

Good practice in working with regional networks

Strengthening the Christian response to HIV and AIDS in Africa through information sharing

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Presentation Overview

- Why networking?
- Donor motives for supporting regional networks
- Networking – constraints and challenges

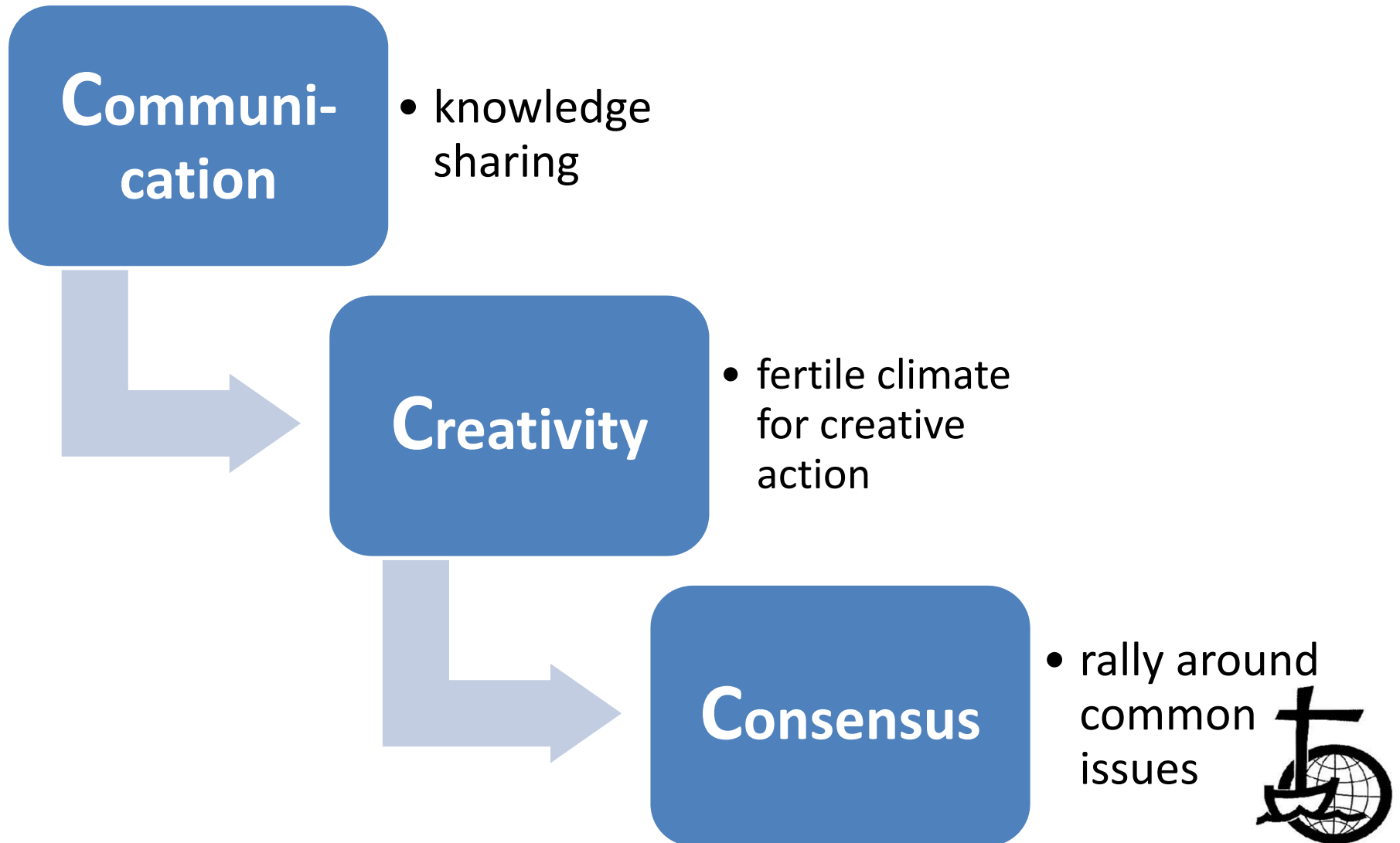


Networks: definition

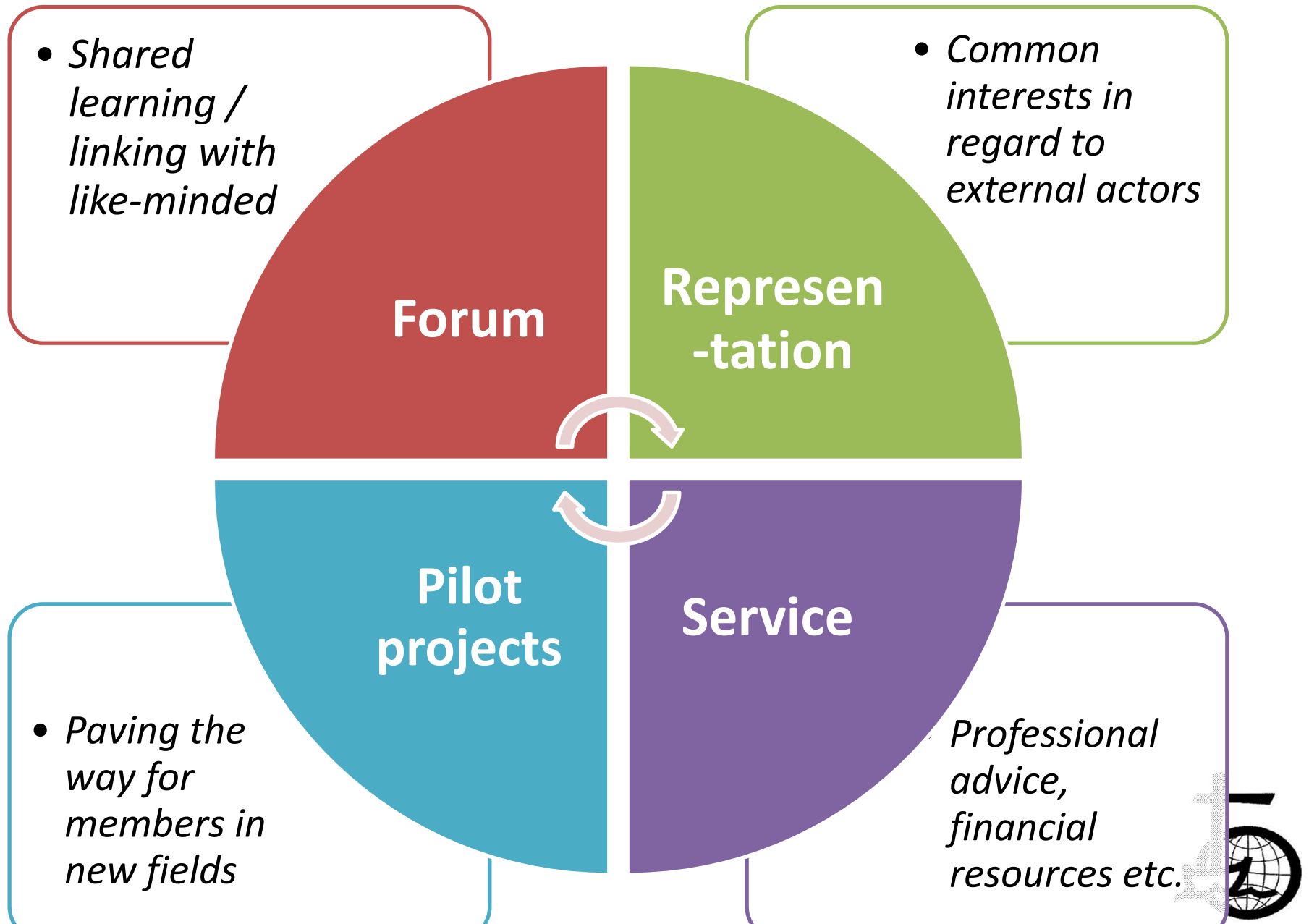
- Formal or informal structures that **link** actors (individuals or organisations) with a **shared** interest on a specific **issue** and/or who share a general set of **values**
- PACANet
 - Secretariat serving Christian constituency in coordinating and facilitating roles of various players
 - Enhance HIV and AIDS responses of churches, Christian organisations and Christian networks
 - Christian values



Networks: Three C's



What is a Network?



Why Regional / Multi-country?

- Cross-boundary challenges
- Scale of problems requires joint solutions
- Conflict resolution
- Opportunities for economic growth
- Shared learning → enhanced skills



Donor motives for Support of Regional Networks

- Promote Interaction
 - Avoid fragmentation and trench-digging
- Outreach: countries + beneficiaries
 - Scaling up + circumventing own limitations
- Reinforce thematic priorities
 - Networks as instruments for donor priorities
- Policy engagement with regional and international organisations
 - Enhance legitimacy and outreach of IGOs (AU, ECOWAS, SADC, EAC etc.)



PACANet Lessons learned 2010

- Networking: relationship building based on trust
 - ⇒ takes time
 - ⇒ shared events, objectives and mutual interests
- Interdenominational work
 - ⇒ focus on common cause (maintain identities of involved parties)
- Innovative projects
 - ⇒ creativity + innovative skills (not mere qualification + experience)
- Africa not one village: Variations across the continent
- Leadership decisive ⇒ response and action in constituencies
- Skills transfer
 - Information provision and skills development + inputs such as technical support and financial resourcing
- Involving external actors: National AIDS Councils



Regional networks – constraints

- Geographical distance: logistics
- Limited experience with (regional) networking
- Differing political and organisational cultures
- Overlapping mandates and competition



Regional networks – challenges

- Governance structures
 - Board ↔ National structures
 - Board ↔ Secretariat
- Legitimacy
 - Representation ↔ Outreach
- Technical expertise
 - Focus on a limited set of issues
- Effective communication strategies
 - Most effective knowledge sharing modalities
- Relations to other networks
 - Nationally and regionally; avoid competition and overlap

