

United Northern Areas NGOs (UNAN)

NGOs is the major development sector besides government and private sector, in Northern Areas of Pakistan. It has been greatly complementing the government` development efforts by reaching to the remotest and comparatively more deprived communities for realizing their access to the socio-economic and other services like environment, health, education etc. Therefore, NGOs are one of the main civil society intuitions that provide support to the communities to analyze their potentials and opportunities and plan how to invest opportunities for achieving the goal of improved quality of life. Their successful intervention in Northern Areas has been largely supported by the old communal tradition of participatory management of natural resources and social affairs.

There are about more than Eleven hundred registered NGOs working in the Northern Areas. Their innovative approaches for work, good partnership with the government, appropriate planning and operations, adequately facilitating administrative procedures and to some extent diversity of their work are worth mentioning. Despite being comparatively in good position with regards to its achievements of objectives, yet the NGOs sector in the North is marked by certain weaknesses in terms of issues and constrains for example lack of coordination among the NGOs themselves as well with other actors of development. Due to which a communication/information gap prevails not only among NGOs themselves but also among NGOs, the government, private sector, and media etc, resulting into the disintegrated planning and implementation. This gap can be bridged by establishing civil society intuition represented by multi stakeholders; the first step towards actualizing this dream was establishment of Union of Northern Areas NGOs **UNAN** which is known as United Northern Areas NGOs (UNAN) and has applied for registration under the same title due to certain reasons.

UNAN is the only representative Network of more than Eleven hundred registered NGOs of the region. Establishment of Active and dynamic NGOs Network is also part of the **Northern Areas Strategy for Sustainable Development (NASSD)** which was developed in 1999 by the Northern Areas administration (Government) with the financial assistance of the *Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation* and the *Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation*. Technical support to develop NASSD was provided by *IUCN-The World Conservation Union*. NASSD addresses a broad range of social, economic, and environmental issues, and seeks to provide a comprehensive policy framework for the sustainable development of the region. For more information about NASSD, please visit <http://www.iucn.org/places/pakistan/publications/nassd.pdf>

It is really matter of proud for Association of Global Humanists and Ethics (**AGHE**) to be member of such an extensive and visionary regional Network of the NGOs. AGHE is not simply the member of the Union but president of the association was also elected as a member of Board of Directors **BoD** of District NGOs Network (**DNN**) Gilgit which is part of UNAN, Secondly, President of AGHE was also being selected as a member of

Central Advisory Committee of the UNAN. Thus AGHE is progressing towards joint ventures, collaborative approaches and developing its learning how to work with others.

The UNAN's Story

A story of a transition from an NGO Interest Group to formation of the first single largest NGO Coalition in the Northern Areas of Pakistan)

Introduction

UNAN-United Northern Areas NGOs is a coalition of six District NGO Networks (DNNs) of small and medium sized Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) rooted in all six districts of the Northern Areas who are actively engaged in health and educational development, income and employment generation, poverty reduction and promotion and preservation of the cultural and natural in the fragile mountain areas of Karakoram, Hindukush and Himalayas.

Its member DNNs work as effective umbrella for the active NGOs working in their respective districts and have an access to more than 500 hundred local NGOs, associations and community groups.

International development and conservation agencies that are grounded in the Northern Areas like the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) provide support to these NGOs and its networks and facilitate the functions of UNAN and other civil society organizations.

UNAN is the single largest umbrella of NGO Networks in the Northern Areas. It was founded in May 2006 following a series of consultative meetings with the District NGOs Networks (DNNs) in all six districts of the federally administrative Northern Areas (FANA) over a period of two years.

IUCN through its Programmes Support Northern Pakistan (PSNP) funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) facilitated the consultative processes and catalyzed the formation of DNNs and UNAN.

Rational and Evolution of UNAN

UNAN emerged because of the strong desire of the civil society groups and the activism of the veteran NGO and peace activists of the Northern Areas to coordinate their inputs to serve the people and to ensure putting a mechanism in place to raise a united voice to influence policies of various development actors including the government to prioritize sustainable development agenda for the Northern Areas and to monitor, as a watchdog, the efficient and effective implementation of these strategies and plans.

The journey started during the formulation process of the Northern Areas Strategies for Sustainable Development (NASSD), a participatory strategy formulation process initiated by the Northern Areas Administration with technical support from the IUCN. During the NASSD formulation, a number of interest groups (IGs) were formed including NGOs IG. The NASSD recommended formation of NGOs Networks ad umbrella associations to

support and coordinate the initiatives of the civil society related actions.

The NASSD was completed in December 2003. Since then the NGO-IG continued to meet and discussed the ways and means through which the small and medium NGOs of the Northern Areas could be united. A task force was formed that held numerous meetings, discussions and consultations. Based on these meetings a memorandum and article of association was drafted and shared with major district level NGOs. These deliberations led to the establishment of DNNs and finally in a general body representative delegation from each DNN met in Gilgit and agreed to the formation of a NGOs Networks as United Northern Areas NGOs (UNAN)

Vision

A peaceful, prosperous, enlightened, free and sustainable mountain communities living in harmony with diversity of nature and cultures within and across the borders of Northern Areas.

Mission

Create a united voice of the local civil society, being able to influence policies for sustainable mountain development and foster development partnerships to enhance effective and sustainable support to its member networks, NGOs and the broader civil society in the Northern Areas.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of forming UNAN are to:

1. Assist DNNs and member NGOs to develop linkages and partnerships with the government, donor agencies and the international organizations for sustainable development in the Northern Areas.
2. Enhance effectiveness and sustainability of the networks and the NGOs through capacity building, information sharing and resource mobilization.
3. Promote good governance and management practices for NGOs and the civil society organizations and assist the DNNs and NGOs in adopting transparent financial control systems, monitoring and evaluation and effective management systems.
4. Engage in policy advocacy, lobbying and networking to promote participatory governance mechanisms and facilitate pro-people, pro-gender, and pro-environmental policies, strategies and plans.
5. Create awareness and understanding about the role of the civil society in promoting good governance, equity, justice, basic human rights, child rights and women rights.
6. Conduct studies, research and surveys to identify major issues, challenges, needs and aspirations of the mountain communities and the impact of development and conversation initiatives undertaken by the government and other actors.
7. Assist and facilitate local communities and institutions in conflict management, resolutions and prevention and in promoting sustainable peace in the region.

8. Organize events of local, national and global significance and create solidarity and networks with regional and international civil society networks to promote the notions of sustainable mountain development, good governance, peace and pluralism.

Note: The major part of this report (Story) has been adopted from the broacher developed by UNAN.

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