

Department of Social Welfare and Development
IBP Road, Batasan Complex, Constitutional Hills, Quezon City

Administrative Order No. 18
Series of 2008

SUBJECT: Amended Guidelines in the Organization and Strengthening of ABSNET

A. RATIONALE

In November 2006, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), with technical assistance from the World Bank through its Policy and Human Resource Development Program, implemented the National Sector Support for Social Welfare and Development Reform Program (NSS-SWDRP). The objective of the NSS-SWDRP or Reform to Lead Project is to formulate a reform agenda and map out the reform process that will lead to the achievement of the following (a) improve outcomes of social welfare and development services; (b) improve governance of assistance and delivery through integrated national and local level reforms; and (c) build capacity of DSWD and associated agencies in performance-oriented budgeting and management. The DSWD's rallying cry for its reform project is do its role *faster, better, smarter and together*.

As the lead agency in social protection, the DSWD recognizes the vital role of Social Welfare and Development Agencies (SWDA) and local government social welfare and development offices, among others as partners in governance of implementing social welfare and development programs and services. Hence, the need to continue to organize and strengthen the Area-Based Standards Network (ABSNET) which was proven to be an effective strategy for participative and consultative standards development, registration, licensing and accreditation, capability building, technical assistance and resource augmentation to these intermediaries. To date, fifty (50) ABSNET Clusters have been organized nationwide in accordance to AO 139 s. 2002 Guidelines in the Organization and Mobilization of Area-based Standards Network (ABSNET). The existing guidelines, however, is only focused on the organization and mobilization of SWDAs engaged in the implementation of social welfare and development programs and services into Area-Based Standards Network (ABSNET). However, said guidelines is only focused on the organization and mobilization of SWDAs engaged in the implementation of social welfare and development programs and services

into Area-Based Standards Network (ABSNET). Thus, amendment is meant to address the ABSNETs' need to have a more structured and formal organization. Likewise, there is a need to enhance the ABSNET capability to generate external resources to sustain and maintain the implementation of its programs.

B. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. ABSNET – is a strategy to organize SWDAs that are registered, licensed and accredited by DSWD located within the same geographical area that assists the DSWD to monitor the implementation of SWD programs and services for the disadvantaged and vulnerable sectors they serve.
2. Core Group - refers to a group of six (6) elected representatives from SWDAs representing the six (6) sectors: a.) children, b.) youth, c.) family and community d.) women, e.) persons with disabilities, f.) senior citizens which shall then constitute the ABSNET Cluster Officers.
3. Social Welfare and Development Agency (SWDA)- refers to a person, corporation or organization engaged in providing directly or indirectly social welfare services and obtains its finances either totally or in part from any agency or instrumentality of the government and/or from the community by direct or indirect solicitations and/or fund drives and/or endowment

C. OBJECTIVES

General:

To strengthen cooperation and coordination among area-based intermediaries to promote quality implementation of social welfare and development programs and services for SWD constituents and clients.

Specific:

1. To enable the organization of a strong and effective organization of intermediaries that will complement efforts of the DSWD in the promotion of the general welfare of the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged sector.

2. To support the DSWD in promoting faster, better, smarter and together social welfare and development programs/services/projects.
3. To establish a participative and consultative mechanisms for standards development, registration, licensing and accreditation, capability building, technical assistance and resource augmentation.
4. To enhance the capability of ABSNET members in project development and resource generation to access to fund for DSWD programs and services.

D. ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES

1. Membership and Organization of ABSNET

All registered, licensed and accredited social welfare and development agencies, provincial/city/municipal (P/C/M) social welfare and development office of the LGUs and DSWD and LGU centers and institutions within the region are automatically qualified to become a member of ABSNET.

2. Election and Terms of Office

2.1 Election of officers must be conducted every second week of November.

2.2 All elected Officers shall hold office for two (2) years and until their successors are duly elected and qualified.

3. Officers of ABSNET

3.1 The officers of the ABSNET shall be the following:

- a. Chairperson
- b. Vice Chairperson
- c. Secretary
- d. Six (6) representatives from SWDAs each serving a specific sector as follows:
 - i. Children
 - ii. Youth

- iii. Family and Community
- iv. Women
- v. Persons With Disabilities
- vi. Older Persons/Senior Citizens

- One (1) P/CSWDO Representatives or his/her permanent alternate

3.2 The Head of the Agency shall be qualified to be elected as Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary while the sectoral representative may be the Head of the Agency or its social worker.

