Division of task and responsibility between the Board and the Secretariat must be adhered to in order to avoid confusion in the management of the association. Training is not well coordinated. Donors fund most of the training. The association just participates. This manner of operating is not beneficial to the association that needs to define the kind of training needed by the staff. For donors to fund the training sessions, it may be necessary for them to follow the training plan of the association. Also the organizational chart is not updated. This may create confusion among the staff as they carry out their duties.

Internal Audit is essential when managing funds. The association does not have a mechanism for funds management. Financial management tools are essential when managing funds for transparency and accountability. For an association to be sure of the output and the outcomes of the activities, there must be indicators to monitor and evaluate which is lacking with this association. The association should consider having some indicators for monitoring and evaluation and should carry this exercise periodically with clear and updated qualitative and quantitative indicators taking into account inputs from experts, the Board and committee of membership. Services are offered to some target members and not properly coordinated. There is no rule of selecting members who benefit from services. Services in an association must go to all the members and not just a selected few. The association should extend the services to all the members. Lobbying and advocacy is handled excellently in this association. The association engages in strong dialogue with the government. It also works on several government commissions.





GENERAL CONCLUSION ON THE STATE OF PLAY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS IN AFRICA

1. In general terms, all countries that have implemented decentralization policies have set up a national association of local governments that represents the interests of local authorities and are their mouthpiece in front of the national governments and the other stakeholders. Most of these associations function as non-governmental organizations despite the fact that local governments (being public entities) form them. **Many national associations are requesting that this anomaly is corrected and that they are recognized associations of public interest if not public entities, as it is the case for SALGA in South Africa.**
2. The membership of the national associations differs from country to country. In many countries affiliation to the national association is voluntary for member local governments, but most of the time, all local governments affiliate, so that at the end the constituency of the national associations is universal. In cases where there are more than one sphere of subnational governments, the tendency is to have an association for each sphere of subnational government, except in the case of Senegal, where the UAEL represents the two spheres, the communes and the districts assemblies. **As far as possible one shall push for the Senegalese model that regroups the spheres of subnational governance into one unified and strong national association of local governments.**
3. Organization-wide, all associations hold regular general assemblies and board meetings. Many associations also have territorial chapters to take charge of the problems of members in different territorial contexts. The day-to-day business of the associations is the responsibility of the permanent of executive secretariat accountable to the board. The secretariat is normally housed in a stand-alone working space, which is the address of the association. In many cases, the secretariat does not have a stand-alone address and is housed in the premises of a local government member of the association, or even worse, in the premises of the ministry in charge of local government. **It should be made mandatory that the association has a stand-alone address to deserve being supported in its operation.**
4. The board members and the chairperson of the national association are often designated following democratic processes. There are however cases where they are nominated by the national government, which weakens their representation capacity. The functioning of most associations is related to the quality of the leadership at the level of the board and of the president of the association. This quality seems unequal in different countries. But the daring capacity of the board and the president is function of their political affiliation. Where the opposition party is dominant, the board and chairperson seem more aggressive in calling out to the national government. If the board and the chairperson are members of the ruling party, they tend to consider lobbying and advocacy as dangerous activities that can be perceived as criticizing the ruling party. In that particular case the board and the chairperson tend to adopt a dormant attitude, and are unwilling to articulate the needs of the members to the national governments. Such situation is of course deterrent to the full participation of members in the life of the association, which results at the end to weakening the association as a whole. Since in principle, the associations are not partisan, it is important to make sure that there is a clear separation of responsibilities between the associations and the political parties. **The way to face this problem is to have a clear code of conduct of the association putting emphasis to the respect of the autonomy of decision of the association, and to which the incoming board and chairperson have to adhere to.**

5. In most countries, the secretariat of the association is managed by a permanent or executive secretary (also called director or CEO in some countries), either seconded by the national government, or hired by the association after a competitive process. The team of the secretariat is rather small in most cases, the average being 10 people. The capacities of the secretariat's team are globally satisfactory for the current management of the association, including financial management and reporting. But the team is not skilled enough when it comes to activities such as strategic planning and programming, submitting funding requests or organizing advocacy campaigns, let alone the drafting of position papers. The secretariat is also weak on communication and on watchdog activities, so that alerts are not timely given when problems facing local governments occur. One should also notice that although they take part in many committees and working groups at national level, many secretariats are not fully informed about the development and cooperation agendas being discussed or implemented in their countries where local governments have a stake. It is not therefore surprising that they are barely well prepared when asked to provide inputs into the debates. They also barely initiate contacts with development partners since they are ill informed on donors programs and initiatives.

