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Concept Note on the 'Taiyari' District Federation

The Necessity to work in coalition

- ✓ Coalitions are invaluable because they bring people and resources together from all sectors of the community and provide visible signs of community support.
- ✓ Working in a group helps increase quality as well as the quantity of work, and prevents burnout by spreading responsibilities.
- ✓ Coalitions allow individuals and groups to contribute their unique expertise, as well as to educate and mobilize their particular constituents.
- ✓ Coalitions can help identify genuine concerns and engage in group problem-solving.
- ✓ Once a program is implemented, coalition members are ideal for providing services and resources for program operations.

Coalitions are hard work; however, we need to keep in mind the following pitfalls and work to minimize the usual problems found in coalitions:

1. Coalition members' interests may conflict (positions/stands/priorities)
2. Building consensus is a time-consuming process (constant connect/efforts / pursuance)
3. Logistics become more complicated (organizing discussions and periodic meetings, ensuring resources to run the operations)
4. Guidelines for Effective Coalitions (need to be evolved through a participatory process and from within the coalition members).

The Statement of purpose: *Build, support and strengthen an enabling atmosphere for the adolescents to achieve their fullest potential in their lives and make meaningful contributions towards building a just society.*

The Members: An organization's membership in the coalition symbolizes their commitment to the goals, and is indicated by endorsement of the coalition's statement of purpose. **Organizations and groups to be involved are:**

- ✓ Representatives of Government departments such as Education (SSA), WCD (Sabla), Social Justice and Empowerment, Labor, Sports and youth Affairs (NYK), Health (NRHM, ARSH).
- ✓ Community based cadres, AWWs, ANMs, ASHAs, LS.
- ✓ Young people, Teens know their peer opinions and needs better than most adults; be open to young people's suggestions, and seek their input. Involve youth in meaningful ways, and encourage them to represent the coalition to the media.
- ✓ School faculty and staff, including teachers' unions
- ✓ Religious leaders and Civil Society organizations

The Objectives: We, the 'Taiyari' district federation partners, define following objectives for our coalition:

- ✓ To advocate for the rights and issues of adolescents
- ✓ To mobilize support, opinions and resources for adolescent programmes in the district
- ✓ To educate and orient Parents, CSOs, PRIs, Legislators, Bureaucrats, Media, Community and the Opinion Makers to support adolescent programmes and their issues.
- ✓ To build an evidence base on the situation and needs of the adolescents in the district, disseminate information amongst the stakeholders influencing adolescent programmes, policies and provisions.

Proposed structure and leadership roles: Coalitions are most effective when all members have a voice and know they will be heard. Creating maximum involvement does not negate, however, the need for organized leadership and structure.

Chair: To be selected by the coalition. The chosen person will be expected to provide overall leadership to the federation and make it an effective coalition on the adolescent issues/programming, in the district.

Co-chair: Chair the meetings and take decisions in the absence of, or when specifically nominated by the Chair.

Spokespersons: We need to select at least two persons from the coalition who will represent the coalition to the media. One of the spokespersons should be an articulate teenager. Also, we need to agree on a process for handling media requests and opportunities.

Note: *The Federation members may decide about the roles and responsibilities and these roles can be shared or rotated.* One of the options is to have shared responsibilities for the work through task forces or committees. These allow more people to become invested in the group, and can either be permanent or just for a specific project. The members need to define responsibilities and the decisions that can be made without the broader coalition.