“Broadening and Deepening Child Rights Agenda in Uganda”

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014 – 2018

UGANDA CHILD RIGHTS NGO NETWORK

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1. Background

1.1 Overview of Uganda Child Rights NGO Network:

Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN) is a coalition of child focused organizations including community based, national and international organizations working for the welfare and the rights of children in Uganda. UCRNN envisions a society where children's rights are realized and exists to promote a coordinated action for the promotion and protection of children's rights in Uganda. Established in 1997 to spearhead the writing of the NGO Alternative Report to the Government of Uganda Report to the UN Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Child, UCRNN has over the years expanded its membership and scope of programmes to include collective advocacy, research and capacity building. The network is currently guided by a five (5) year strategic plan (2010 - 2014), with three interlinked strategic objectives; which are: (i) to collectively advocate for implementation of the rights and responsibilities of children, (ii) to collectively monitor implementation and promote understanding of child rights at all levels in Uganda, and (iii) to strengthen the institutional capacity of the network to fulfill its mandate. To date, the network's core undertaking is monitoring and reporting on the commitments made by the government of Uganda in the various national and international legal frameworks and instruments.

1.2 Evolution of UCRNN (1997– 2013)

Over its 16 years of existence the network registered gradual progress in its growth trajectory categorized in four (4) phases as follows;

- ***Phase I - Inception (1997-2000):*** Started operations; raised awareness on child rights; and mobilized actors to join the network.

- ***Phase II - Strategic Re-direction (2001-2003):*** Realigned the network to deliver its mandate and to act as a platform for collective action.

- ***Phase III - Growth and institutional development (2004–2009):*** Monitored child rights instruments with member organizations; participated in profiling child rights issues in the national development agenda – PEAP/NDP. Demonstrated experience, professionalism, track record as a promoter of children's rights agenda.

- ***Phase IV - Consolidation (2010-2014):*** In 2010, the network launched its strategic plan for the period 2010 - 2014 with a continued focus on; collective advocacy, monitoring and promoting child rights instruments and institutional development,

1.3 UCRNN Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Objectives (2010 – 2014)	
1.3.1 Vision and Mission	"A society where children's rights are realized" This would be achieved through, "undertaking collective action for the promotion and protection of children's rights in Uganda"
1.3.2 Values	The principles and core values of UCRNN include: • Child Participation • Non-discrimination • Transparency • Accountability • Fairness
1.3.3 Strategic Objectives	To achieve the vision, three (3) specific strategic objectives were set. These are: 1) To collectively advocate for the implementation of the rights and responsibilities of children. 2) To collectively monitor the implementation of and promote understanding of child rights at all levels in Uganda. 3) To strengthen the institutional capacity of the network to fulfill its mandate.

2. Review of the key elements of the previous strategic plan (2010-2014)

In 2012, the network undertook a mid-term review of its 2010-2014 strategic plan to assess the effectiveness and progress towards realization of the set objectives. This section provides an overview of the achievements and challenges encountered in the three programme areas and the extent to which the 2010-2014 plan was effectively implemented.

2.1 Major achievements during the previous strategic period

2.1.1 Collective Advocacy

Under this programme area the following achievements were realized:

Theme based advocacy action:

One of the key advocacy platforms that facilitated coordinated and collective action was the establishment of thematic groups comprising of member organizations. Through these thematic groups member's organizations played a lead role in generating strategies on the themes and engaging collectively on specific issues. Some of the achievements of the thematic groups include: generation of a position paper on the Children's Act Amendment Bill; advocacy on children with disability; child sexual abuse and exploitation; lobbying for the implementation of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2010) and advocacy on children in the post-conflict region of Uganda.

Voices of Children:

Lobbying for the inclusion of children's concerns in government plans and priorities as part of the effort to promoting opportunities for children and young people to contribute to advocacy for change

UCRNN mobilized its members and partners (World Vision, Trocaire, Save the Children International (SCI) and Plan) to generate children's views and incorporate this into a children's manifesto. The manifesto informed programming and is a key reference document on "Voices of Children".