Supporting the strengthening of national associations secretariats in terms of leveraging their knowledge and skills ability is key to helping the national associations play their rightful support role to their membership, and be a competent partner for national governments and other stakeholders. This should remain at the core of any support program to decentralization and local governance on the continent. Peer learning and exchanges among the national associations on this matter should also be organized and supported.

6. One of the daunting issues facing the associations of local governments in Africa is their financing. Membership fees are not paid regularly, except in countries like Ghana and Cameroon where they are deducted directly from grant allocated to local governments by the national budget. In most countries, the programs implemented by the associations are either funded by donors, or by decentralized cooperation partners, including sister associations such as AIMF, CLGF, VNGi or FCM. The budget of the association does not allow to finance beyond the operating cost of the association and its secretariat. The dependency of the associations on external funding is of real concern, because it systematically places these associations on a begging position, which does not allow them to conduct own programs targeting their specific problems. This is contrary to the autonomy principle put forward by local governments, and interrogates the capacity of the associations to really be in line with the dynamic of local self-government. It is critical to cultivate a business-oriented mindset within the association and its secretariat, so that financial resources mobilization and management becomes a must in the performance assessment of the association. **Any support to national associations of local governments in Africa cannot put aside a serious reflection on the way to build a sustainable financing mechanism that can allow them to timely deliver on their mandate at the service of their constituency.**

7. Most associations understand their lobbying and advocacy mission. But few have a real lobbying and advocacy strategy, let alone the mastering of associated methodologies and skills. They barely use their website if any, to disseminate compelling narratives on local authorities and their actions. Only few (with the exception of AMBF in Burkina Faso) have a structured dialogue with national governments, taking advantage of the organization of local governments open days during which a memorandum on the implementation of the decentralization policies is presented to the national governments. **There is a strong need to support the lobbying and advocacy capacity of the national associations of local governments in Africa. But this strategy should stem from a good knowledge of the challenges facing local governments, hence the need to develop an observatory on decentralization and local governance in each country under the auspices of the national association of local authorities.**





8. When it comes to direct support to its members, the association is rather weak. Many reasons explain that weakness: in many countries, the association does not have an updated database of its members and the members of their constitutive councils; it barely follows the changes that occur in the membership at the institutional and personal levels, and does not keep the other members informed of those changes; it barely exerts a watchdog role on the preparation and publication of the legislation that impacts local governments, so that local governments can raise their concerns on the consequences of such legislations. It barely publishes position papers on issues of concern for local governments and does not mobilize the attention of citizens on the defense of local governments causes. At the end, many members question whether the association has impact beyond the board members, and it is not surprising that the relations between the association and its members is rather loose. **Strengthening the network capacity of the associations should be a requisite for building strong national associations of local governments.**

9. One of the key dynamics observed in local government dynamic is the emergence of city or municipal diplomacy whereby local governments and their associations are more and more involved in international relations. There are countries where this involvement is recognized by the national government, and where the associations are allowed to conclude partnership agreements with their counterparts from Africa or outside Africa. Most national governments have past legislations to organize the decentralized cooperation relations. They are interested in a regular oversight of the performances of these decentralized cooperation relations, a function that should be normally fulfilled by the national associations. But most of the time this is not done, and in response, many national governments are creating decentralized cooperation services at the national administrations. **It is important that the national associations of local governments develop the capacity to monitor and assess the partnership agreements implemented by their members, and come up from time to time with a regular evaluation report of these decentralized cooperation agreements, as part of the contribution of the city diplomacy to the external affairs relations of the country.**

10. The new era inaugurated with the definition of new international agendas, such as the financing for development, the climate agenda, the Habitat agenda, and other global agendas calls for even more openness of the national associations and their members to international affairs. This is why their full participation to regional, continental and global networks of local governments is key. It is therefore important to get the institutional environment of work of the associations right in order that they can fully take part in any initiative involving local authorities in a large scale, including beyond the national boundaries. **The global era we are living in makes it obligatory for African national associations of local governments to be part of regional, continental and global networks in order that they are kept abreast of the state of play in local governments business across the world.**





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