3.3 The DSWD Standards Unit shall be the secretariat.

3.4 There shall be a permanent and alternate representative for each of the SWDA representing the six (6) sectors a) Children b) youth c) family and community d) persons with disability e) women f) older person/senior citizens sector.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

4.1 ABSNET Officers

1. Chairperson

- a. Preside in all meetings of ABSNET
- b. Oversee the activities of ABSNET.
- c. Carry out and implement the approved work and financial plan of ABSNET.
- d. Represent ABSNET in any meetings/ consultations related to social welfare and development activities.
- e. Submit project proposal to DSWD for mobilization and capability building activities.
- f. Convene the General Assembly and prepare an Annual and Accomplishment Report of ABSNET.

- g. Coordinate closely with DSWD Field Office in the resolution of issues and concerns related to registration, licensing, and accreditation of SWDAs.
- h. Submit quarterly accomplishment report and minutes of quarterly meetings.
- i. Ensure all information in the ABSNET directory is updated.
- j. Ensure that the stated functions of ABSNET in the Guidelines are observed and complied.

2. Vice-Chairperson

- a. Assist the Chairperson in carrying out the function of ABSNET.
- b. Exercise all the powers and perform all duties of the Chairperson during the absence or incapacity of the latter.
- c. Perform duties that maybe assigned by the Chairperson.

3. Secretary

- a. Give notices of meetings and/or relevant information to core group officers and members thru verbal or written information or other means of communication.
- b. Be responsible for the safekeeping of all the official records of the cluster: notice of meetings, minutes of meetings, proceedings and/or photo documentation of conferences, directory of SWDAs, etc.
- c. Act as the rapporteur during the meetings and submit report to the Chairperson for approval.
- d. Regularly update information in the directory of SWDAs within the cluster in coordination with the cluster members and DSWD Field Office.

4. SWDA Representative of the Sector

- a. Represent the sector during the cluster group meetings.
- b. Conduct feedback sessions/meeting with the members of the sectors on updates related to ABSNET activities.
- c. Assist sectoral members on compliance to registration, licensing and accreditation.

5. Local Government Units Representative

- a. Coordinate with other P/C/M SWDO to submit reports regarding SWD agencies not yet registered, licensed and accredited by DSWD.
- b. Assist SWDA operating in their area of jurisdiction in securing permits and accreditation from the LGUs.
- c. Explore the possibility of augmenting fund support to the program implementations of ABSNET members.

6. ABSNET members

- a. Comply with the guidelines, rules and regulations of the ABSNET cluster.
- b. Attend the Annual General Membership Meeting/Assembly and/or other meetings convened by the Cluster Chairperson.
- c. Elect the sectoral representative.

5. ABSNET General Functions

- 5.1 Participate in the review/amendment of social welfare and development standards, policies, rules and regulations adaptive to the area/locality.
- 5.2 Promote registration, licensing and accreditation to SWDAs involved in the implementation of SWD programs and services in the Regions through the conduct of orientation and advocacy activities.

5.3 Conduct consultation dialogues with SWD agencies that are not yet registered, licensed and accredited to clarify issues and concerns relative to registration, licensing and accreditation and promote compliance to SWD standards.

5.4 Establish, maintain, and update directory of SWD agencies/organizations operating in the local area.

5.5 Attend quarterly meetings with ABSNET Cluster Members as venue for updating exchange of ideas, discussion of issues and concerns, sharing of best practices, planning and evaluation as well as fostering camaraderie among ABSNET members.

5.6 Enforce SWD standards by 1) facilitating/providing technical assistance to NGOs application registration, licensing and accreditation; 2) monitoring of existing NGOs; and 3) participating to review committee sessions whenever there is a complaint against an NGO.

5.7 Develop priority project proposal for fund accessing and conduct resource generation activities in coordination with DSWD Field Offices.

6. Rights of the Members

6.1 To exercise the right to vote for a sectoral representative to the core group

6.2 To eligible to any elective or appointive office of the cluster.

6.3 To participate in relevant meetings/deliberation on the cluster.

6.4 To request access o records of the cluster if and when the need arises during business hours e.g minutes of the meetings, etc.

