THE NGO HANDBOOK

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About the Author

(Courtesy of Hilary Binder-Aviles)

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THE NGO HANDBOOK

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Have you ever seen a problem and wanted to do something about it? Of course you have. The schools, police, government welfare offices, churches and families aren't handling it. Others share your concerns and want to do something. That's why you would start a nongovernmental organization, or NGO. This handbook will guide you through the steps of starting and operating an NGO.

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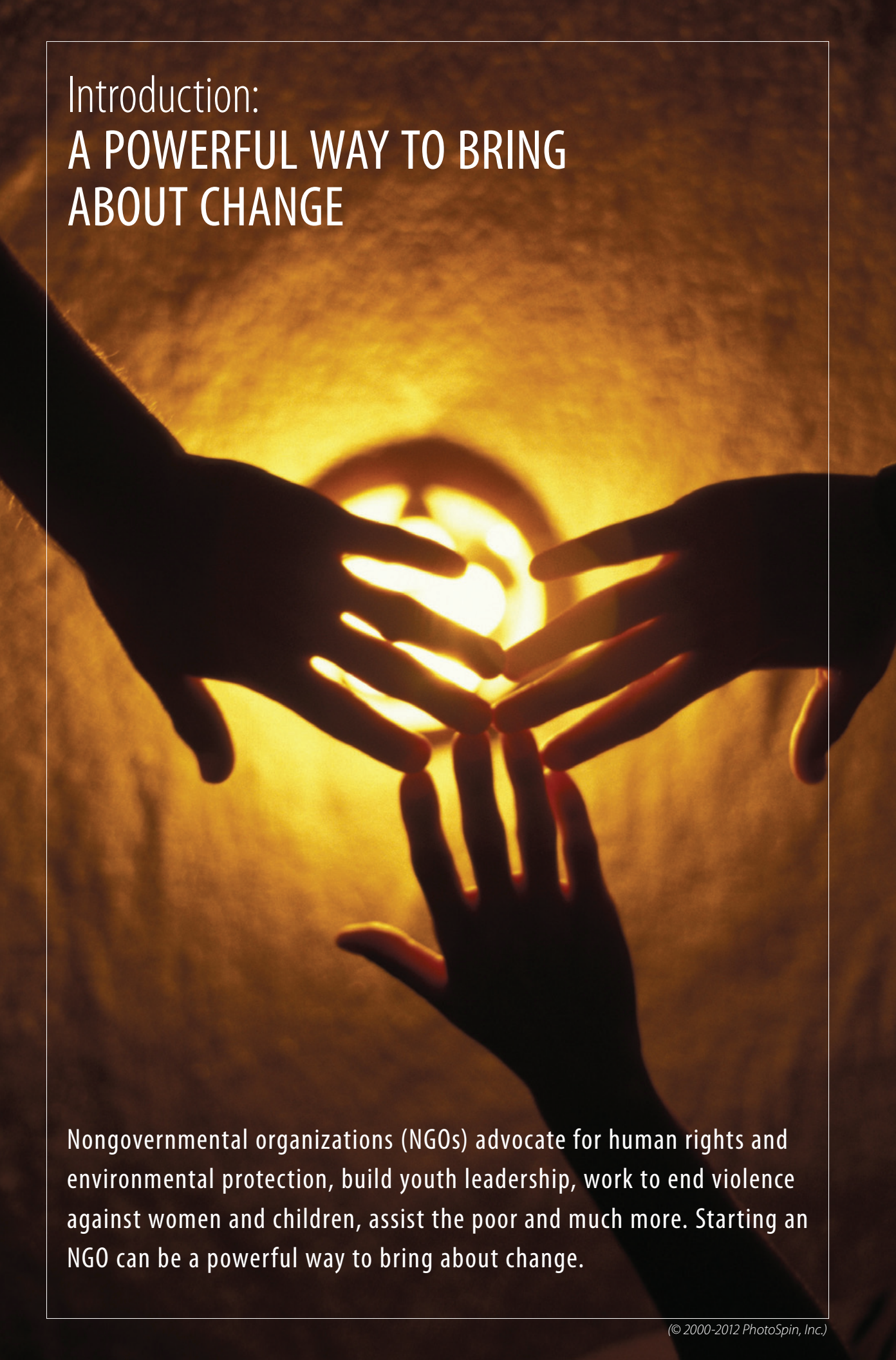
Introduction:
A POWERFUL WAY TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE



Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) advocate for human rights and environmental protection, build youth leadership, work to end violence against women and children, assist the poor and much more. Starting an NGO can be a powerful way to bring about change.

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NGOs — nongovernmental organizations — are independent of both the government and the business sector. Their mandate is to promote the public interest and serve the public good rather than to make a profit or advance the interests of a narrow group of individuals. Their independence enables them to monitor government performance and advocate for improvements.

NGOs that are respected by both the government and the business sector can help mediate conflicts or find solutions to common concerns. Finally, their independence from government, political parties and religious institutions allows them to create a shared vision for their community. NGOs mobilize volunteers and other resources to achieve their vision.

Whether you are thinking about starting an NGO, have already established one, or have been leading one for years, you are part of a global movement of people channeling their power to effect change. Over the past few decades, NGOs have been at the forefront of major social movements to better people's lives. The number of NGOs in emerging democracies has grown rapidly over the past decades. In places such as the former Soviet republics, NGOs are helping build democratic institutions and provide safety nets for poor and vulnerable populations.

The term "NGO" first came into use after World War II when the United Nations applied it to private organizations that helped heal the ravages of the war — millions of displaced people, orphans and high unemployment. But the concept of citizens organizing around issues goes back much further. Some scholars identify the first international NGO as Anti-Slavery International, established in 1839.

Today, the U.N. recognizes an estimated 40,000 international NGOs, with millions more operating within countries. There are many different kinds of NGOs. Some are large, multinational organizations while others are small, village-based groups. Some target particular issues or sectors, such as women, youth, the environment, human rights, education or health. Others address multiple issues and sectors.

Whatever their area or scope, all NGOs exist to make people's lives better or solve a social problem. Most NGOs are founded by people who are passionate about their communities or causes. Yet starting and running an NGO takes more than passion. It takes knowledge, skills, resources and relationships. It also takes time, planning, patience and flexibility.

This handbook provides a framework for building an effective, sustainable NGO. In these pages, you will find information about how to develop the core components of an NGO — the values, vision, mission and programs — and tips for how to carry them out. We will also cover the different kinds of relationships you need — with the community you serve, your partners, your funders, the government and other stakeholders. Throughout the book, you will find best practices for running an NGO and advice on how to avoid and address common challenges your NGO might face.

Ultimately, this handbook will help you build an NGO that is legitimate, transparent and accountable, qualities necessary for your NGO to be effective.

LEGITIMACY

When an NGO is seen as legitimate, the public believes that it addresses a need in society and that its members put that social need above their personal interests. Before you ask yourself: How do we sustain our NGO?, you need to answer the questions: Are we legitimate? and Does our NGO deserve to exist? An NGO deserves to exist when it has a

clear, relevant mission focused on meeting a critical community or societal need. But a good mission is not enough. To be legitimate, an NGO must also be well-governed, well run and effective.

An NGO that is controlled by one individual will not be seen as legitimate. If one person dominates an organization with little input or oversight from others, that individual risks promoting his or her personal interest over the public interest. Without the active leadership and management of several people, there are no checks and balances to prevent misuse or abuse of NGO resources. An NGO needs a broad base of leaders who solicit input from stakeholders to make sure their organization serves the public interest.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Because an NGO exists for the public good, it must be accountable to — answer to — the public. Specifically, that means answering to your stakeholders: funders, members, partners, the people you serve, the community you operate in and other NGOs.

Different stakeholders have different expectations. Your funders expect their money to be used for the intended purpose, managed well and applied to meet project objectives. The people you serve expect help with their needs and to be treated with respect. Partners expect you to be honest and follow through on commitments. These are just a few examples. NGOs need to engage and listen to their different stakeholders to understand their varied expectations. At a minimum, your NGO is accountable for:

- The mission: An NGO's mission is why it exists. It is your public promise about what you do and the difference you seek to make in the world. An NGO keeps its promise to the public by upholding its mission.
- The results: It is not enough to carry out projects and activities. An NGO must achieve tangible results in improving the lives of the people it serves.
- Good governance: Your NGO should have a volunteer board of directors that governs the organization ethically and effectively. Governance is the set of activities through which a board provides direction and oversight of the organization and its activities.
- Fiscal responsibility: Your NGO must make sure the contributions it receives are used to advance the mission, not for the personal gain of specific individuals. In its governance role, the board oversees the NGO's finances.

How do you hold your NGO accountable? Too often, NGOs hold themselves accountable only to their funders and donors and not to their communities. Your funders, of course, require you to report to them, while your communities do not. In many countries, government ministries that oversee NGOs require annual reports. But how do NGOs hold themselves accountable to the

KEEP IN MIND...

NO ONE OWNS AN NGO

Throughout this handbook, we may refer to "your NGO." By that we mean the NGO with which you are affiliated. An NGO is not someone's property. It serves the public good and must have a group of people who serve as the stewards of that public trust. This is typically the board of directors. NGOs that are controlled by one individual who is not accountable to a board or other stakeholders will not be seen as legitimate and will not earn the diverse support needed to sustain the organization.

communities they serve? They do that by holding community meetings, conducting surveys, and writing annual reports, newsletters and other forms of outreach. Not only should you regularly inform your constituency of your activities, you should seek their input and feedback. If NGOs demand accountability in others, they must be accountable themselves.

TRANSPARENCY

When something is transparent, you can see through it. That is how NGOs must operate. Stakeholders must be able to see into your organization and understand how its programs operate, how funds are used and how decisions are made. An NGO practices transparency by providing timely and accurate information about its activities, finances, policies, procedures and decisions. By being transparent, you create opportunities to learn how to do your work better. When others have information about what you are doing and how you are doing it, they can offer ideas for improvement.

REMEMBER…

OTHER TERMS FOR NGOs

You may hear other terms used to describe organizations that work to advance the public good:

- Civil society organizations (CSOs)
- Nonprofit organizations
- Charities or charitable organizations
- Grassroots or community-based organizations
- Voluntary organizations

In some cases, the terms suggest a particular type of NGO. For example, grassroots organizations are NGOs that members of a community form to help themselves.

Legitimacy, transparency and accountability go hand in hand. If an NGO is not accountable to its stakeholders, it will not be seen as legitimate. If an NGO is not transparent, it cannot hold itself accountable and neither can others. Further, being accountable and transparent helps you build trust with the community. Earning your community's trust is key to being able to carry out your mission. When community members lack trust in an NGO, they are less likely to participate in its programs or seek its services. The more accountable and transparent you are, the more trust you gain. And the more trust you gain, the better able you are to serve your community.

It is up to you as an NGO leader to uphold these principles, for they are the keys to your success.

When one NGO makes headlines for corruption or mismanagement, it makes all NGOs look bad, and the whole sector loses legitimacy in the eyes of the public. On the other hand, when NGOs uphold these principles in word and action, they build confidence and trust in the work of all NGOs. This handbook will help your organization do just that.

1 STARTING AND SUSTAINING AN NGO

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Solutions to large global challenges often start with small, local actions. When you see a need or a problem in your community, you can make a difference by standing up and taking action. An artist may see youth in his neighborhood with nothing to do after school and start an informal art program. An educator may notice that young girls from poor families don't attend school regularly and set up a Saturday tutoring program. A nurse may learn that women in her community are uninformed about basic health services and organize informational workshops.

But, no matter what kind of challenge or opportunity you face, you can accomplish more when you have more resources and people supporting your goal than when you act alone. This is why you start a nongovernmental organization (NGO).

Starting an NGO requires many kinds of support. You need volunteers, people who provide resources and advocates who believe in your efforts. Launching projects and activities demands multiple skills and forms of support. You need to make plans, reach out to the community, recruit volunteers, raise funds, monitor projects and evaluate results. Sustaining an NGO over time demands an even greater level of commitment, skills, systems, support and resources.

This chapter provides an overview of the key components to start and sustain an NGO. As we discussed in the introduction, when an NGO is legitimate — accountable, transparent, and connected to the community — then it deserves to be sustained. *Sustainability* refers to the capacity of an NGO to maintain its activities over time. Often, when we hear the term sustainability, the first thing that jumps to mind is money. But sustainability is about much more than that. It starts with the organization's vision and mission.

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Your NGO's vision describes the long-term changes you seek and how people's lives will be better thanks to your work. Your mission is the unique way your organization contributes to turning that vision into reality. It is necessary that you put your vision and mission into writing.

When the leaders of an NGO share a powerful vision and a clear mission, the NGO has a much better chance to be successful. Without a vision, your NGO will find it hard to inspire others to join your cause. An ill-defined mission leaves an NGO without focus and direction. NGOs with unclear missions often dissipate their energy in many unrelated projects or activities, leaving little impact.

Writing vision and mission statements is one of the most important things you, the founders of an NGO, do. Vision and mission statements set the tone for your future work. In the beginning, set aside time for your core leadership team to come together and define your NGO's aims and means to accomplish them.

As your NGO gains experience, or as new needs emerge in the community, you will likely need to refine your mission. Imagine a lawyer who wants to help migrant workers in his city. He starts an NGO called Migrant Workers' Support Network (MWSN). Initially, his mission is broad: *Help migrant workers*. Later, he realizes the mission is too broad and his NGO lacks focus. So he narrows the mission to: *Advocate for the rights of migrant workers in detention*. Now he knows exactly where to channel the NGO's resources. But as time passes, he discovers other unaddressed needs that his NGO can meet, such as improving housing and working conditions, so he decides to redefine his mission again: *Support migrant workers to live with safety, security and dignity in our community.*

Periodic review and reaffirmation of the mission is part of an NGO's ongoing strategic planning process. If at any point your staff, board and key volunteers disagree about what your NGO should be doing, or if your funders and partners show signs of losing confidence, that might signal the need to revisit your mission.

ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

An NGO must be able to translate its mission into projects and activities that have measurable impacts welcomed by the community. Projects must be thoughtfully designed and carried out by qualified people in order to effect lasting change and receive long-term funding.

When you are starting out, start small. MWSN has a basket of ideas for projects to empower migrant workers: an after-work education program, recreational activities to build community, an art workshop for the children of migrant workers and a public education campaign about how migrant workers contribute to society. But its leaders wisely realize that doing all these at once would be biting off more than they can chew. Instead, they pick one or two projects and do them well. This way, the NGO can build up a track record of success and learn what it takes to be effective. If you are uncertain about the best place to start, conduct a simple community survey or needs assessment.

TRY THIS…

BUILD YOUR TRACK RECORD

Even if you have a lot of good ideas, start small. Pick one or two projects that your group can do well. If immigrants are your focus, try an after-work education project for migrant workers or their children. By doing one or two projects well the NGO builds a track record of success and learns what it takes to be effective.

The hypothetical NGO Migrant Workers' Support Network aims to assist people such as this migrant worker in a Vidalia onion farm in Georgia. *(© AP Images/David Goldman)*

This young girl in India's remote Rann of Kutch, in Gujarat, is the child of a migrant salt worker. Such a child might benefit from an NGO focused on helping migrant laborers and their families, like the NGO suggested in this chapter. *(© AP Images/Prakash Hatvalne)*

As your NGO matures, its projects and activities will evolve in response to the changing needs of the community as well as your own lessons learned. You might decide to expand some activities and cut back on others or completely restructure your programs.

MWSN has launched an after-work education program for migrant workers and found that there was high interest but low participation. After conducting a survey, the NGO found the reason was that the immigrants did not have child-care facilities in the evenings. MWSN solved this by partnering with another group to add child-care assistance to the program.

NGOs must regularly evaluate how well their projects and activities meet the community's needs and interests. You need to end programs that are no longer relevant or effective and focus on those that are, especially when money is scarce. When your NGO can show that it is meeting community needs and producing measurable results, you will stand a good chance of securing the resources and support to be sustainable.

WHAT IS THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF AN NGO?

The board of directors is the body responsible for governing the organization. The board makes sure an NGO's mission is carried out legally, ethically and effectively. Ultimately, the board is accountable to the community the NGO serves, its donors and other partners.

THE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY: PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, EVALUATION

Sustainability requires systems for planning, management and evaluation. Regular planning must take place at multiple levels: project plans, fundraising plans, overall organizational plans, short-

WHAT IS EVALUATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Evaluation is the systematic review and assessment of the benefits, quality and value of a program, activity or organization as a whole. An evaluation asks:

- What worked?
- What could have worked better?
- Why did certain things work or not work?
- What difference did the work make for our community?
- What did we learn and how do we use that knowledge?

term plans, long-term plans. Planning systems enable you to organize your work, respond to needs and anticipate challenges. Management systems are the tools to establish clear responsibilities and procedures for handling everything from money and staff to projects and timelines. Finally, evaluation systems inform you of the results you are achieving. To be accountable, you need to report results not just to your funders and supporters, but also to the community you serve.

Sometimes, new NGOs do not think about setting up systems. After all, most people start NGOs because they want to contribute to a cause, not because they want to create administrative procedures, develop budgets and write reports. But you must set down at least simple policies and basic procedures. At a minimum, you need to set up a database to track income and expenses, and establish fiscal controls such as who can approve payments and who can sign checks.

As your NGO grows, you will have more things to manage: projects, people, money, relationships. You can develop more sophisticated systems as you need them. When you begin to raise larger sums of money from multiple sources, then you can acquire financial management software and detailed accounting procedures. Having clear policies and procedures and well-defined roles and responsibilities for management will help your NGO's projects, activities and overall organization run smoothly. And when that happens, your donors and supporters will have confidence their resources are being used well.

COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

Building and sustaining an NGO takes people with different kinds of knowledge and skills: project managers, proposal

The NGO Pragya, "wisdom" in Sanskrit, runs this school bus that serves migrant worker communities in Central Himalayan villages in India. *(© Andrew Aitchison/In Pictures/Corbis)*

writers, website developers, fundraisers and survey takers, to name a few.

But, above all, NGOs need leaders — people committed to the organization and willing to spend time and effort directing its work. Typically, the leadership group consists of an executive director, senior staff and the board of directors. An NGO's leaders take on extra responsibility for making sure the NGO has a clear mission, effective programs and efficient management of its resources.

When an NGO is starting up, it is common for the founder to invite friends, family members and colleagues to join the board. However, as an NGO matures, the founder and board will need to bring in new leadership from outside. The founder and founding board members of the MWSN might realize they need a banker or business owner with financial expertise to advise on budgets, or someone from the faith community to ask churches to provide food and shelter to migrants. Board members should make a list of the kinds of experts their NGO needs and draw up a plan for recruiting them. New board members from outside can bring fresh perspectives and energy to the NGO.

Sustainable NGOs continuously cultivate new leadership at all levels — the board of directors, staff, volunteers, and program participants and beneficiaries.

WHAT IS A RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

A resource development plan is one of the many types of plans an NGO needs to sustain its work. It includes your NGO's total funding needs for the year and specific goals for the amount of money you aim to raise from each of your different sources. It also includes a work plan to meet these goals with specific activities, tasks, responsibilities and deadlines.

NGOs that are dependent on just one leader, or a small clique of leaders, have shortcomings that can affect their longevity and effectiveness. Some NGOs have shut down when their founders departed because there was no one else with enough knowledge or commitment to keep them going. Others have lost the trust of the community when founding leaders refused to make space for new leaders to come on. Still other NGOs have become irrelevant and ineffective because they failed to attract new and diverse talent.

Your NGO should constantly work to identify and recruit new talent, build their leadership skills, and move them into positions of responsibility.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Groups and individuals that care about the same issues and interact with many of the same people as your NGO are stakeholders in your organization. They have a stake in your work.

Relationships with a broad range of stakeholders — business and professional associations, donor organizations, faith institutions, coalitions, unions, political parties and informal community groups — allow an NGO to thrive. Stakeholders provide your NGO resources — not just financial support but also *in-kind support*. For example, one of the MWSN's stakeholders owns a printing business. The stakeholder prints materials for MWSN at reduced cost. Or a professional association with a stake in MWSN's work may recruit professionals from a particular field to mentor migrant workers.

Building relationships with stakeholders creates a network of allies who will champion your NGO's cause and defend its rights, and those of your community. Imagine that MWSN has been working

to get the local government to consider passing legislation to protect the rights of migrant workers. The organization is more likely to be successful if it can get letters of support from many stakeholders — other NGOs, businesses, faith leaders and community leaders.

Strong relationships are based on shared goals, trust and mutual benefit. Regardless of where your NGO is in its lifecycle — whether it is just starting or well established — you need to invest time and energy in building relationships with these diverse stakeholders. The relationships will change over time, but they are always critical to your NGO's sustainability.

DIVERSITY IN FUNDING SOURCES

An NGO should not rely on a single funder, such as a wealthy business owner, or a single type of funder, such as foundations, for its survival. If your source of funding changes priorities or faces financial problems, your NGO may become insolvent and have to close. To avoid that, your NGO should seek a wide variety of funding sources, including foundations, businesses, governments and individuals. An NGO may also generate income by selling products or services and holding community fundraising events. With diversified funding, if one source of funding ends, others can help make up for the loss.

Building a diversified funding base requires the collective effort of an NGO's staff, board and volunteers. You will need a fundraising plan that lays out objectives, strategies, tasks and timelines. Involve all your staff, board members, volunteers, and even community members in helping to raise funds. Create a fundraising committee to coordinate the work and monitor progress.

Building a diversified base of funding takes time. Keep in mind that many NGOs start without formal grants or

The Haitian NGO Fondation Seguin partnered with USAID to involve schoolchildren in a tree-planting program in Parc National La Visite, Haiti. Children from neighborhoods devastated by the 2010 earthquake help fight deforestation and learn about the environment. *(Kendra Helmer/USAID/Haiti)*

WHAT IS "IN-KIND" SUPPORT?

In-kind support refers to items donated to your NGO. They have monetary value, but your NGO does not have to pay for them. Common examples include donations of supplies and materials, equipment, and meeting or office space. In-kind support can also include donations of time and expertise, such as a graphic designer who designs your NGO's website. You must keep track of in-kind support in your NGO's budget.

long-term sources of funding. They get volunteers and startup donations, then seek funding from foundations, government agencies and the general public once they have results to show for their efforts. Some funders give seed grants to new organizations. Seed funders understand that new NGOs do not have long records of success and are willing to take a risk on a good idea and the people who will carry it out. When courting a seed funder, write up a detailed proposal describing what you plan to do and how you plan to do it, as well as a description of the qualifications of the NGO's leaders.

Many NGOs struggle in their first years with only one or two funding sources. However, this is the time to build a diverse base of funding for the future.

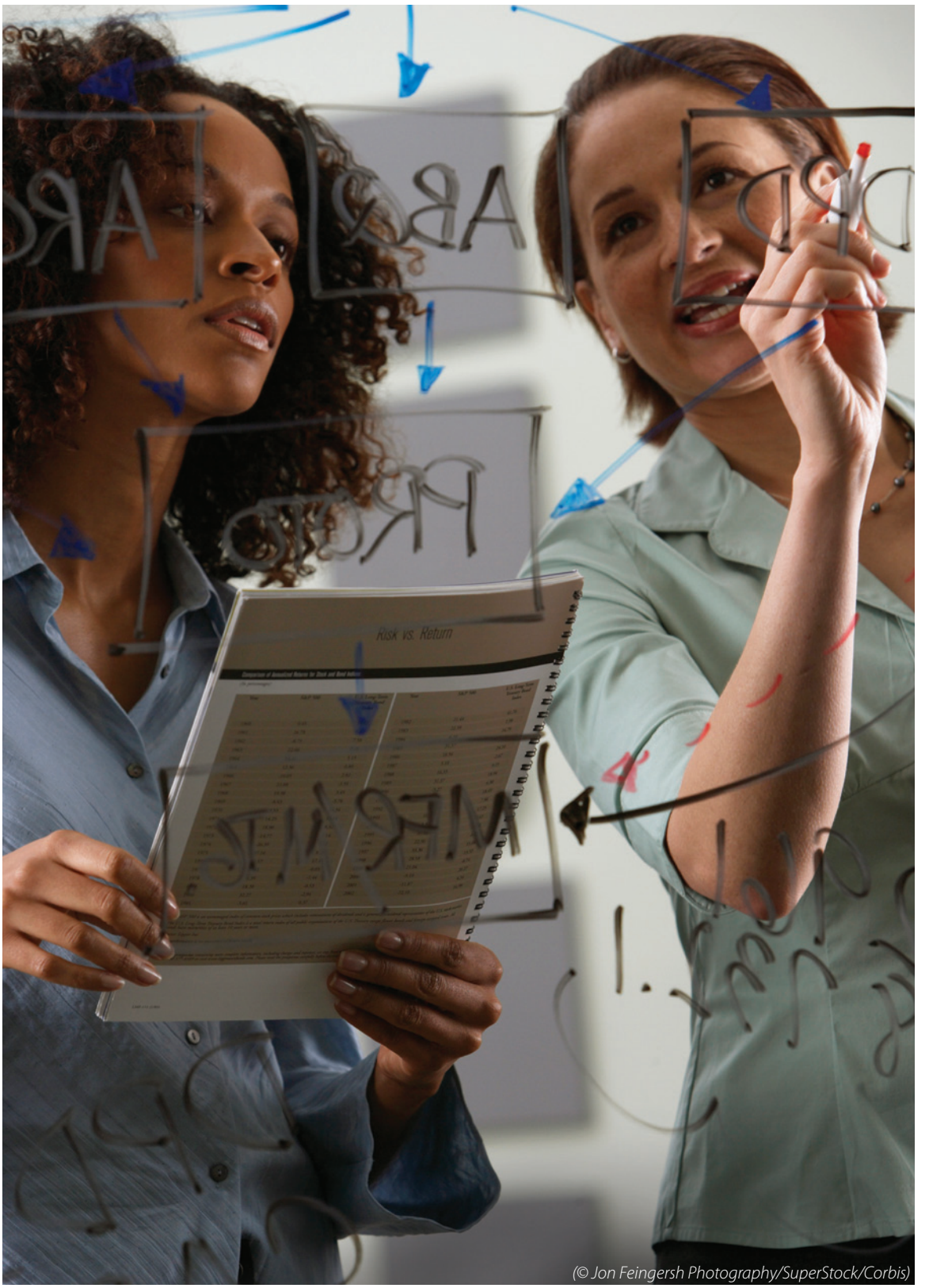
CONCLUSION

A clear mission and vision; relevant and effective projects and activities; good planning, management and evaluation; committed leadership; strong relationships; and a diverse base of financial support are the building blocks that sustain an NGO over time. From the moment you found an NGO, think about sustainability at every step. For example, when you carry out strategic planning, assess your NGO's strengths and set goals for improving its weaknesses to promote the organization's long-term viability.

There are key decision points in an organization's lifecycle that are vital to its sustainability. Whenever your NGO is considering launching a new project or activity, entering a new partnership, or hiring new staff, stop and assess your capacity to sustain the new endeavor. Ask yourself: Does it fit our mission? Is it needed and wanted by the community we serve? Do we have a good plan and can we manage it well? Do we have relationships with stakeholders who can support or partner with us? And, can we raise the resources we need to start up and maintain the project over time?