Tumaini Awards:

Tumaini was established to respond to the growing concern over the gaps in realization of the four core rights of children including the right to survival, development, participation and protection. UCRNN membership i.e. ANPPCAN, World Vision, Child Fund, Compassion, and Save the Children partnered on this award; and since then the programme has contributed to public awareness on the theme of the Day of the African Child (DAC), basis on which the Tumaini Awards process takes place.

Policy Advocacy:

Lobbying for the review and enactment of child related policies and legislation, including the Children Act Cap 59, the amendment of the Birth Registration Act, National Programme Plan of Investment (NSPPI) for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) II and the Early Childhood Development Policy. In this regard UCRNN mobilized CSOs to collectively lobby key duty bearers for the enactment of these policies and legislation. UCRNN contributed towards the following; the enactment of the NSPPI II, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Comprehensive Policy, the Children Act Amendment Bill currently before cabinet for consideration.

This was done through the establishment of a confidential reporting mechanism, working in partnership with member organisations - ANPPCAN, Action for Children, World Vision and Child Fund – in order to strengthen referral and response at district level. The key services provided through the child helpline include: telephone counselling which mostly responds to the emotional and psychological needs of children; provision of legal support; shelter, and medical services. Since its establishment, the *Child Helpline* has contributed to increased reporting of cases of child abuse and increased response to the same. Above all it created a confidential mechanism where children experiencing abuse or those at risk of abuse can seek help and access services.

Research and documentation to generate information on child rights issues to inform planning and advocacy. Research in key and emerging child rights issues was undertaken including generation of a situational analysis report of child rights in Uganda, 2010, A study on birth registration, 2010; region specific study on children affected by conflict, and a study on child rights accountability mechanisms, 2011 (to insert exact titles)

*T*o broaden alliances with a view to advance the course for children. Active engagement was undertaken in a number of partnerships both at national, regional and international level. These include: the Child Policy Forum, The Africa Wide Movement for Children, Rwanda NGO Network, Uganda National NGO Forum, End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) and Child Helpline International (CHI)

2.1.2 Monitoring and Promoting Child Rights Instruments

- *Promoting child rights through awareness and child rights instruments*: In this regard MGLSD was supported in generating the consolidated action plan on the concluding observations and recommendations of treaty bodies.
- *Preparation of reports on the status of implementation of child rights in Uganda:* In 2011 UCRNN prepared a CSO Child Rights paper as part of the Universal Periodic Review for

Uganda. In the same year working with NUDIPU, UCRNN supported the developed of a complementary report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD).

- *Providing technical support on child rights monitoring within the region:* In 2012, UCRNN supported the establishment of the Child Rights CSO Coalition in Rwanda. In addition the network provided technical input in the generation of reporting guidelines for the State Party reporting on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

- *Ensuring availability of updated data on the situation of children***:** In 2011 UCRNN undertook a rapid assessment on the wellbeing of children in Uganda based on the reporting guidelines on the implementation of the UNCRC.

- *Engagement with treaty bodies on the status of implementing the child rights instruments*: UCRNN sustained engagement with treaty bodies, both with the Geneva based UN Committee and the Africa Union Committee of Experts in on Child Rights.

2.1.3 Institutional Development

- *Improved capacity of UCRNN member organizations:* Through targeted capacity building initiatives for child actors on key areas such as child protection, and child participation. For example the development and implementation of institutional strengthening tools and improving the human resource base.

- *Improved capacity of the UCRNN Secretariat to deliver on its mandate:* UCRNN has over the years developed technical competence and expertise in child rights. The Secretariat is now adequately equipped with the requisite technical human resource and equipment to effectively discharge its coordination function.