6.5 To be endorsed by the cluster to avail funding assistance from any local or foreign donors.

7. Meetings

7.1 The Chairperson shall convene the core group regular meeting every last Friday of the month.

7.2 The Sectoral Representative shall convene the sectoral meeting every first Friday of the proceeding month.

7.3 The annual meeting of the members shall be held anytime during the last quarter of the year. The Chairperson shall report to the members the accomplishments of the cluster. The election of sectoral representatives shall also be held during this annual meeting.

8. Sanctions to Erring Member

Each ABSNET Cluster shall develop its guidelines and procedures on sanctions to erring members e.g. suspension, expulsion or termination.

E. RESOURCE GENERATION OF ABSNET MEMBERS

There are quite a number of Social Welfare and Development Agencies that need assistance to augment their resources to achieve their goals in providing social welfare and development services to their beneficiaries.

1. Each ABSNET may identify and maintain a pool of donors to partner with in order to ensure and expand the delivery of their programs and services to SWDAs in need. Identification may be made through the following:

1.1 Review the list of SWDAs categorized as resource agencies issued certificate of registration by the Standards Bureau operating in their area of jurisdiction.

1.2 Coordinate with their respective legislators (Congressman/Senators) who are interested to established MOA with a SWDAs to implement a specific social welfare and development programs and services in the region.

1.3 Coordinate with DSWD Field Office for endorsement to legislators who are looking for SWDAs to implement their social welfare and development programs and services

2. ABSNET members may also enter into MOA with the local government units to implement a specific social welfare

programs and services as in the case of other cities and provinces.

3. They can also make representations with foreign embassies to directly submit project proposals for funding of the expansion and sustainability of the agency implementation of SWD programs and services.
4. Interested ABSNET members may be capacitated by the DSWD FO in the preparation of feasibility studies and project proposals as per request through a letter to the FO Director.
5. ABSNET members shall prepare the project proposals for submission to donor agencies for fund accessing at the regional level.
6. For project proposals that were not able to access funds at the regional level, the DSWD FO may submit the proposals to the Central Office through the Policy Development and Plans Bureau - External Affairs Division for fund-matching to national-based and/or foreign donor organizations for endorsement.
7. ABSNET member may recommend to the DSWD FO or Central Office potential local/foreign donors for coordination for possible inclusion in the existing pool of donors of the Department.

F. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. DSWD CENTRAL OFFICE

1. Standards Bureau

- 1.1 Monitor and provide the necessary technical assistance to DSWD FO to ensure the functionality of the ABSNET Clusters.
- 1.2 Allocate funds for the capability-building and mobilization activities of ABSNET Clusters to the FOs based on the approved project proposal.
- 1.3 Conduct three-day capability building session on organization and strengthening of ABSNET in coordination with concerned FO.

- 1.4 Conduct an annual program review and evaluation on the ABSNET as a strategy for institutionalizing partnership between and among the DSWD, SWDAs and LGUs.

2. Policy Development and Plans Bureau-External Affairs Division

- 2.1 Access project proposals submitted by DSWD Field Office to donor agencies for possible funding assistance.

- 2.2 Provide technical assistance to ABSNET members in the enrichment of project proposals based on the requirements of donor agencies.

B. DSWD Field Office

1. Monitor the operation of the ABSNET specifically the implementation of their approved work and financial plan;
2. Provide the necessary information, technical assistance and capability building activities towards the effective performance of the duties and responsibilities of the ABSNET Cluster officers;
3. Ensure that issues and concerns on registration, licensing and accreditation are discussed during quarterly meetings;
4. Disburse ABSNET mobilization fund according to existing financial and auditing rules and submit liquidation report to the Finance Service copy furnish the Bureau;
5. Maintain database of donor agencies within the region that have already made their commitment to assist ABSNET members;
6. Conduct meetings with donor agencies to discuss updates on issues and concerns on submitted project proposals of the SWDAs;

7. Provide technical assistance to ABSNET members in coordination with concerned DSWD Office/Bureaus/Service/Units on 1) project proposal development and packaging 2) Project management and monitoring and evaluation and 3) Planning and conducting resource generation activities; and
8. Ensure submission of quarterly reportorial requirements by ABSNET clusters;
9. Conduct monitoring and post project evaluation assessment of completed funded projects.

G. EFFECTIVITY

This order shall take effect immediately and supersedes other DSWD guidelines and issuances inconsistent thereof. Let copies of this Administrative Order be given to all DSWD Field Offices, Local Government Units and Social Welfare and Development Agencies.

Issued this 11th day of December, 2008 at Quezon City

ESPERENZA I. CABRAL
Secretary