An NGO is a powerful way to create lasting change for your community. Through it, you can mobilize others and build something bigger than what you can achieve alone. But it is a long journey and a lot of work. It takes years and many kinds of skills, resources and relationships to build and sustain an effective NGO. Remember our hypothetical example: The founder of the MWSN started with a core leadership team, clarified his mission, and later diversified the leadership to bring in new skills, expertise and relationships. The organization started by carrying out a small number of projects, set up systems to make sure they were well run, evaluated them to find out if they were making a difference, and began to raise money from diverse sources. With these building blocks in place, the MWSN has a strong foundation on which to grow. This means that more migrant workers will be able to live with safety, security and dignity.

2 VALUES, VISION AND MISSION — THE COMPASS



(© Jon Feingersh Photography/SuperStock/Corbis)

An NGO's values, vision and mission are its compass. They guide every decision an NGO makes and every action it takes. Putting into writing your values, vision and mission is one of the first steps you **must** take when you found an NGO. These statements will direct the rest of your journey and communicate to your stakeholders who you are and what you stand for.

An NGO is more likely to be successful when its leaders agree on its core values, share a powerful vision for change and establish a clearly defined mission. Conversely, an NGO without clear values, vision and mission lacks a moral compass to guide its decisions. Without a clear vision, it will struggle to inspire others to join. Without a clear mission, it will lack focus and direction. Such an organization will likely find itself engaged in projects that have little connection to the community it seeks to serve.

In this chapter, we will explore how an NGO develops values, vision and mission statements to guide its work. We will follow the steps taken to found the hypothetical NGO Young Women Unite, which was created to empower young women to combat violence in their community.

Typically, an NGO's founders hold preliminary discussions of their values and vision without putting anything in writing. But later, after formalizing your core leadership team, including a board of directors and key volunteers, your team needs to put into writing your organization's values, vision and mission. This will build a sense of ownership and investment in your NGO. After the statements are drafted, the board of directors must officially adopt them.

TRY THIS...

AN ACTIVITY TO CREATE A VISION STATEMENT

Have your board, staff and key volunteers work in small groups. Give the groups large pieces of paper and markers to discuss and depict their vision using words, pictures or a combination of both. Questions to spark the discussion could include: What will our community look like? What will people's lives be like? What will they be doing? Then ask the groups to share their visions. Discuss them and identify the common elements. Task two to three people to craft a concise vision statement.

WHAT ARE VALUES? HOW DO WE DEVELOP THEM? AND HOW DO THEY GUIDE YOUR NGO?

Values are the principles an NGO commits to uphold in all aspects of its work. Accountability and transparency are two values all NGOs must share. Your NGO should discuss and agree on others that are important to who you are. Some NGOs identify values related to the quality of their work, while others define their values in relation to how they work with others. Still others choose values that say something about their view of the world.

For example, Young Women Unite might state its core values as:

- Non-violence — All women and girls have the right to live in violence-free families and communities.
- Respect — All women and girls have the right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- Empowerment — All women and girls have a right to make their own decisions and control their own lives.
- Partnership — Civil society must work together to bring about peaceful communities. No single NGO or other entity can do it alone.

- Community Leadership — Efforts to build peaceful communities should be led by women and girls from the community.

Once an NGO's leaders agree on their core values, they should use them to guide decisions about:

- Projects and activities. For example, Young Women Unite's first project was a series of "Know Your Rights" workshops for women, with messages and approaches based on the NGO's core values. This initiative focused on building the participants' critical thinking and empowering them to speak out.
- Internal operations. An NGO's employees should be treated in a way that reflects the organization's values. Young Women Unite made sure it always treated its staff, volunteers and constituents with respect. It also nurtured young women to move into leadership positions in the organization.
- External relations. Young Women Unite ended a partnership with another NGO because it did not respect the ideas and opinions of young women.

It is important to discuss each value and define what it means to the group. Sometimes, people use different words to mean the same thing. One person might say "nondiscrimination" while another says "inclusiveness," but they both mean that the NGO should serve and involve all segments of the community. Other times, people use the same word but mean different things. Two people might list "leadership," but one means the NGO should strive to be a leader in its field while the other means the NGO should train leaders.

There might also be values that only one or two people identify. You should discuss these as well and include them in your core values if the group agrees that they are important. If the group decides not to add them to the list, make sure those who stated them are comfortable not including them. Try to agree on a final list of four to seven core values. More than that will blur the focus of your NGO.

TRY THIS...

Ask each member of the leadership team to trace his or her hand on a piece of paper. Then have each person write a value they believe should guide the organization on each finger on the paper. Next, put people in pairs or small groups and ask them to share their hands. The members of each group agree on the five or six most important values they have in common. Then ask each team to write out its list and post it on a wall. After assessing each list, you likely will find a core set of values that everyone shares.

WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT? HOW DO YOU DEVELOP ONE? AND HOW DOES IT GUIDE YOUR NGO?

A vision statement describes how you want the world to be. It is a picture of the world you seek to create. It tells how people's lives, communities or society at large will be better as a result of your NGO's work. A vision statement is big and bold, such as Young Women Unite's:

We envision a society in which all people are safe in their homes, schools and communities; are treated with respect and dignity; and have equal opportunities to develop and activate their leadership abilities.

It is a good idea to involve the community you serve in drafting your NGO's vision.

A real NGO called Young Women United in Albuquerque, New Mexico, supports the well-being of women of color, improving health and education and reducing violence. This eye-catching art is from a recruitment flyer that states the NGO's mission, and contact and meeting information. *(Courtesy of Young Women United)*

An NGO's vision statement is a powerful tool for motivating staff and volunteers and inspiring others to join you. For example, the staff of Young Women Unite has been working hard and is tired. The leadership team organizes a day where the board and staff come together to share a meal and re-energize themselves. Each one reads the vision out loud and talks about what it means to her. Similarly, when members of the board or staff are out in the community recruiting volunteers, they talk about how the Young Women Unite's vision and mission inspired them to get involved.

Different NGOs can share a common vision for what they are trying to build. It is likely that a number of them share a vision of a world where all people and families have access to quality housing, health care, jobs and education. But no single organization can achieve all these things on its own. Making this vision a reality takes the combined efforts of many groups working together.

WHAT IS A MISSION STATEMENT? HOW DO YOU DEVELOP ONE? AND HOW DOES IT GUIDE YOUR NGO?

An NGO's mission statement concisely states the main purpose of the organization. It answers the question of why you exist. It describes who you are, what you do and the end results you seek. For some NGOs, it might identify a geographic region or specific target population you serve.

Mission statements have two parts. The first is the core mission statement — the one or two sentences that communicate what you do and the long-term changes you work to achieve. The second part briefly describes the strategies or types of

activities you use to achieve your mission. Here is the mission statement for Young Women Unite:

The mission of Young Women Unite is to build the capacity of young women to end violence in our community. We do this by:

- Providing educational workshops in schools and community centers.
- Training peer educators to be youth leaders who teach others and speak out on this issue.
- Developing curricula and training for other organizations to conduct workshops in their communities.

Do some research to write a sharply focused mission statement. At the outset, the founders of Young Women Unite knew they wanted to combat violence in their community, particularly against women. But to determine their NGO's exact mission, they needed to research what others in the community were already doing to address the problem. They found that one women's group focused on intervening directly in domestic conflicts and another nurtured youth leadership, but no one ran educational programs to end community violence. The research helped Young Women Unite define their mission, which filled a gap in the community and complements the work of other NGOs. The mission statement guides an NGO's leaders in choosing what projects and activities to carry out, especially during important points in an NGO's lifecycle.

- When an NGO gets started and has limited resources, it needs to think carefully about finding projects that are fundamental to achieving the mission. Young Women Unite might decide that its target population needs information about the issues surrounding violence and about their rights to do something

Nepalese women from the Bakduwa Paralegal Committee meet regularly in their remote village of Joganiya, Saptari District. Such committees, active throughout Nepal to fight discrimination and abuses, operate like NGOs. They were set up with the help of UNICEF as part of an anti-trafficking program. *(Prakash Mathema/AFP/Getty)*

TRY THIS...

WRITING A MISSION STATEMENT

Whether you are drafting your first mission statement or revising your existing one, writing this document is not easy. You might start by having the NGO's leaders agree on the key words or concepts that best communicate who you are and why you exist. Then you might assign a small group to put the key words and concepts together into one or two concise sentences. It is a good idea to prepare several different options to choose from. Share them with a few people outside the NGO to get feedback. It might be helpful to study mission statements from other NGOs as models.

about it, so they start with "Know Your Rights" workshops.

- When an NGO is growing, it is important to make sure new projects and activities are closely aligned with the mission. NGOs at this stage should be sure to seek out and accept only funding that supports their mission.
- When an NGO faces funding cuts and must end a project or let staff go, think about which projects are most fundamental to your mission.

REVISING YOUR MISSION

An NGO should periodically review and update its mission statement. The best time to do this is at the beginning of a strategic planning process. As your NGO matures, it will likely refine its mission to better capture what your NGO is uniquely suited to do. An NGO that began with a broad mission may decide to narrow it to provide clearer direction and focus. Or, an NGO that began with a narrow mission may decide to broaden it because it has the capacity to address other community needs.

NGOs are more likely to change the second half of their mission statement — describing core strategies and activities — than the first half, which describes the NGO's primary purpose. NGOs commonly revise their strategies and activities in response to shifting community needs or changes in the environment. When Young Women Unite was founded, it focused on its peer-educator initiative and "Know Your Rights" workshops, which brought down community violence in a few years. Noticing its success, several other youth organizations contacted Young Women Unite to request similar workshops for their members and volunteers. After reassessing their values, vision and mission, Young Women Unite's leaders decided to expand their NGO's work by training other NGOs to deliver educational workshops.

NGOs should revisit their values, vision and mission statements every three to five years. As your NGO matures, it will need input from stakeholders, including its community members, project participants, partners and even funders. Find out if your stakeholders understand your NGO's values, vision and mission. Do they think they are still relevant and, if not, what changes do they suggest? In addition,

TRY THIS...

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN REVIEWING YOUR MISSION

- Is the mission still needed?
- Have the community's needs or conditions changed?
- Does the mission statement reflect who we really are and what we really do?

revisiting the values, vision and mission provides new members the opportunity to shape and take ownership of these statements. It is common for an NGO to make small changes and refinements to its values, vision and mission statements every few years. However, an NGO that radically changes its core principles often will not be seen as stable, and supporters might lose confidence in it.

COMMUNICATING YOUR VALUES, VISION AND MISSION

An NGO must communicate its values, vision and mission to all of its stakeholders: project participants, the broader community, and current and potential funders and partners. If they are going to trust you, work with you, support you and hold you accountable, then they need to understand who you are and what you do. NGO leaders also need to make sure that the staff, board members and volunteers fully understand the values, vision and mission, and reinforce them in their day-to-day work. Communication is at the heart of achieving this understanding.

- When you recruit new people to join your organization, share your values and vision with them. Ask them how they understand and relate to them. Someone who does not share your values or believe in your mission should not be invited to join.
- When you have board and staff meetings, write your values, vision and mission statement up on large sheets of paper and place them where everyone can see them. Start your meeting by reading them aloud, then use them to guide discussions and decisions.

REMEMBER…

PUT YOUR VALUES, VISION AND MISSION IN WRITING

Often, the people who found an NGO neglect to put their values, vision and mission into writing. This is a fundamental mistake. Later, as new members join the organization, they might bring in different values. It is important for the NGO's leaders to discuss and formally agree in writing on the shared values that will guide the NGO. Without the written statements, you risk running into serious disagreements.

- If you have a website, post your values, vision and mission publicly and make sure they are easy to find. Many NGOs put them under "About Us" or "Who we are and what we do."
- Provide orientation and training on the values, vision and mission to all board members, staff and volunteers. These are your NGO's ambassadors. They must be able to communicate your NGO's values, vision and mission.
- When you meet prospective partners, allies, supporters or donors, start by explaining your values, vision and mission. Prepare a one-page sheet with your formal statements and a folder with information about your projects, flyers, and a few photos of what you do.

In the business world, companies sell tangible merchandise and services, for example, a computer, a television, a table, an airplane ride. As an NGO, you sell your values, vision and mission. If you cannot communicate them effectively, you will not be able to get others to buy them.

CONCLUSION

An NGO's values, vision and mission all work together and feed into one another. The mission flows from the vision, and they both need to be aligned with the values. Together, they tell a powerful story about what your NGO stands for.

YOUNG WOMEN UNITE'S VALUES, VISION AND MISSION

OUR VALUES

- Non-violence — All women and girls have the right to live in violence-free families and communities.
- Respect — All women and girls have the right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- Empowerment — All women and girls have the right to make their own decisions and have control over their lives.
- Partnership — Civil society must work together to bring about peaceful communities. No single organization can do it alone.
- Community Leadership — Efforts to build peaceful communities should be led by women and girls from the community.

OUR VISION

We envision a society in which all people are safe in their homes, schools and communities; are treated with respect and dignity; and have equal opportunities to develop and activate their leadership abilities.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Young Women Unite is to build the capacity of young women to end violence in our community. We do this by:

- Providing educational workshops in schools and community centers.
- Training peer educators to be youth leaders who inform others and speak out on this issue.
- Developing curricula and training other organizations to conduct workshops in their communities.

REMEMBER...

AVOID FUNDING THAT DEVIATES FROM YOUR MISSION

Your NGO should have a plan that sets out clear goals for advancing your mission and identifies projects that will accomplish those goals. Then, you fundraise for your priorities! When you find an opportunity for new funding or a new partnership, stop and ask: Does it fit our mission? An NGO that drifts away from its mission for the sake of funding can soon find itself running unrelated projects. As a result, the organization can become fragmented, its impact will be diminished, and its stakeholders may lose confidence.