2.2 Unachieved targets & challenges in implementing the previous strategic plan

Although there was demonstrated progress and initiatives undertaken in the two (2) years of implementation of the strategic plan, the mid-term review report highlighted limited progress but above all new developments within the operating environment that would affect achievement of the strategic objectives. Below are some of key challenges in the implementation of the strategic plan that will be addressed in the coming re-casted plan;

- *Lack of a clear advocacy agenda*: Whereas the review noted considerable progress made in the area of advocacy though mobilizing child rights actors into coalitions to push shared agendas, it was noted that the advocacy engagements were not guided by a clear advocacy agenda. It was recommended that UCRNN needs to develop a clear advocacy strategy that defines key outcomes and strategies to guide its advocacy actions in the coming period. .

- *Research and Documentation*: past research initiatives undertaken by UCRNN have not been linked to the advocacy agenda being perused. It was noted that there is need to align UCRNN's advocacy work and its research activities.

- *UCRNN's scope limited to thematic focus*: The network's effort has largely been directed towards child protection interventions and child participation with very limited engagement with issues and actors focusing on education and health. It was recommended that there was need for the network to deliberately target organizations working on issues of children's health and education in addition to child protection and participation in the coming period, in order to ensure a comprehensive focus on the broad spectrum of rights thus giving credence to the mandate of the network.

- *Integrate cross-cutting issues more effectively*: The strategic plan outlines four cross-cutting issues that should be mainstreamed across the network's interventions. These include: HIV/AIDS; Gender; Climate Change; and Child Protection. It was noted that whereas some concrete initiatives have been undertaken to mainstream child protection by supporting members to develop child protection policies, there was need to identify strategies on how the other cross-cutting issues can be meaningfully mainstreamed within the network's interventions.

- *Lack of a systematic approach and consistent process of monitoring International, regional and national Instruments*. While monitoring and reporting on the implementation of child rights instruments is a core mandate of UCRNN, it was observed that the process and approach has been undertaken more like an event and therefore the need to strengthen members' capacity to effectively monitor the status of implementation of the various provisions relating to the issues on which they focus in their respective areas of operation, and subsequently engage relevant actors.

- *Resource mobilization*. The issue of resource mobilization is critical for the survival and effectiveness of UCRNN and her members. It was noted that leveraging resources for the child rights sector is central to the realization of many of the set strategic aspirations of the network and that this should be a major focus for the network in the coming period.

3. Anchoring the Strategic Direction 14-2018

The 2014 – 2018 strategic direction aims at providing a prudent policy framework that will guide UCRNN's engagements in the next five (5) years. Thus, it is firmly rooted in the organizations values and sixteen years' experience, achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. It strives to ensure that UCRNN has formal and well-established practices as well as adopting a management for results approach that firmly connects plans to budgets

3.1 The Goal

UCRNN strives to broaden and deepen the Child Rights Agenda in Uganda by collaborating and contributing to the effective role of 106 member organizations by 2018.

3.2 Strategic Objectives (SO)

To achieve this goal, UCRNN will pursue the following strategic objectives in 2014 - 2018:

Strategic Objective 1:

70% UCRNN members and other child focused CSOs supported to effectively address child rights issues in Uganda by 2018.

Outcomes:

SO1.1:	Well coordinated and harmonized CSO interventions on child rights
SO1.2:	UCRNN members and other child focused CSOs with capacity to address child rights issues
SO1.3:	Up-to-date information on key child rights issues compiled and disseminated among child rights stakeholders

