

IANSA IMPACT ASSESSMENT: SUMMARY

1. Context of the Study and Key Findings

In December 2008, an Impact Assessment was commissioned by the UK government to determine the impact of its funding contributions to IANSA since 2002. The Assessment was conducted by three independent consultants, and was designed to achieve two main purposes:

- *To assess the value and impact IANSA has had as a network, given the resources invested in it.*
- *To help ascertain or inform its future evolution by assessing what its current strengths and weaknesses are and looking at what its required future role should be. (p7)¹*

The Report considered data and information from five sources – 40 in-depth, 1:1 interviews; a Likert perception-based questionnaire sent to all network members; an E-discussion hosted on the IANSA website; three in-depth country case studies; and a literature review of IANSA's documents, reports and bulletins.

The Assessment established that IANSA has “definitely provided impact, both at the level of states and in mobilising civil society”, and particularly noted its success in emphasising issues affecting the Global South and women (p5). With respect to the question of effectiveness, the Report concluded that “IANSA has given good value for money to its funders” (p5).

2. Impact and Effectiveness of IANSA

IANSA was found to be extremely effective in generating and disseminating information pertaining to small arms through its five communications mechanisms: the IANSA weekly bulletin, E-Alerts, the IANSA website, the Women's Network bulletin, and general campaign materials. In particular, the organisation's website was seen to be a “highly valued resource (and) ‘one stop shop’ on small arms and light weapons (SALW) used by members and the wider SALW community” (p19). IANSA's ability to raise awareness through its campaigns and events (the Global Week of Action, Control Arms Campaign, the UN related events and the Women's Network) was perceived by members to be excellent.

Impact at the Global Level

The findings of the evaluators suggest that IANSA has enjoyed great success in mobilising civil society, and in ensuring that small arms control has been recognised as a key factor in sustainable development. It was found that “IANSA has established itself as the voice of civil society, and has been very successful in bringing civil society into UN and other international forums” (p15). The Report also noted that IANSA's impact to these ends was “remarkable...given the small level of donor investment” (p15).

Impact at the Inter-Governmental Level

IANSA was found to have positively influenced inter-governmental level relationships in three key areas. Firstly, it has proven to be a central driver of the ATT discussion; by way of example, the recent IANSA conference in Cairo (31 March – 1 April 2009) is the first forum yet to facilitate a process of civil society consultation on the ATT within the Middle East and North Africa. Secondly, IANSA has been credited with direct responsibility for the five-fold increase in national submissions to the UN concerning the ATT. Finally, IANSA's centrality to the drafting, and ratification, of international agreements such as the ECOWAS Convention was commended by the evaluators.

Impact within UN Member States

The Report emphasised that the IANSA Secretariat and members have been key players in the establishment of over 35 national commissions, and also directly influenced the adoption of stronger gun laws in more than 20 countries. The Assessment made particular note of the fact that IANSA's activities have significantly increased parliamentarians' understanding of, and engagement with, the small arms issue in recent years.

Impact on Civil Society

Concluding that IANSA “is a highly visible and valued player in global processes”, the Report recognised the important role which IANSA plays in providing a voice to women and in supporting victims/survivors of

¹ Poulton, R, Shanahan, Y & Keen, M (2009) 'IANSA Impact Assessment: Main Report', *EPES Mandala Consulting*, p.5

gun violence; the organisations' network was further credited with successfully providing "a rapid immediate response to key incidents"(p18).

3. Challenges to, and Criticisms of, IANSA

The evaluators felt that challenges to the effectiveness of IANSA gravitate around critical issues concerning the role, structure and perceived legitimacy of IANSA, including internal governance and membership (p21). The most pressing concern of its members is that there are

"no clear, effective mechanisms or processes for inputs or feedback, and that this hampers the...potential impact of the network"(p21).

In turn this contributes to perceptions of a top-down leadership style, a lack of transparency and accountability in decision-making. This concern regarding over-centralisation is raised in other areas of operation; the evaluators noted that "Charismatic leadership has brought the organisation thus far, but additional skills and resources are required for the next stage of IANSA's development" (p24). These problems are exacerbated by the demands associated with IANSA's diverse membership – the Report indicated that expectations and perceptions of the network's operations differed dramatically across members, and particularly between those in the North and South.

The most significant challenge to IANSA at this point in time remains the ability to locate consistent and adequate funding for its operations, since the evidence would suggest that "IANSA is seriously underfunded and needs to create a strategic resourcing policy" (p24). As a corollary, the attendant problem of this challenge is a lack of staff – ultimately resulting in unsustainably high levels of work for the Secretariat.

4. Recommendations and Implementation Strategy

Stage 1: 'Revisioning' (0-6 months)

The Revisioning phase of implementation will involve five initial steps:

1. the expansion of the existing Board;
2. the development of a strategy for the consultation of network members;
3. the introduction of management coaching within the Secretariat;
4. the identification of necessary skills for the organisation's future recruitment; and
5. the initiation of website redesign.

Stage 2: 'Restructuring' (6-18 months)

The focus of the Restructuring phase will also be five-fold:

1. to develop a participatory planning process to generate a new log frame for IANSA to define its purpose, objectives and ambitions;
2. to enhance the structural distinction between the programmatic requirements and organisational management of IANSA;
3. to introduce participative email discussions within the membership;
4. to consolidate a new, permanent Board through enhanced democratic governance structures; and
5. to implement clear business processes for IANSA's key activities.

Stage 3: 'Reenergising' (12-36 months)

The Reenergising phase is intended to be ongoing in nature, and is designed to entrench organisational ownership of these changes throughout the network. It is intended that by mid-2011 the new Board should be overseeing the strategic planning process, ultimately strengthening IANSA's future operations.