3 PLANNING, EVALUATING AND MANAGING

(© 2003-2012 Shutterstock Images LLC)

Once your NGO has a clear mission, you have to translate it into projects and activities that the community needs, wants and values. Query your community to make sure they welcome your initiatives. When projects are thoughtfully designed, carefully planned, and rigorously carried out by qualified people, they will have an impact. If your NGO can show that its work makes a difference in people's lives and communities, your stakeholders — the community, donors and partners — will likely support you for many years.

This chapter walks you through the steps to plan, evaluate and manage your NGO's work. We provide examples drawn from Youth Voices for Democracy, a hypothetical NGO that educates youth about democracy and increases their community participation.

PLANNING

Planning keeps you focused on your goals and enables you to organize your work and allocate your resources efficiently. NGOs that plan do better than ones that do not because they have clear direction and focus. With planning, you will anticipate problems and prevent them or solve them before they become crises. Here we discuss two broad types of planning: strategic planning and project planning.

What is Strategic Planning?

Strategic planning is a systematic way of assessing where your NGO is now and where it wants to be in the future. It answers questions about what it will look like, what it will be doing and what it will have accomplished five to 10 years from now. A strategic plan starts from an NGO's values, vision and mission, then lays out its direction, priorities and goals. The plan keeps an NGO on mission. It guides decisions about project development, new partnerships and allocation of resources, especially staff time and money. It provides a basis for monitoring progress and assessing results.

NGOs use various approaches to strategic planning. Some spend months gathering input from a broad range of stakeholders, including the board, staff, project participants, partner organizations, funders and others, before drawing up their strategic plan. Others bring board and staff together for a one-day brainstorming meeting to do the same thing. Regardless of how you do it, the planning process involves the following steps:

1. **Identify the key issues and questions.** Strategic planning is an opportunity to step back and look at the big picture of your organization. Our hypothetical Youth Voices for Democracy might want to answer the question: Do we want to and are we ready to grow? If so, how much and what type of growth is manageable? Or Youth Voices might have learned that several of its funders are planning to reduce their contributions. In light of that, the NGO needs to refocus its operations on projects that are core to its mission.

TRY THIS...

FORM A STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

You need strategic planning. The best way to carry out the task is to create a strategic planning committee made up of three to five board and staff members. This group will decide the approach to use, identify key questions, and develop a work plan with tasks, responsibilities and timelines.

Use SWOT to analyze your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

2. Give your NGO a SWOT.
It is vital that you step back from your day-to-day work and assess your NGO's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This is called a SWOT analysis.

The quickest and easiest way is to have board members, staff and key volunteers conduct this analysis. These key players know a great deal about the organization and its environment. If time and resources allow, get outside perspectives as well, especially from project participants, funders, volunteers and organizational partners. You can do this by using surveys, interviews, community meetings or focus groups.

A SWOT analysis helps you grasp the key issues facing your organization and make wise decisions about how to address them. Youth Voices wants to grow, but through the SWOT analysis, it learns that its internal systems are weak and its staff is unprepared for expansion. So Youth Voices instead decides to focus on building internal capacity for the next year to prepare for expansion.

3. Hold a meeting to discuss the findings of the SWOT analysis and make decisions about priorities, goals and objectives.
Once you have done a SWOT, you will be prepared to set relevant and realistic goals for the organization. Based on what they learned from the SWOT analysis, Youth Voices has set goals for strengthening its internal systems — improving management structures and providing more training for staff — and for improving current projects. It also has decided not to take on new projects over the next three years.

4. Prepare a final strategic plan.
You need to write the results of your analysis and prioritizing in a final document that serves as your strategic plan. It does not have to be elaborate or lengthy. Most NGOs prepare simple one- or two-page documents that present the NGO's values, vision, mission and main goals. Others are more thorough and include the findings of the SWOT along with detailed objectives for each goal.

TRY THIS...

HOLD AN ALL-DAY PLANNING MEETING

The best way to set your future directions and goals is through a planning meeting where you bring the board and staff together for at least one day to make decisions. If circumstances permit, meet somewhere outside of your day-to-day workspace so you will not have distractions. At the meeting, you should review and update the organization's values, vision and mission, then set broad goals for the NGO's projects, as well as for building the capacity and infrastructure of the organization.

WHAT'S THIS?

FOCUS GROUP

A focus group brings together about 10 to 15 people for a guided discussion about a particular topic. You could hold a focus group with project participants to learn what they think is working well, what could work better, and what difference the project makes in their lives. A focus group should be led by an experienced moderator using carefully developed questions and last one to two hours.

5. **Share the plan with your stakeholders.** Send a copy to your funders and your partners. You can hold a community meeting to present the plan to your constituency. Make a special effort to give project participants who provided input for the plan the opportunity to comment and make suggestions. If you have a website, post the plan on it. If you send out a newsletter, include the plan in it.

6. **Carry out and monitor the plan.** An NGO's board, staff and key volunteers all need to work together to make sure the final plan gets implemented. The executive director sees to it that all of the NGO's projects and activities are aligned with the plan and that staff understand its goals and organize the work around it. The board of directors also needs to align its priorities with the plan. If the plan calls for a project that needs new resources and expertise, then the board might need to set objectives for raising additional funds and recruiting new board members with the needed expertise. At a minimum, the board should formally review the plan once a year to assess progress.

Strategic planning helps an NGO

Somali organizers discuss strategy at a training session offered by Mosaica. *(Courtesy of Mosaica)*

TRY THIS...

INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY YOU SERVE IN PLANNING

When you plan a project, form a community advisory committee to provide input and feedback on project plans. This advisory committee can continue to meet regularly as you implement the project to review its progress and provide suggestions for improvement. Because they know the community well, a community advisory committee can identify solutions to problems you may run into. For example, if your project faces a high number of drop-outs, the committee could identify additional participants.

remain relevant and responsive to the needs of its community. It brings focus and common purpose to its leaders. NGOs should carry out strategic planning every three to five years. Some may find at the end of three years that things are going well, the environment is stable, and they just need to keep doing what they have been doing. Others might find that things have changed. Maybe the NGO has new staff and board members who do not share a common vision, or perhaps other NGOs are doing similar work and competition for funding is greater. In this case, it would be helpful for the NGO to go through the in-depth planning process again and develop a new plan.

Sometimes, NGOs face major threats or unexpected opportunities — e.g., the loss of a grant or a change in the political environment — before they reach their three-year goals. When that happens, an NGO may need to change course quickly.

Once an NGO has its strategic plan, it will need to do project planning.

What is Project Planning?

A project plan sets goals and objectives for a specific project, identifies the resources needed to achieve it, and lays out the key tasks, responsibilities and a timeline.

Whether your NGO is developing its first projects or continuing long-established ones, you must have in-depth knowledge of the community you serve. In the past, NGOs and their donors emphasized the *needs* part of the assessment. Today, growing numbers of NGOs also are assessing the *strengths* and assets that community members can contribute to solve their problems. In conducting its assessment, your NGO should ask community members about the knowledge and experience they already have, as well as things they are interested in learning and doing.

Suppose Youth Voices for Democracy has held educational workshops to teach youths about their rights

WHAT'S THIS?

NEEDS AND ASSETS ASSESSMENT

An NGO should carry out a systematic assessment of the needs and assets of its target community (e.g., neighborhood or village) or target population (e.g., unemployed youth or pregnant women with HIV). Form a team that includes both staff and community members to lead the assessment.

A typical assessment involves surveying a sample of community residents or the target population. Also, find out if the data that you seek has already been collected by government agencies, international NGOs or universities. You might also consider partnering with a university to conduct the survey. Once you have the results, the team can review them to identify priorities for new projects or advocacy.

and responsibilities in a democratic society. Now, Youth Voices wants to expand the project in a particular low-income neighborhood to support youth involvement in the community. By carrying out a needs and assets assessment, Youth Voices can identify not only the individuals to enroll in the program but also the knowledge and skills they bring with them. The assessment might find that youth who are out of school have no access to computers. As a result, they have low computer literacy and little familiarity with social media tools that help youth access information, connect to other youth groups, and organize their neighborhood. At the same time, the assessment might find that youth are eager to learn and have ideas to improve their community. So Youth Voices might decide to open a new computer learning center as a first step.

Projects based on a careful assessment of needs and strengths are likely to be relevant, useful and trusted by the target audience, raising their chances for success. Once you have determined the needs and interests of your target audience, you are ready to develop a detailed project plan. There are many different formats for this. Often, international donors have particular formats they want their grantees to use. Find out if this is so and make sure you use them.

A project plan needs to define what you want to accomplish for the target population. In other words, what will

REMEMBER…

ALWAYS PAY ATTENTION TO THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

While a formal strategic planning process is an important time to assess the external environment, an NGO's leadership should always be monitoring what is happening in the community, region, country and beyond. At their regular meetings, board and staff should discuss what is going on outside of the NGO: with the economy, government, donors, etc., and discuss any emerging threats or opportunities.

One of the goals of hypothetical NGO Youth Voices for Democracy is to provide young people with computers. This child in Peru benefited from the real NGO One Laptop Per Child project that donated small laptops to schoolchildren in Arahuay, an Andean village. *(© AP Images/Martin Mejia)*

THE BASIC LOGIC MODEL

Certain resources are needed to operate your program.	If you have access to resources, then you can use them to accomplish your planned activities.	If you accomplish your planned activities, then you may deliver the amount of product and/or service that you intended.	If you deliver the product or service you intended, then your participants will benefit in certain ways.	If these benefits to participants are achieved, then certain changes in organizations, communities or systems might follow.
RESOURCES/ INPUTS	**ACTIVITIES**	**OUTPUTS**	**OUTCOMES**	**IMPACT**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
YOUR PLANNED WORK			**YOUR INTENDED RESULTS**	

(See Resource Appendix A on page 35 for a sample logic model for Youth Voices' new Computer Learning Center.)

be different in the lives of people who participate in the project? The plan also describes what your NGO will do and the resources it needs to achieve these results.

One format for a project plan is called a Logic Model. This helps you map out a project, starting with what you want to achieve and working backward to describe the activities you believe will produce those outcomes. From there, identify the resources needed to carry out those activities.

Although you read a Logic Model from left to right, it helps to work from right to left as you develop it.

When read from left to right, Logic Models describe program basics over time from planning through results. Reading a Logic Model means following the chain of reasoning or "*If...then...*" statements that connect the program's parts.

Once you have developed a project plan using a Logic Model or another tool, you will need a more detailed work plan.

As your NGO matures, you will adjust your projects and activities according to the changing needs of the community and your own experience. For example, after Youth Voices opened its new computer learning center, it found that some participants wanted to build on their new skills and start an Internet radio show. Youth Voices then added a new technology training component focused on radio production.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the outcomes, quality and performance of a project, activity or the organization as a whole. Evaluation is a tool for answering the question: What difference did our work make in people's lives and communities? In other words, it measures what you achieved for the people you serve. NGOs need to assess community needs and strengths regularly, and evaluate the results of their projects.

An evaluation should ask:

- What did we do that worked?
- What could have worked better?

WHAT'S THIS?

WORK PLAN

A work plan is a detailed description of who will do what by when. It ensures the activities are carried out in a timely manner. Written work plans allow staff and key volunteers to organize their time efficiently and hold each other accountable. In contrast, a project plan describes a project's goals and objectives, the sequence of activities and resources needed.

- Why did certain things work (or not work)?
- What did we learn and how can we use that knowledge to strengthen our work?

Every day, an NGO's staff and volunteers see the people they serve learning new skills, achieving their goals and improving their lives. They can share stories about particular individuals whose lives have been transformed. Many NGOs also keep track of the number of people they serve. For example, Youth Voices counted the number of youth who attended classes at the computer learning center each month and the number of youth reached through its "Introduction to Democracy" workshops.

But for NGOs to be truly accountable to their stakeholders and to their mission, they must also quantify the outcomes, such as higher student test scores or higher numbers of students who demonstrated ability to apply what they learned in the workshops to their jobs.

The first step of evaluation is to define the outcomes you want a project to achieve. Do this at the design phase of a project. Going back to Youth Voices' computer learning center and their

"You Choose!" is the catch phase during a voter education campaign in Bulgaria. During local elections a young activist in Veliko Turnovo hands out information to encourage voting in the community. *(Center Amalite/USAID)*

REMEMBER…

EVALUATION: A TOOL FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

An NGO's public promise to its stakeholders — especially the community it serves, its partners and its donors — is not just to carry out activities, but to make a difference in people's lives and in society. To be accountable to your stakeholders, you should report the results of your activities to them. Tell them what difference your NGO made. You measure results by evaluation.

Internet radio training project, the desired outcomes for participants were to:

- Acquire the technological skills to produce an Internet radio show.
- Learn how to develop program content for a radio show.
- Apply these skills to produce a weekly, one-hour radio show about a topic of interest to youth in the community.
- Have greater confidence to speak out on issues that concern them.

The next step is to determine how to measure the outcomes. Youth Voices could collect data in a number of ways. They could administer a test to assess participants' knowledge and skills at the beginning and again at the end of the project to measure how much they learned. Project staff and volunteers could write down their observations each month, noting changes they see in each participant's skill and confidence. They could hold focus groups at the beginning, middle and end of the project to ask participants for feedback. What are they learning? How are they using what they learn? What more do they want to learn and what will they do with their new skills after the project?