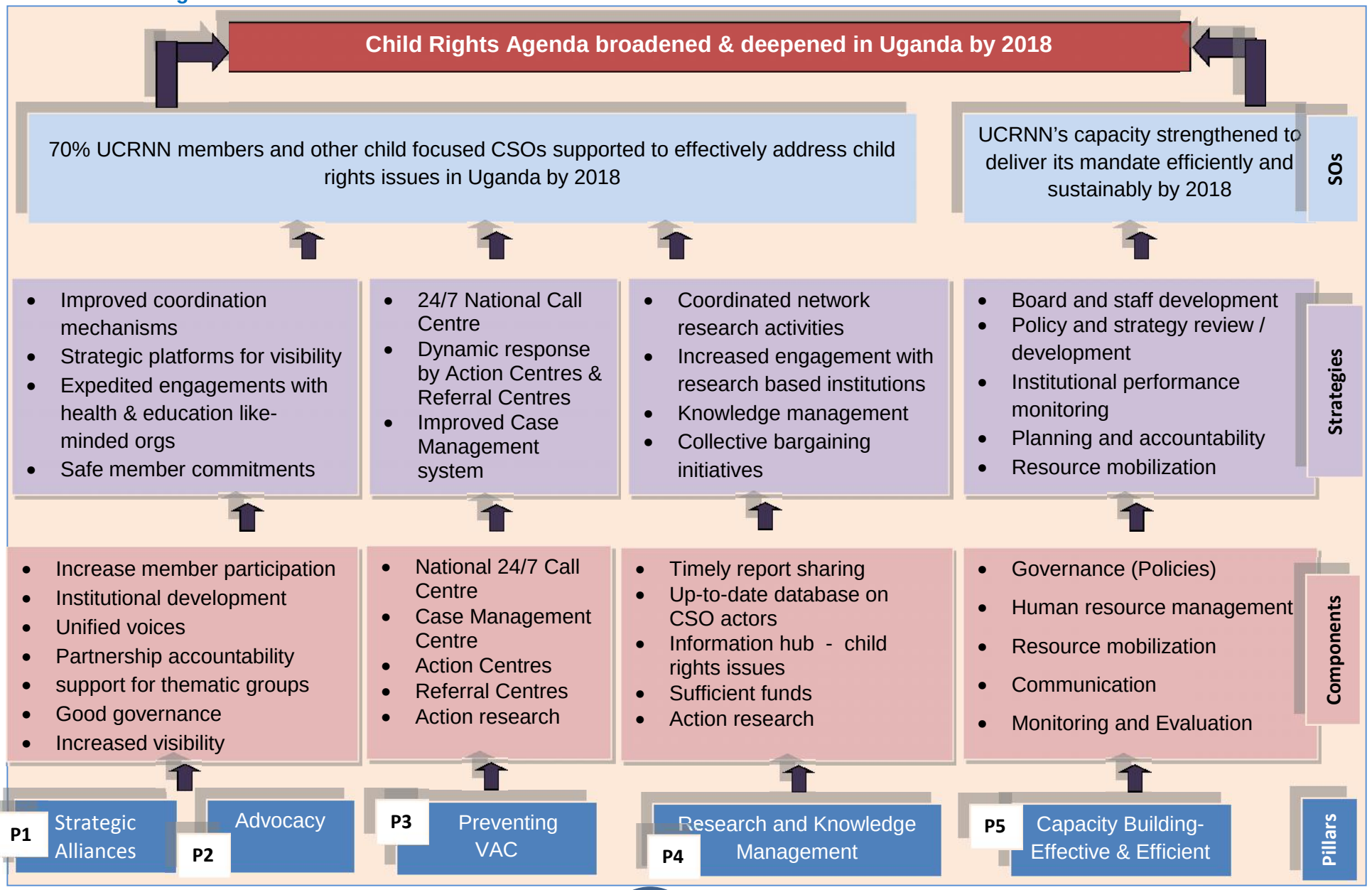
Strategic Objective 2:

UCRNN's capacity strengthened to deliver its mandate efficiently and sustainably by 2018

