Social Network Analysis to Strengthen Information & Resource Sharing in Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

Expert Group Meeting,
Division for Sustainable Development, UN-DESA
UNOSD

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About LINC

- LINC is a small US-based business dedicated to improving development outcomes worldwide:
  - Local, Regional, National Capacity
  - Systems-level analysis and strengthening
  - Equitable partnerships
- Committed to learning and sharing of research and tools that increase local ownership, impact and sustainability

Partnerships in the context of SDGs

- <u>Ultimate goal:</u> improve outcomes and sustain impact
- <u>Needs:</u>
  - Equitable / high-trust partnerships
  - Healthy networks (flow of information and resources)
  - Diverse representation / inclusion
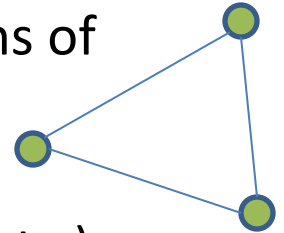 - Relationships that bridges across sectors and geographies

Organizational Network Analysis is an effective tool for understanding the "system":

- Remove obstacles for collaboration
- Facilitate sharing of knowledge and experience
- Identify partners and roles
- Increase social capital and trust

Organizational Network Analysis Overview

- A way of thinking about social systems that focus attention on the relationships among actors in a system.
- A classic systems approach, measuring complex interactions of actors at multiple levels.
- Utilizes nodes (actors) and edges (relations).
- Attributes can be assigned to nodes (e.g. org type, sector, etc.).
- Analysis is conducted at the whole network and individual organizational level.

An actor's position in a network determines in part the constraints and opportunities that s/he will encounter, and therefore identifying that position is important for predicting actor outcomes such as performance, behavior or beliefs.
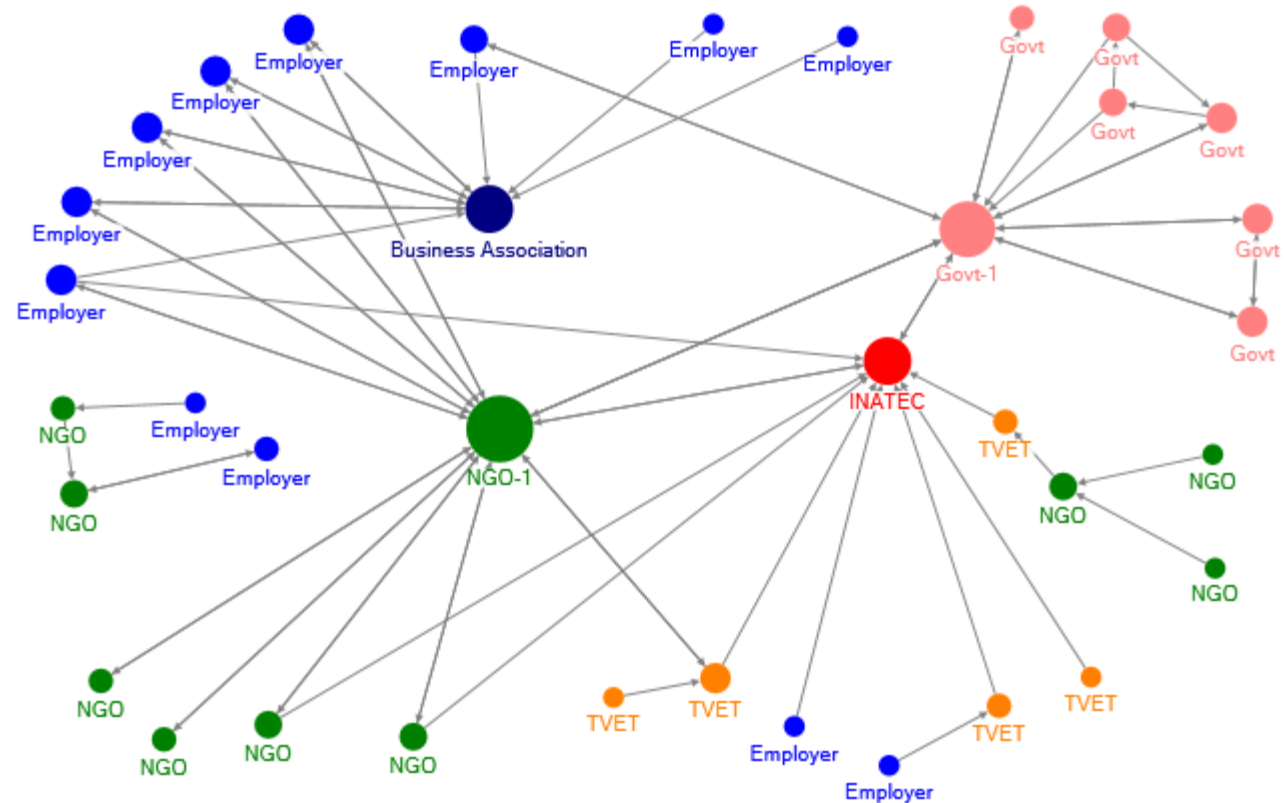
-Borgatti, "Analyzing Social Networks" (2013)

Example Map & Analysis (Employment Network)

Sample Indicators:
- Density
- Average distance
- Reciprocity
- Centrality
- Average trust

Characteristics:
- Clusters
- Bridges / Brokers
- Gatekeepers
- Central / Peripheral
- Fragment

Partnership Effectiveness

Questions to explore effective flow of knowledge and resources:
- Which actors are most central? Are they the most essential actors to address SDG priorities?
- Does the structure / hierarchy of the system enable efficient sharing of information, ideas and resources?
- What are the power relationships within the network and how are decisions made?
- Which actors / relationships bridge geographies and/or sectors?
- Which actor groups share similar interests and/or goals?
- What is the level of trust / perceived equity among actors? Is this improving over time?
- Is the system growing over time?
- Is bonding, bridging, and linking social capital increasing over time?

Thank you

Looking forward to our discussion...