Your NGO's staff and volunteers should agree on an evaluation plan that is feasible with the time and resources you have. If you create a plan with many ways of collecting information at many points in time, it may be too complicated and time-consuming to implement. Once you agree on your approach, you should:

- Train all staff, volunteers and participants who will be collecting data to use the collection tools properly.
- Set up a system for storing the data. Assign someone to set up and maintain a file — in a file cabinet and/or on a computer — for all the tests, surveys or notes from interviews and focus groups.
- Choose a small group of people to compile the data. This could include collecting test results or putting all the survey comments into one list.
- Have a mix of staff, volunteers and possibly participants review the data and identify the key findings. Did participants gain new knowledge and skills? Were they able to apply them? Why or why not?
- Use the evaluation results to improve your project. If an evaluation finds that participants are not learning a

REMEMBER…

COLLECT THE NUMBERS AND THE STORIES

Numbers are important. You need to track the number of people you serve and the percentage that achieve your targeted outcomes. But stories are equally important, so you need to collect them. After each workshop, get quotes from participants to capture what they learned. Contact a few of them several months after the workshop to find out how they have applied what they learned. Write that up in a paragraph you can place in a newsletter or proposal. But always get permission to use their name and story!

Members of Alternativa, an NGO advancing the rights of the Roma community in Biala Slatina, Bulgaria, participate in a World Bank Development 360 project. *(Scott Wallace/The World Bank)*

particular skill, consider revising the training curriculum or finding better trainers. Too often, the results are sent to donors but are not used to help NGOs improve their programs.

- Summarize the data and share your analysis. Evaluation helps you tell your story to stakeholders. It provides you with both data and anecdotes that demonstrate how your work makes a difference.

When NGO leaders invest in evaluation and involve everyone in the organization, it is a powerful tool for learning, improvement and growth.

What is Participatory Evaluation?

Participatory evaluation invites project participants and stakeholders, such as family members and teachers of youth participants, to help shape and carry out evaluation. Stakeholders are typically involved at all steps of evaluation, including formulating the key questions, gathering and analyzing the data, identifying the key findings and lessons learned, and developing the recommendations and action plan to improve project performance.

If Youth Voices decides to use participatory methods to evaluate its radio project, participants themselves will help decide what to evaluate and what questions to ask. They will also be involved in collecting data, such as designing and conducting a survey of community members who have listened to the broadcasts to find out how much they learned. Or the participants might record their own observations about how community members used the broadcast information.

When stakeholders — especially community members — are involved in designing and carrying out an evaluation, the results are likely to be

more relevant and useful to the NGO and the community.

MANAGEMENT

Just as you need many kinds of plans, you need many systems for managing your NGO. Decide who has responsibility for each aspect: money, people, projects and facilities. Because Youth Voices is a small NGO, the executive director is responsible for most of its organizational management while the staff is responsible for managing projects. As the NGO grows and hires additional staff, however, someone other than the executive director may take on specific management roles, such as for finances or human resources.

Like any manager in business or government, an NGO manager is responsible for planning, organizing and monitoring tasks needed for an organization to run smoothly. But the context is different for an NGO. Its work often is difficult to measure and communicate. Its goals are ambitious but its resources are limited. It works to improve people's lives and communities, not make a profit. It faces multiple — and sometimes competing — demands from its stakeholders, many of whom have different expectations for what the NGO should do and how it should operate. An NGO is rarely fully staffed, so individual staff members often fill multiple roles. Funding limitations mean the staff works without adequate training, equipment, supplies or facilities.

In this environment, basic management tasks are both more critical and more challenging for NGOs.

What are Management Tasks?

1. **Assigning people and resources to tasks.** Staff should have written job descriptions that define their primary responsibilities, but in small NGOs, staff often have to take on additional projects or administrative tasks. When Youth Voices prepares for a site visit from a funder, the office needs to be cleaned, the files need to be organized, and several project participants should be prepared to attend the meeting and share their experiences. These tasks do not fall under anyone's job description and everyone needs to help. The executive director should call a staff meeting to review the tasks that need to get done and assign the additional responsibilities. This way everyone knows who is responsible for what.

   Good managers do not just delegate responsibility. They also make sure people have the authority, resources, knowledge and skills to get the job done. If the executive director of Youth Voices sets up a system for making sure bills are paid and reports to donors are sent out on time, she will assign specific responsibilities to staff members, train them on the system, create a master calendar of deadlines, then monitor their work.

2. **Motivating people.** Some people who work for an NGO are highly motivated by the organization's mission. They

REMEMBER…

THE BOARD ALSO HAS A ROLE IN EVALUATION

To govern an NGO effectively, the board of directors should review evaluation findings across projects annually, at least. In reviewing results, the board needs to discuss where the NGO's work is having the most impact and the least impact. The board can then decide if projects need to be changed to ensure the NGO meets the overall goals in its strategic plan.

devote their careers to civil society because they want to make a difference. This is often the case with an NGO's first staff members who work long and hard to establish the NGO. As the NGO grows and hires new staff, the newcomers may not all share the same commitment to the NGO's mission. A good manager inspires the staff to believe in the organization's mission and support its goals. A good manager helps the staff see how their tasks, however big or small, contribute to the success of the NGO.

3. **Monitoring activities to make sure plans are accomplished.** If plans are not accomplished, the NGO manager must figure out why and solve the problem. While reviewing the reports prepared by project staff, Youth Voices' executive director finds that one staff member's reports lack information required by the funder. In discussing the problem with this staff member, she learned that the employee never received a copy of the requirements and that the project did not have a system for collecting the needed data. After discovering what the problem was, the executive director was able to find a solution. Good managers identify problems and make corrections before they become crises.

REMEMBER...

SOME NGOs HAVE FEW OR NO PAID STAFF

In NGOs with no paid staff, board members, or other volunteers supervised by the board, must manage the organization and its programs. Even when an NGO hires paid staff, board members may continue some management responsibilities such as maintaining the organization's finances.

4. **Ensuring communication and coordination.** Organizational managers look at the NGO as a whole. They need to make sure that staff assigned to different projects or areas communicate with each other. In the fast-paced environment of an NGO, staff members sometimes neglect to share information or ask for help. To avert this, Youth Voices holds regular staff meetings to review the status of all projects. This regular communication has many benefits. For example, when the staff members leading Youth Voices' educational workshops learn about the new radio program, they encourage their workshop participants to listen and suggest topics for future programs.

What is Participatory Management?

As an NGO manager, you also will have to create structures for management and decision making. A number of approaches are available to you. The participatory approach involves staff in programmatic and management decisions. A manager asks staff for input, then makes the decision alone. In the team approach, senior staff make decisions collectively. In the fully democratic approach, all staff and managers discuss and reach consensus on major decisions. However you manage your NGO, you should find ways to involve staff and create a formal structure through which they can add their input. This will help build a sense of ownership and investment in the NGO, its work and its future.

Above all, good managers understand that people — whether paid staff, volunteers or board members — are an NGO's greatest asset. An NGO's ability to deliver high-quality work depends directly on the skills, energy, commitment and talents of the people who carry out the work. NGO managers need to invest in their people. This means making sure

that staff members get training to do their jobs effectively and opportunities to grow professionally.

It can be hard for executive directors, especially those who are founders of an NGO, to delegate tasks to others. But for an NGO to succeed, its staff members need to grow. Executive directors and other managers must be willing to entrust tasks to others.

Finally, as an NGO manager, you need to create a positive work environment in which all staff and volunteers are treated with respect and recognized for their contributions. You can recognize individual staff members' accomplishments with something as simple as a "thank you" at a staff meeting. When a team has worked particularly hard on a project, you might take them to lunch and feature their efforts in your newsletter. Spending small sums in your NGO budget for staff and volunteer recognition is appropriate. People who work for an NGO need to know their commitment and competence are recognized and valued.

Good managers and good management practices are crucial for an NGO to sustain itself over time. Even the smallest organizations need to set up basic systems for management. Suppose you raise your first $500 at a community fundraiser. You should immediately record who gave you the donations, keep track of how you spend the money, and maintain a file with all of your receipts.

As your NGO grows, you will have more things to manage: projects, activities, people, money, relationships. You can develop more sophisticated systems as you need them. Once you begin to raise larger sums of money from multiple sources, you should invest in financial management software and develop detailed accounting procedures. When donors and supporters see that an NGO is well managed, they will have more confidence that their resources are being used wisely and for the proper purposes.

REMEMBER…

MAKE SURE YOUR STAFF UNDERSTAND THE NGO'S VALUES, VISION AND MISSION

Sometimes NGO executive directors are good at communicating the NGO's values, vision and mission to partners and funders, but their staff do not fully understand the organization's purpose. NGO leaders should continuously show staff — through training, staff meetings, and one-on-one conversations — how they contribute to the NGO's values, vision and mission.

CONCLUSION

Good planning, evaluation and management are the foundation that supports all of your NGO's projects and activities. When you take time to plan, your projects are more likely to address community needs. When you pay attention to management, your projects will be effective and efficient. And when you invest in evaluation, you will be able to document your results and see where you can improve. In each of these areas, an NGO needs to define roles and responsibilities and set up suitable systems.

Resource Appendix A

LOGIC MODEL FOR YOUTH VOICES COMPUTER LEARNING CENTER

RESOURCES/ INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
$100,000 – covers all project costs Major costs: • 25% of NGO director's time • 1 part-time computer instructor • 15 computers and related equipment (half donated) • Operating costs (space rental, utilities, supplies)	Computer training classes for youth ages 18-25 years	Thirty youth will complete six months of computer training (eight hours a week).	***Immediate/ short-term*** *(after 6 months)**:*** • 90% of youth demonstrate skills in Windows, MS Word, and Excel by completing defined tasks and passing standardized tests developed by Youth Voices. • 85% of youth demonstrate skills in usage of social media tools, including Facebook and Twitter, by completing defined tasks. • 80% of youth set up their own email and create their own Facebook page. ***Medium-term*** *(within one year)**:*** • 70% of youth who complete the training become involved in an existing community project. • 50% of youth organize their own initiative to address a community problem.	• Computer literacy becomes widespread in the neighborhood served by Youth Voices. • Knowledge and use of social media tools become widespread. • Overall higher level of youth engagement around neighborhood and community issues.

4 THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(© Kai Chiang/Golden Pixels LLC/Corbis)

The board of directors is the body responsible for governing an organization. It makes sure that the NGO has what it needs to carry out its mission, and that it does so legally, ethically and effectively. Ultimately, the board is accountable to the NGO's community, donors, partners and other stakeholders.

In this chapter, we will follow the board of the hypothetical Clean Streets, Healthy Children, an NGO that deals with urban sanitation and children's health. We will see how the board helps its NGO navigate through challenges and threats.

If your NGO is just starting out, your board need not engage in the full range of governance responsibilities discussed here. But you do need to assemble a founding board, typically three or four people to help you set your NGO's values, vision and mission and build up your relationships. Every member must know good governance practices so the board can fulfill its prime mission of making sure the NGO remains transparent, accountable and legitimate.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. **Setting the NGO's values, vision, mission and goals.** The board provides the overall direction to an NGO. The founding board usually sets the values, vision and mission at the time of its establishment. The board reviews the guiding principles every few years and makes sure that the NGO's long-term goals are aligned with the principles through a strategic planning process. If an NGO engages in advocacy, the board should set advocacy priorities and positions.

   When an NGO faces a threat or opportunity, the board makes decisions about what to do. For example, if one of Clean Streets, Healthy Children's largest funders withdraws its support, the board decides how to handle the loss. The board takes a hard look at the strategic plan and identifies the projects that are critical to the NGO's mission and those that are expendable.

2. **Making sure the NGO has the resources it needs.** Boards raise money, collect in-kind contributions and recruit volunteers. Boards set the fundraising goals and work with staff to meet them. It is up to each NGO to determine its requirements in terms of staff and resources. It is the board's job to make sure the NGO has what it needs to carry out its mission. In Clean Streets, Healthy Children, the executive director generally writes the funding requests to prospective donors, but the board organizes fundraising events and schedules meetings with individuals and businesses to ask for contributions.

REMEMBER...

YOU NEED A BOARD FROM THE BEGINNING

When you start an NGO, one of the first things to do is recruit a few people to be the founding board of directors. The founding board can help you get work done, such as writing your first proposals or attending meetings with potential partners. More importantly, this group gives you feedback on your ideas and advice on how to move forward. As you build the NGO, you need people to challenge your ideas or proposed actions. A board provides the checks and balances that keep your NGO accountable and legitimate.

3. **Making sure finances are well managed.** Financial oversight is one of the board's most important responsibilities. Making sure that money is spent wisely and appropriately keeps your NGO accountable to your funders and community, so boards must regularly review financial reports. The staff of Clean Streets, Healthy Children prepares the annual budget, but the board approves it. Board members who cannot attend a budget or finance meeting need to get copies of the documents, review them and send questions before or after the meeting. All board members are responsible for the board's decisions and actions, regardless of their attendance at every meeting.

4. **Ensuring that an NGO's work is effective.** Your board regularly reviews your NGO's projects and activities — through updates from the executive director and evaluation reports. It then assesses whether the projects and activities are advancing the NGO's mission and goals. In the event of a negative assessment, the board may need to make a decision to end or restructure a project, or start a new project that better meets community needs. To be effective monitors, all board members must be familiar with all of the NGO's activities. They should visit projects to meet the staff and see how the community is benefiting.

5. **Hiring, supervising and evaluating the executive director.** The board hires the executive director. It does not take a short cut and appoint the first available person. It goes through a multi-step, transparent process that identifies the best candidate for the job.
   - Develop a job description with clear objectives.
   - Announce the job opening.
   - Review resumes to identify the strongest candidates.
   - Interview these candidates.
   - Make a decision about the best candidate based on the NGO's needs.

   Once hired, the executive director reports to the board of directors. The board provides feedback and regular performance assessments, including a formal annual evaluation. If the executive director does not meet objectives or manage the NGO effectively, the board has a duty to dismiss that person. The board must make this decision carefully based on the best interests of the NGO. The board should never dismiss an executive director based solely on the preferences of one board member.