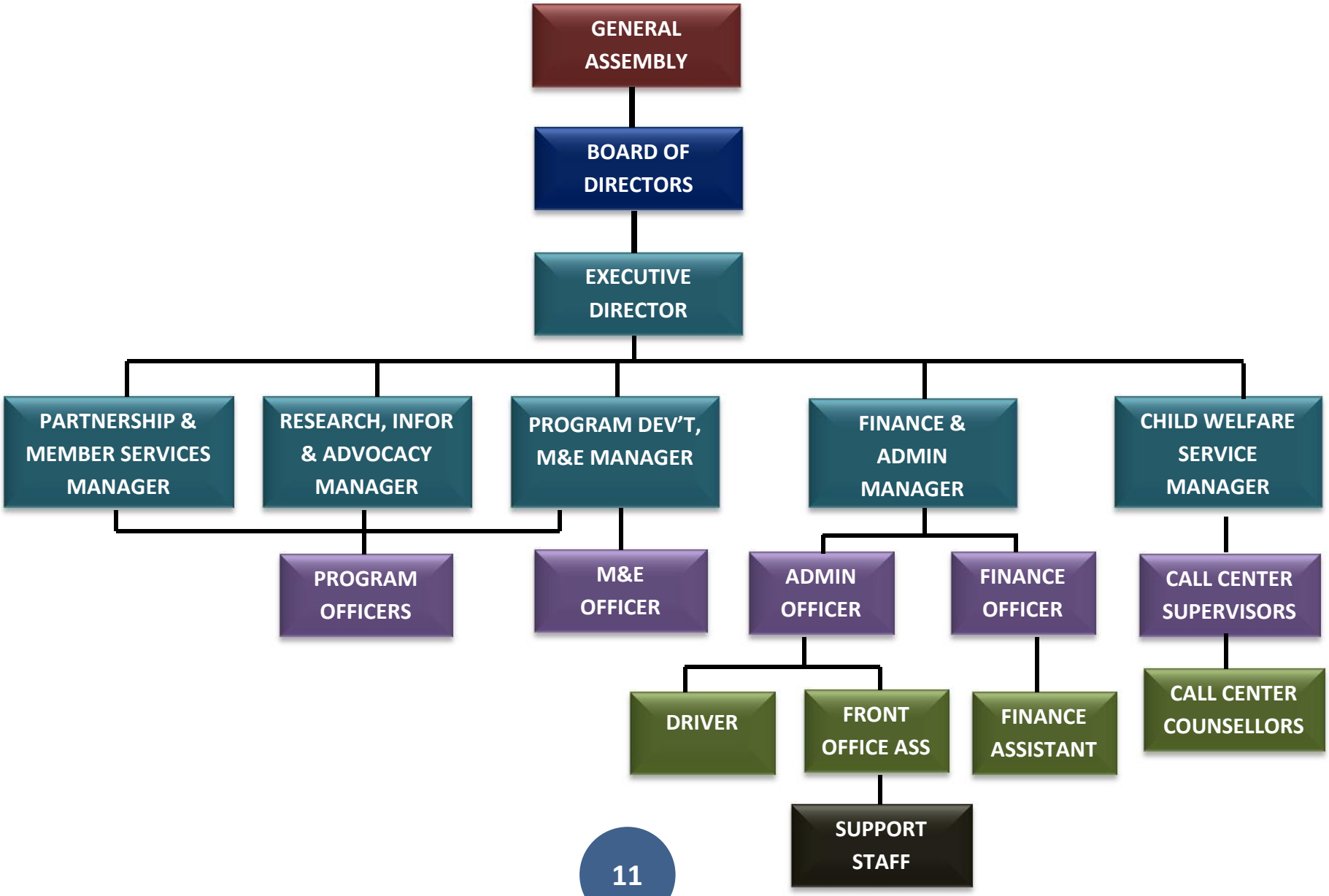
Outcomes:

SO2.1:	A competent and functional board that provides oversight to the Secretariat and strategic direction to the network
SO2.2:	Adequate policies and systems to guide the operations of the Secretariat and the network instituted and implemented
SO2.3:	Adequate human and financial resources available to support the operations of the network

4. Intervention Logic 2014 - 2018:



5. UCRNN Organisational Structure



7. Accountability and Learning

UCRNN is committed to demonstrating and enhancing organizational accountability and learning. This will span across the organization with the aim of maximizing the effectiveness of programme interventions. The organization takes a deliberate effort to be accountable on the organizations' work with appropriate rigor to all stakeholders.

UCRNN will organize workshops to enhance knowledge and enrich the network's mandate. Workshops will be held after consultative efforts have been made on reports so as to enable the dissemination and sharing of appropriate strategies and action points. The Information management system will promote information sharing, effective programming and the practice of standards in a bid to boost efficiency and impacts.