WHAT'S THIS?

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest arises when the personal or private interests of a board member are at odds with the interests of the NGO. Such a conflict may prevent a board member from making an objective decision. Your NGO needs an explicit conflict of interest policy that requires board members to disclose any conflicts of interest and remove themselves from the related discussion and decision.

Let's say Clean Streets, Healthy Children wants to speak out publicly against a company that is dumping waste into the water supply. One of the board members has a business relationship with the polluting company and does not want to jeopardize his relationship with it. This board member needs to disclose the relationship and withdraw from related discussions and decisions.

6. **Establishing policies and procedures.** The board approves all of the NGO's policies and procedures, covering the gamut from personnel and fiscal issues to conflicts of interest. Staff might prepare the policies but the board must approve them.

7. **Serving as ambassadors for the NGO.** Board members should always look for opportunities to develop new relationships and find new resources for the NGO. They advocate for it and its community and represent the organization at community events. Board members for Clean Streets, Healthy Children are also active in national and international professional networks. When they attend meetings or conferences, they bring their NGO's brochures and have their talking points ready.

   Board members are the NGO's ambassadors. They attend community meetings and events, listen to community concerns and make themselves active and visible in the community. In this way, board members build trust with the community.

8. **Ensuring the NGO meets ethical standards.** The board of directors ensures that anyone associated with the NGO behaves ethically and avoids corruption at all costs. An NGO must be honest, fair and transparent in its interactions with all stakeholders, internal and external. For example, it would be unethical for Clean Streets, Healthy Children to have a partnership with another NGO to run a joint project but not reveal information that it received a grant to support the joint project. Or, it would be unethical for the executive director to pay a staff member a salary different from the salary written in the budget. If such practices are allowed, the NGO will rightly be seen as corrupt.

   To prevent unethical behavior and corruption, an NGO's leadership must establish fair and open dealing as a core value. Practices must be put in place to discipline or terminate anyone found in violation. If the board learns that the executive director has engaged in corrupt practices, it should let this person go immediately. If one board member sees other members acting unethically, that board member must report their behavior to the board chair for immediate action. All board members are responsible for ensuring the full board behaves ethically.

WHAT'S THIS?

SELF-DEALING

Self-dealing is when a board member acts in his or her own interest rather than in the interests of the organization. A board member who advocates for the NGO to use his sister-in-law's printing company even though it would cost the NGO more would be engaged in self-dealing. The extremes of self-dealing involve illegal actions such as stealing or steering funds to others in exchange for a kickback.

Boards must set policies to prevent self-dealing and take immediate action when self-dealing occurs.

THE BOARD'S ROLE WHEN AN NGO IS JUST STARTING UP

In new NGOs without paid staff, board members take on roles and tasks that would otherwise be carried out by paid staff, including:

- Designing the NGO's first projects and getting them started.

- Attending meetings with stakeholders to build relationships.
- Creating the management infrastructure for the organization — such as setting up an accounting system or a system for organizing volunteers.
- Carrying out the project — such as teaching a computer class or leading a civic education workshop.

Board members of start-up NGOs need to remember that, in addition to carrying out the NGO's work and managing the organization, they still need to pay attention to their *governance* responsibilities and should set aside a portion of board meetings for oversight activities.

Once an NGO gets its first grant and hires paid staff, the role of the board will begin to change. Not only will the board be less involved in the day-to-day work of the NGO, it will also have new governance responsibilities. It will need to develop personnel policies and supervise the executive director, for example. Making the transition from an all-volunteer NGO to a funded and staffed one can be very challenging for NGO boards. When board members understand how their role is changing, they will be better able to navigate the transition.

HOW DO BOARDS CARRY OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES?

Regular meetings are a must for a board to exercise its oversight responsibilities. Some boards meet monthly — especially if the NGO is just starting up, growing rapidly or going through a crisis. For NGOs that are running smoothly and not having to deal with threats or opportunities, quarterly meetings are adequate. Board members should review project and financial updates at their meetings, as well as discuss any new issues that require a decision. At a typical meeting, the executive director of Clean Streets, Healthy Children might report to the board that she met with a prospective donor for the NGO's new public awareness campaign. The executive director shares concerns that the donor wants to restrict what the NGO can say in the campaign in return for funding. The board discusses the offer, decides whether to accept it, and establishes a policy for handling funding offers that come with conditions.

A board of directors makes only official decisions, such as to approve priorities, new projects, budgets or policies. It can take official action only at meetings that have enough board members present. That detail needs to be specified in the NGO's charter. An individual board member cannot make decisions for the NGO. At each board meeting, someone should take thorough notes, called "minutes," which become the official record of a board's discussions and decisions.

Board members should make every effort to attend all board meetings. This is necessary for them to keep informed and make sound decisions for the NGO.

TRY THIS...

WHEN BOARD MEMBERS DISAGREE

Sometimes board members disagree with each other on a decision, a policy or the best course of action. When this happens, take time to discuss why. Try to understand the perspectives and reasoning behind the different points of view. This will lead to a better, richer discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches, and ultimately a better decision for the NGO. If, even after discussion, board members still disagree, you may have to take a vote on the issue and have the majority rule.

If a board member has to miss a meeting, he should follow up with a fellow board member to find out what happened and ask questions.

Many boards set up committees to carry out specific tasks between full board meetings. This makes board meetings more efficient. For example, when the board of Clean Streets, Healthy Children needs to review and update a policy, it creates a committee to analyze the issue and bring forth recommendations for the board to act on.

For a new or small NGO, it makes sense for the whole board to work together. As the NGO grows, the board may form committees to deal with an expanding number of issues. Committees are a way to strengthen teamwork on the board and provide opportunities for its members to build their skills and leadership.

NGOs provide all new board members with a thorough orientation to the organization — its mission, history and projects. NGOs make sure board members are equipped with the knowledge and skills to do their jobs, providing training when necessary.

Finally, NGO boards elect a board chair who provides leadership that motivates all board members to do their best for the NGO. A good chair creates a positive environment and good working relationships among board members.

HOW DO YOU BUILD AN EFFECTIVE BOARD AND DECIDE WHO SHOULD BE ON IT?

Building a board takes time. Time to find people with the right mix of knowledge, skills and relationships and time to train them to fill their roles. Few board members will come to your NGO fully equipped to perform all the functions required of them. Think of your board as a team — each player has his or her own position. Working together, they get the job done. Regardless of what position each

Taking notes of board meetings, called "minutes," is important for transparency as a record of the board's discussions and decisions. *(© 2003-2012 Shutterstock Images LLC)*

plays, all board members must believe in the NGO's mission and be willing to work hard to advance it.

Founders of NGOs often start by inviting friends, family members and colleagues — people they know and trust — to serve on the first board of directors. Once the NGO is established, people with new skills, experiences and points of view need to be brought onto the board. Greater diversity helps a board govern a more complex organization.

To build a more diverse board, make a list of the kinds of expertise, skills and relationships the NGO needs and where you can find people who have them. As you do so, consider these questions:

1. **What expertise, skills and relationships do we need for a well-rounded board?** Many NGOs look for new board members with expertise in their sector, such as health, human rights, education, or microfinance. This is important, but don't forget to recruit board members with expertise in management, communications, community outreach and finance.

   If Clean Streets, Healthy Children has a well-rounded board, it will make better decisions. Suppose it is entering into a new partnership with an international NGO to help engineering students carry out community sanitation projects. The board needs to review and approve both the partnership agreement and the budget. Board members with expertise in public health and sanitation can make sure the project approach is sound, while board members with management expertise can oversee budget issues.

2. **What specific knowledge and skills will help our NGO achieve its goals over the next three to five years?** Let's suppose Clean Streets, Healthy Children plans to launch a public awareness campaign about the connection between waste and child health. The board would definitely benefit from having new members with backgrounds in communications and social media. A board consisting solely of sanitation and health experts would be unable to guide the NGO through a communications campaign or review a contract with a consultant to ensure it was appropriate.

3. **What kinds of connections and relationships does our NGO need now and in the future?** Clean Streets, Healthy Children has decided it wants to build a long-term partnership with a local university to bring engineering and environmental science students into the NGO's projects. The board realizes that it could benefit immensely by recruiting a new member from the university. The board draws up a list of their contacts at the university and arranges meetings with them to start the process of identifying prospective candidates for the board.

4. **What personal traits and characteristics should a new board member have to fit in with the rest of the board?** This is an important question to answer before making your selection. If your board

REMEMBER…

FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS HAVE TO REPORT TO THEIR BOARDS

Sometimes, the founder of an NGO decides to be its executive director and recruits the first board of directors. Founding executive directors still are accountable to the boards and must report to them. Founding boards demand regular reports from the executive directors and evaluate their performances.

meetings are casual and informal, you should make sure new members are comfortable with that style. If the NGO is growing or changing rapidly, you need to find members who make decisions quickly and are flexible.

As you recruit new board members, keep in mind that, above all, they must be committed to the NGO's vision, values and mission. Make it clear to them that they will need to devote time to NGO governance and planning, and acquire new skills to support the NGO.

Once your board has identified what it wants in new members, agree on a process for recruiting them to join the board.

HOW DO BOARDS AND STAFF WORK TOGETHER?

The key is for boards and executive directors to work together cooperatively. Both are responsible for setting directions and priorities, building relationships and bringing in resources for the organization. The main danger is that they will step on each other's toes without clearly differentiated roles.

Here are a few tips for building a good relationship between your board and executive director:

1. **Make sure that board members and the executive director understand their respective roles and responsibilities.** Develop written job descriptions for each. Keep in mind that:
   - The board of directors sets organizational policy, authorizes programs and approves expenditures. This is the governance role. The job description states that the board supervises and evaluates the executive director, who reports to the board.
   - The executive director implements the policies and programs the board sets out. This is the management role. The job description states that the executive director is responsible for hiring, supervising and evaluating all other staff.

2. **Support one another to fulfill respective roles and responsibilities.** Boards need information about the day-to-day operations and challenges of the NGO to do their governance job. Executive directors have this information and need to share it willingly with their boards. Suppose a board member of Clean Streets, Healthy Children has a relationship with researchers at a university. The university wants to partner with the NGO to carry out a research project. The board discusses the project and reaches the conclusion that such a partnership would raise the NGO's visibility and provide opportunities for further collaboration.

TRY THIS...

CHECKLIST FOR A WELL-ROUNDED BOARD

Before you begin your search for new board members, go through the checklists below to identify the right candidate.

Knowledge and skills:
- Organizational and project management
- Fundraising
- Budgeting and fiscal management
- Human resources
- Planning and evaluation
- Marketing and communications
- Legal issues

Networks and relationships:
- Other community groups and networks
- Local business community
- Corporate sector
- NGO sector
- Government sector
- Professional associations

Before making a decision to move forward, the board should consult with the executive director, who might have concerns about the NGO's capacity to take on a major new effort. In this case, the board might decide not to authorize this new initiative or it might go back to the university, present the concerns, and see if the university could provide the resources for additional staff and training. Close consultation between the board and the executive director provides a solid foundation for decisions they take together.

Likewise, an executive director needs the board's guidance and input to manage the NGO well. Let's say that Clean Streets, Healthy Children has begun implementing the new research project, and now, the executive director has concerns about the performance of the newly hired project manager. While it is the executive director's job to address these concerns, she might want to consult with the board to gain

REMEMBER...

BOARDS MUST PUT THE INTERESTS OF THE NGO FIRST

Expanding the board beyond the founder's relationships will help avoid conflicts of interest that might arise by having family or friends on the board. If the NGO needs to make a difficult decision, a family member or close friend might not be willing to disagree with the founder. If the founder is no longer the best executive director for the NGO, a friend or family member might not be willing to replace the founder.

Involving community members in planning ensures an NGO's responsiveness to their needs. Here Melinda Gates, co-founder and co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, meets with health and sanitation committee members in Kathgara village in Uttar Pradesh, India. *(© Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation/Barbara Kinney)*

a different perspective before making any decisions on how to deal with the matter.

3. **Build collegial relationships between the board and NGO staff that respect the authority of the executive director.** Board and staff members should know each other and understand that they play for the same team. You can facilitate this relationship by having staff periodically attend board meetings and inviting board members to visit projects and get to know staff. But board and staff members must also recognize that the executive director supervises and directs the staff. Board members should never attempt to give instructions to staff or bypass the executive director to obtain information from them.

Above all, boards and executive directors need regular and open communication. When a problem appears, you need to raise it, discuss it, and try to resolve it before it becomes a crisis. Understand that there always is tension in the relationship. The executive director may at times feel like the board is trying to manage the NGO, and conversely the board might feel that the executive director occasionally makes decisions that are not hers to make. Such tension is a natural and important part of holding each other accountable. As long as everyone talks openly and honestly, with the understanding that each has a job to do, you can find the appropriate balance for your NGO.

HOW NGOs BUILD TRUST WITH THE COMMUNITY

One of your NGO's most important assets is your good reputation within the community. You earn it by running projects that respond to the community's needs. The community in turn rewards you with their trust. The board of directors works in tandem with the NGO to build trust with the community. Here is what your NGO and board need to do to build trust:

1. **Educate the community about your NGO.** The staff and board members are all your NGO's ambassadors. They educate community members about what your NGO does, how it works, what its limitations are, and the resources it needs to function. Have your ambassadors tell about your projects, staff, board members, funders — especially why the funders support your NGO. Lastly, your ambassadors must let your community members know that your NGO is accountable to them and they have a right to demand information, ask questions and give input.

2. **Hold your NGO accountable to the community.** Remember, NGOs exist for the public good, and they must

REMEMBER…

INVOLVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS ON THE BOARD

A good way to make sure an NGO is responsive and accountable to the community is to have community members on the board. If your NGO focuses on a particular neighborhood, recruit people who grew up there to serve on the board. If you focus on young mothers, get several of them on the board. They will bring in firsthand community knowledge and relationships that will make your work more effective. Make sure you provide newcomers with the training and support to carry out the board's governance responsibilities.

answer to the public. All NGOs need to set up mechanisms to hold themselves accountable to the communities they serve. Involving community members in planning and evaluation and reporting back to them are two ways to do this.

3. **Behave ethically. All board members, staff and volunteers have a duty to behave ethically.** It is the role of the board to enforce ethical standards by taking corrective action when the standards are violated. The board's goal is to ensure a high level of professionalism by making sure that your NGO's actions are open and in the best interest of your community.

4. **Be transparent. Your NGO must provide community members access to information about your organization.** Never hide information about:
   - How your organization works, the projects it runs, or who it serves.
   - How people are selected to be on the board or hired as staff.
   - How major decisions are made and priorities are set.
   - Where your money comes from and what it is used for.

   Nonprofit organizations rely on the resources (e.g., time, money, skills and energy) of the community to do their job effectively. The community has a right to know what you are doing, how you are using their resources, and what results you are achieving.

5. **Treat all community members with fairness, dignity and respect.** The board needs to communicate this principle to all NGO staff and volunteers. The board adopts policies that prohibit all forms of discrimination (for example, based on ethnicity, religion or clan affiliation). The board can also dedicate resources to train and monitor staff

Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), or the "Save Childhood Movement," is an example of a successful NGO. It began in the 1980s with a handful of people committed to ending child labor and trafficking. BBA's marches against child trafficking, like this one in New Delhi, India, spread across India and the world. *(© AP Images/ Manish Swarup)*

and volunteers to ensure they do not show favoritism.

6. **Respect confidentiality.** Your NGO's staff and board members may learn sensitive information about individuals, such as their health status, financial situation, or family secrets. NGOs must put policies in place to protect this information and sanction those who breach confidentiality. This is one area where you should not be transparent!

7. **Solicit community input and feedback.** This can be done by creating formal community advisory committees, as described above, as well as by involving community members in planning. You can also conduct regular surveys that invite people to tell you what you can do better and hold regular meetings with project participants to listen to their views.

In the end, trust is the critical factor in an NGO's success. Its founders, staff and volunteers build it. The board establishes and implements policies and practices that create it. When the community trusts you, they will:

- Seek out your services and participate in your projects.
- Volunteer and support your organization in other ways.
- Speak well of your NGO's work, staff and leaders.
- Give you honest feedback to improve your organization and its projects, and refrain from harmful accusations.

Remember, you will never be able to make everybody happy. There will always be someone whose expectations you cannot meet. But as long as you stay true to your mission and behave ethically, you will gain the trust of most people in your community.

REMEMBER...

GOVERNANCE VS. MANAGEMENT

In its governance role, the board reviews and approves the budget. Once the budget is approved, the executive director executes it. If the board approves $5,000 for printing, it should not later question the executive director's decision to spend $3,000 on a new brochure. A board member can offer suggestions for a cost-effective alternative, but, ultimately, it is the executive director's responsibility to decide how funds are spent.

CONCLUSION

Whether an NGO is just starting out or well established, the board of directors plays a critical role in keeping the organization accountable, transparent and legitimate. In the beginning, that means working with the founder to set out the organization's vision, mission and goals while holding the NGO accountable to its community. As an NGO grows and matures, adding projects, staff, resources, donors and partners, the board assumes greater responsibility for oversight and accountability to an expanding set of stakeholders. For any NGO, finding the right board and making sure its members are equipped to do their jobs is critical to success.

5 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

(© AP Images/Tony Avelar)

People and communities are the heart of why an NGO exists. Regardless of the issues they address, all NGOs were created to make people's lives better and communities stronger. Yet NGOs can be more than humanitarian organizations to ease suffering. They can also be empowerment organizations to spur people to realize their aspirations for better lives and communities. To achieve this potential, NGOs need to give community members the knowledge, skills and confidence to address their own needs and advocate on their own behalf.

A good way to begin is for your NGO to open doors for community members not only to participate in projects, but also to help plan, manage and evaluate them.

Your NGO can facilitate broader civic participation in a number of ways, by:

- Investing in leadership development and supporting new leaders to define problems, identify solutions and establish action plans.
- Organizing "visioning" sessions that invite community members to share their dreams for their lives and communities, then combining them into a collective vision.
- Coaching community members to be their own advocates and voice their concerns to elected officials and government decision makers.
- Advocating for the creation of structures and mechanisms that make government and elected officials accountable to citizens.
- Mobilizing people to vote.

Participation and empowerment are mutually reinforcing. When people participate, they learn new skills, gain confidence and develop their own voice and ability to control their lives. And when people feel empowered, they are more likely to participate. In this chapter, we'll illustrate this by showing how another hypothetical organization, Health for All, approaches community participation and empowerment.

REMEMBER...

DEFINE YOUR COMMUNITY

NGOs define community in different ways. For some, community means a geographic area — a neighborhood, a village, a city or a region. For others, community refers to members of a particular ethnic minority, language group, age group or gender identity. And others might define their community as anyone affected by a particular issue, such as HIV or youth unemployment. Your NGO needs to define the community you seek to engage and empower.

CULTIVATING NEW LEADERS

NGOs need to cultivate new leaders within their communities, whether they are geographic or based on addressing a shared problem. You do this by building people's skills and providing them with opportunities to step into leadership roles. By cultivating new leaders, you ensure that your NGO's work will go on after the founders are gone. Equally important, you create a situation in which people affected by a problem are part of its solution.

The leaders you cultivate will amplify your NGO's work in a number of ways, by:

- Educating others in the community about the issue.
- Serving as the messengers in public education campaigns.
- Advocating with government or elected officials and by attending meetings or giving testimony.
- Mobilizing others to get involved, speak out and take action.

Health for All has been providing health-education workshops targeting low-income women and has been successful in helping them adopt good health practices. Now, Health for All wants to start a Women's Leadership Project to train low-income women to become community leaders on health issues.

The NGO is going to recruit a few women who participated in the workshops to begin meeting weekly. The NGO will focus discussions on what it means to be a leader, what kind of leadership is needed in their community and what kind of leaders the women want to be. The project will hold training workshops designed to build basic skills, such as how to:

- Analyze a community problem.
- Develop solutions.
- Plan events and projects.
- Manage tasks, timelines and resources.
- Run a meeting.
- Speak in public.
- Deal with conflict.

While providing formal training is important, remember that people learn by doing. The most effective leadership programs guide participants through the process of picking an issue to tackle, identifying solutions, then carrying out an action plan. Health for All's Women's Leadership Project will guide its participants to:

- Identify an issue, such as why so many women in the community have been getting sick from preventable illnesses.
- Analyze the root causes. For example, funding for the government primary care clinic was slashed, with the result that many women are being turned away. Also, government-funded health-education campaigns have been cut.
- Identify and prioritize what they want to change. They decide they not only want funding restored, but also the clinic to develop better outreach and education for women with low literacy levels.
- Pinpoint who they need to influence — the person with the power to restore funding — and decide what kind of message is most likely to persuade that person.

TRY THIS...

LOOK FOR YOUR COMMUNITY'S NATURAL LEADERS

All communities have "natural leaders" — individuals whom others seek out for advice, look up to, and listen to. They might be elders respected for their experience or young people able to motivate others. Some may have formal education; others may not. If you don't already know who they are, ask your community members when you conduct a needs and assets assessment. Then, invite these natural leaders to participate in a leadership program.

REMEMBER...

START BY INVOLVING COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN YOUR NGO

When the people you serve are involved in your NGO, your NGO will be more successful. Not only will your projects be more relevant to their needs, but you will build collective ownership for your NGO's mission. Your community members will be more willing to support your NGO and its work in the future. In addition, by investing in the skills and leadership of the people you serve, your NGO will expand the pool of talent to help carry out your mission.

Here members of the Anti-Poverty Campaign, a Tokyo-based NGO, tap their community support across the seas, as this Los Angeles, California, demonstration shows. *(© AP Images/Hector Mata)*

- Finally, the women leaders mobilize other women in the community to sign a petition, send letters, or stage a vigil in front of the regional office of the health ministry.

After new leaders "graduate" from your training, find ways to continue nurturing and supporting them. You can do this by:

- Hiring them as staff. If Health for All secures additional funding to expand its health-education projects, it can hire leadership-project graduates to conduct outreach, coordinate workshops or even provide training.
- Engaging them in advocacy. If Health for All decides to advocate for greater public funding for maternal and child health clinics, for example, it can invite graduates of the leadership project to help design the campaign, craft the messages, and advocate with public officials.
- Supporting them to become engaged in other community projects and coalitions. Health for All can introduce newly trained leaders to other NGOs and coalitions where they might get taken on as staff or volunteers. In this way, Health for All's leadership project benefits the whole sector.
- Creating opportunities for them to implement their own ideas. If the new leaders have an idea for a project — such as a public awareness campaign on the importance of prenatal care for pregnant women with HIV — then Health for All might help them

raise funds to launch the project. The confidence they glean from this project might propel some of them to found their own NGO, which would be an ally of Health for All.

PROMOTING WIDE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Your NGO can promote civic engagement in ways other than grooming new leaders. After all, not everyone is cut out to be a leader. Your NGO can create opportunities for people who are not leaders to contribute to bettering their communities. Generating broad civic engagement will ultimately help your NGO accomplish its mission.

The ways that NGOs can promote civic engagement range from simply creating opportunities for people to articulate their vision of the future to mobilizing them to get out and vote. NGOs can be instrumental in getting people to realize that they have a voice and a vote!

Inviting Community Members to Shape a Vision

For people who have never had a say in shaping their future, a powerful way to begin is to invite them to share their hopes and dreams for their lives and their communities. Health for All could hold visioning sessions with different segments of the community, such as youth, elders, adult women, or men, or in different neighborhoods of the city. In the sessions, you could ask participants questions such as: If everyone in your community had health care, what would it look like? What would be different?

Health for All's Women's Leadership Project could bring together women from a low-income neighborhood to create a collective vision for a community that fosters women's health. Visioning processes often ask questions such as: In your vision for the future, what would women's lives be like? What would the community look like? What kinds of resources would it have to support women's health?

Organizing Projects for People's Participation

Helping people to form a collective vision for their community is the first step to get them to see that they have a voice in shaping their future. The next step is

REMEMBER...

TO EMPOWER OTHERS, NGO LEADERS NEED TO STEP BACK AND LET GO

If your NGO is going to build new leaders and empower them to lead efforts to effect change, then the NGO leaders and staff must be willing to step back and let others lead. To be empowered, people must be responsible for their own successes and failures.

WHAT'S THIS?

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement encompasses a range of activities that allow citizens to express their views and take action to effect change.

- Helping in neighborhood meetings, clean-ups, or cultural festivals.
- Volunteering with an NGO or other community group.
- Attending city council meetings or giving testimony at public hearings.
- Participating in meetings or forums to discuss community issues.
- Writing letters to the editor.
- Taking part in rallies, marches, or vigils.
- Voting.

to help them see that they can make a difference. NGOs can organize various activities in which people can make changes — large or small — to improve their communities.

Health for All, for instance, could sponsor mural projects in the neighborhood, inviting youths to paint the walls with scenes of a healthy community. Health for All could also organize neighborhood clean-up days, where people come out to clean their streets and parks. The NGO's board members could help by appealing to businesses to donate supplies for these activities.

Your NGO could also seek to make the government a partner to support such efforts. This would provide opportunities for officials and lawmakers to build goodwill with the public and strengthen your NGO's ties with the government. We'll talk more about NGO-government relations in the next chapter.

Engaging Community Members in Advocacy

You need to involve community members in speaking about the issue your NGO deals with. The people who are most affected by an issue are the most credible messengers to government officials and other decision makers.

In countries with sufficient margins of freedom, NGOs can organize people to sign petitions, write letters, make phone calls and provide testimony. Your NGO needs to support them by furnishing information and other tools to be effective.

For example, if Health for All advocates with the health ministry to improve sanitation in the region, it could recruit and train community members to speak out on the matter. Community members could help shape the key messages for an advocacy campaign, then present testimony and facts to government

A mother and her child at a Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) march outside parliament in Cape Town, South Africa. TAC advocates for access to comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services. Through such efforts, South African NGOs have brought better health care to HIV positive citizens.
(© AP Images/Obed Zilwa)

WHAT'S THIS?

ADVOCACY

Advocacy is the act of promoting a position with the decision makers who have the power to effect change. You can advocate with government officials to get a new law passed or an existing one changed. You can advocate with officials of a government ministry to change their rules or practices. Many NGOs advocate for increased funding for a particular problem or issue, such as primary health care or education. NGOs can also advocate with business leaders for greater corporate social responsibility.

officials about the impact of poor sanitation in their communities. It would be especially powerful if a few community members told personal stories of how the health of their children has been affected. Health for All staff could work with community members to draft their talking points and coach them on delivering them.

In countries where the political environment discourages community activism, your NGO needs to carefully consider its advocacy strategies. You want to make sure that your community is well-informed about any risks of government reprisals.

Advocating for Governance Structures that Support Engagement

In countries where civic activism is legally permitted but not widely practiced, an appropriate role for NGOs would be to advocate for the creation of mechanisms of civic engagement. NGOs could work together to advocate for:

- The adoption of requirements that local elected bodies hold open meetings for citizens to voice their views on new laws under consideration (i.e., public hearings).
- The use of community advisory committees or citizen oversight commissions by government ministries to receive community input and answer community questions.
- Greater transparency in the decision-making process and access to information for citizens, such as requirements to publish voting records or make certain documents available for public scrutiny.

NGOs can educate officials to recognize the value of such structures and mechanisms in helping them to meet their mandates and generate greater public support through increased accountability. At the same time, NGOs need to educate their communities that officials are accountable to them, and citizens have a right to hold officials accountable. To do so, the communities need information and access to officials, both of which NGOs can provide.

Health for All, for example, is leading a coalition of NGOs to press the health ministry to create a citizen advisory committee to provide input and feedback on the ministry's health programs.

TRY THIS...

HELP PEOPLE TELL THEIR STORIES

Advocacy is about telling stories that help decision makers understand the impact of a problem, law or policy on people's lives. NGOs can encourage community members to step forward and share their stories — whether as testimony at public meetings or as part of the NGO's general education and awareness-raising efforts. You can do this by recording people's stories in writing and on video and posting them on your website and other media.

The NGOs see a role for themselves in recruiting and training community members to serve on the committee. Health for All encourages graduates of its Women's Leadership Project to apply for seats on the committee. The NGOs want to make sure that the committee is structured in a way that it is outside the control of the government or a particular NGO.

Mobilizing and Educating Voters

Finally, NGOs can promote voting as a form of civic engagement. The political system permitting, NGOs can register voters, educate them about the importance of elections, sponsor forums for candidates to meet community members and mobilize voters to turn out on Election Day.

CONCLUSION

Strengthening community participation and empowerment is key to an NGO's efforts to bring about sustainable change. Your NGO may have exemplary planning, management, and governance practices, but if you are not building a strong base of community leadership and engagement, your NGO might not outlive its founders.

As with other aspects of an NGO's work, you need to build your own capacity to support and sustain community participation and empowerment. You need to start by educating your own staff, volunteers and board members about what NGOs can do to generate civic engagement. Educate yourselves about the political process, understand the power dynamics, identify the role your NGO wants to play and build relationships with government.

You also need to listen to your community. What are they ready and willing to do? Where do they want to start? Some people may want to limit their engagement to their own neighborhood or to a narrow problem that directly affects them and their families. They may need time before they are ready to speak out on large policy issues.

There is no one right way to promote community participation and empowerment. You can start small, try different approaches, and learn as you go. Remember, regardless of your NGO's specific mission, the more that individuals understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, the more effective your NGO will be.

REMEMBER...

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SERVES THE PUBLIC GOOD AND HELPS GOVERNMENT DO ITS JOB BETTER

In dealings with appointed and elected officials, NGOs need to hammer home continuously the message that citizen input and oversight will ultimately result in better government services, and help the officials fulfill their mandate. Further, this will show the officials that broad civic engagement is a way to tap into citizens' own resources to improve communities, thus complementing what government can accomplish on its own.

6 PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER NGOS AND GOVERNMENT

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An NGO cannot achieve its vision for a better society on its own. Community needs are too numerous and society's problems are too complex. Your NGO needs to work with other NGOs and your government to accomplish your goals.

Through partnerships with other NGOs, and the public sector, you gain access to new resources, including funding and in-kind support as well as information, expertise and skills. When an NGO is just starting, it might find rent-free space for its activities through relationships with other NGOs, a local government office or a university. Partnerships with other NGOs might allow you to reach new target populations with your public education messages and broaden your base of popular support for your mobilization efforts. In short, partnerships can be an important vehicle for young NGOs to build visibility and capacity.

Partnerships take different forms, ranging from informal and casual to formal and structured. You can have relationships where you talk to each other regularly to share information, ideas and experiences. You can also have highly organized, collaborative relationships where you design projects, raise money and run the projects together.

When you are developing your near-term project plans and long-term strategic plans, think carefully about who you want to build partnerships with and what form the partnerships should take.

In this chapter, we use a hypothetical NGO, Citizens Fighting Corruption, which focuses on rooting out local corruption, to explore how different partnerships are built, and the benefits and challenges they present.

TRY THIS...

CREATE A MAP OF NGOs

As you become familiar with your environment, get to know the other NGOs that work in your community or on your issue. Draw a map of your community and mark the locations of other NGOs. Identify what they do and the type of relationships you would like to build with them. This exercise will highlight knowledge gaps that you need to fill.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL NGOs

Other NGOs can be sources of information and ideas, partners for projects, and allies for your cause. Get to know the ones working in your community — their issues, target populations and services. They can be especially helpful when you are just starting up and trying to define your mission and carve out your niche. Later, as you plan new projects and activities, you will want to know who is doing similar work so you can coordinate your efforts and avoid duplication. Make it a point to get to know other NGOs in your area, even if they are pursuing different missions. They probably care about your issue and may become strong allies.

You also need to know who is working on your issue in other cities and at the national and international levels. NGOs can learn from each other by sharing experiences and lessons learned. If Citizens Fighting Corruption wants to address corruption at the municipal procurement office, it could learn about strategies used by groups in other cities and how effective they were.

NGOs working on the same issues in different places can work together

A year after the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, a member of the Japanese NGO Association for Aid and Relief (AAR) walks past ruins of a school in the city of Kamaishi. The AAR partnership with the International Rescue Committee helps distribute assistance to people still struggling with effects of the disaster. *(Courtesy of International Rescue Committee)*

to address the root causes that cross geographic boundaries. When anti-corruption groups from various localities get their heads together, they might realize that what's really needed is a national law. That would open the possibility for them to coordinate their efforts in a nationwide campaign to pressure legislators to pass such a law.

But make no mistake, effective partnerships take time to build. NGOs often see each other as rivals, competing for resources, support, visibility and even public praise. To begin to see each other as partners, you need to get to know each other and build trust. You can start by contacting another NGO for a meeting to get acquainted.

Once you know each other, you can share information about activities, conferences, training opportunities and funding opportunities. Telephone calls, meetings and email are good ways to keep in touch. Another way to build trust is to support one another's work by publicizing and attending each other's events, volunteering for each other's activities, and providing letters of support for grant proposals.

Citizens Fighting Corruption has conducted a survey about perceptions of corruption. After compiling the results, it invites other NGOs to a briefing to share and discuss the results. That opens communication channels with other groups that have the same concern about corruption. Likewise, Citizens Fighting Corruption makes every effort to accept invitations from other NGOs to expand its network of allies.

COORDINATING EFFORTS

As NGOs build trust with each other, they can coordinate their efforts more closely. Before you combine your efforts, however, make sure you agree on certain things:

- A shared vision. While each NGO should have its own distinct mission, a shared vision will help like-minded groups set common goals and deliver a common message for change. For example, if anti-corruption NGOs working in different parts of a country come together to develop a shared vision for what a corruption-free government looks like, they can establish a national platform that will provide a clear direction and sense of purpose for all.
- Common goals and a coordinated strategy for achieving them. Citizens Fighting Corruption and its related NGOs know all too well that they face potent opposition from the beneficiaries of corruption. By forming a united front with like-minded NGOs, Citizens Fighting Corruption reduces the opportunities for corrupt elements to play NGOs off each other and nullify their efforts.

WHAT'S THIS?

ALLIES

Your allies are the individuals, organizations and institutions whom you can call on to support your NGO, your community and your issues. If your NGO faces a funding cut that might force you to close your doors, your allies will speak up that your work is important and deserves to be supported. If you are an advocacy group, your allies will sign your petition, give testimony, or show up for your rally.

WHAT'S THIS?

INFORMATIONAL MEETING

At an informational meeting, members from your NGO and another can share information about each other's vision, mission and values. It's an opportunity to identify shared goals and explore whether you might have opportunities to work together. Sometimes, an informational meeting results in concrete ideas about coordination or collaboration. Other times, you may simply agree to stay in communication.

- Coordinated outreach and education. Create a division of labor among cooperating NGOs as to who shares information or conducts trainings with different target audiences. This is needed to avoid duplication of effort. Citizens Fighting Corruption is working with another NGO that focuses on fair elections. Both want to educate voters to recognize election fraud and blow the whistle on it when they see it. The two NGOs realize that they can increase their effectiveness by pooling their knowledge and skills in joint education workshops and campaigns. Those steps enable them to expand their work into new neighborhoods.

  Coordination does not mean you do everything together. It does mean you talk and decide what you will do individually and what you will do jointly. Keep in mind that each NGO is autonomous and has its own internal priorities and decision-making processes.

RUNNING COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Sometimes NGOs develop close collaborative bonds by designing and carrying out projects together. Through collaborative projects your NGO can:

- Reach more people and broaden your constituency.
- Carry out new kinds of projects and expand your range of skills and expertise.
- Attract new resources. If you have limited management capacity or project experience, you may not qualify for grants from large foundations or the public sector. Partnering with an experienced organization could make your NGO eligible for such funding.

WHAT'S THIS?

AN ADVOCACY COALITION

An advocacy coalition is a group of NGOs, sometimes joined by other civil society groups, who come together to advocate for changes in laws, government policies or regulations. Coalitions can come together for a very specific objective — such as to pass a particular law — or to work together on a range of advocacy strategies.

Let's say Citizens Fighting Corruption sets up informational meetings with other NGOs working in the same neighborhood. It gets to know an arts and culture NGO, and the two start talking about how they

Could this be the beginning of an advocacy coalition? During an Occupy Wall Street movement protest in Philadelphia, participants meet to discuss social and economic issues that fueled the protest. NGOs may start with a perceived need, but require an organized plan and follow-through to achieve results.
(© AP Images/Alex Brandon)

can reach people with low literacy levels. They decide to work together to create street theater performances with anti-corruption messages. In working together, the anti-corruption NGO learns about staging theatrical performances and the arts and culture group learns about the corruption issue.

It's good to start with something easy. For example, your NGO could partner with another to co-sponsor a one-time training event that benefits everyone. Afterward, the NGOs can assess what worked well, what did not, how each benefited, and whether you want to work together again.

FORMING ADVOCACY COALITIONS

NGOs that seek to change laws and government practices are more likely to be successful when they join forces. Effective advocacy requires large numbers. The more people you have on your side, the louder your voice is, and the stronger the pressure you are able to bring to bear. If a coalition already exists, join it. If none exists, think about starting one. That will make your NGO a leader among its peers. Such a step will take time and commitment. You may have to recruit staff and board members who can invest the time and energy to do it well.

Let's return to Citizens Fighting Corruption and its struggle to root out corruption in the local government procurement office. It is looking to form a coalition of diverse stakeholders, such as NGOs from the health care, education, and housing sectors. They all seek contracts from the city government and are concerned about corruption in the process of granting them. Citizens Fighting Corruption sees that by unifying these NGOs into a broad coalition, they can all speak with one voice and increase pressure to reform the government procurement office.

In order for the coalition to succeed, Citizens Fighting Corruption needs to make sure there is agreement on the following points:

- A shared commitment to the coalition based on shared values and vision.
- Clear roles and responsibilities for each partner.
- A defined decision-making structure.
- Open communication and transparency. Have clear understandings about what information you will share and will not share and how you will share it, such as through regular email, phone calls and meetings.

TRY THIS...

COLLABORATE TO BUILD YOUR CAPACITY

When you are starting up and have little experience and few resources, finding an established NGO to collaborate with is a good way to build your capacity to design and run projects. Your NGO has to have something of value to offer an established NGO in return for taking you on as a junior partner. For example, your NGO might have a very good relationship with a community that the established NGO wants to serve. The experience your NGO gains through collaboration improves your chances to win funding grants on your own in the future.

REMEMBER...

USE YOUR BOARD MEMBERS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Your board members are your NGO's ambassadors. Use their networks of contacts to identify and build partnerships with other NGOs.

- An agreed-upon process for dealing with conflict or disagreements.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH INTERNATIONAL NGOs

Relationships with international NGOs offer your small NGO access to information about global standards and practices that affect your work. The international organizations are important members of your support network who will speak up and defend you when necessary. Through contacts with international NGOs, Citizens Fighting Corruption learns about international conventions, model laws from other countries and advocacy strategies that have been effective elsewhere. Taking on corrupt politicians, government workers and business owners can be a dangerous undertaking. The more relationships the NGO has with anti-corruption activists nationally and internationally, the more people there will be looking out and demanding protection should Citizens Fighting Corruption be threatened.

Building relationships with international NGOs can be challenging for local NGOs. The international NGOs, with their size, resources and visibility, often dictate agendas. But they also need small NGOs. International NGOs do not have your detailed knowledge of local issues and your relationships with local stakeholders. You have a lot to offer. Remember that.

TRY THIS...

SHARE RESOURCES

When your and another NGO see that you are working toward the same vision and goals, it makes sense to pool your expertise and materials, such as training curriculum, tools, fact sheets, contact lists, etc. NGOs can also train each other's staff in areas where they have knowledge, expertise and skills.

TRY THIS...

ESTABLISH GROUND RULES

When NGOs begin to coordinate their work, it is important to establish ground rules for this. Even though you are not creating a formal structure, NGOs should agree on basic rules to conduct joint meetings, communication, and any projects you do together.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT

NGOs need to build relationships with the government — elected and appointed officials — to accomplish their mission. At times, the relationships may be confrontational; at other times they may be cooperative.

The role of NGOs is to hold governments accountable. Sometimes, an NGO may monitor a particular government agency or elected official to make sure they are doing their jobs and spending public resources appropriately. If they are not, that's when NGOs need to speak up and demand changes.

Let's say the advocacy coalition formed by Citizens Fighting Corruption was successful in getting the government procurement office to adopt an anti-corruption plan and appoint a commissioner to oversee it. The next goal for the NGO is to monitor implementation of the plan.

NGOs also need to cooperate with governments in providing outreach, education or services. NGOs and governments can work together to develop solutions to community needs, run joint projects, or carry out public awareness campaigns. For example, through meetings with the new anti-corruption commissioner at the government procurement office, Citizens Fighting Corruption saw a need to educate other NGOs about the government's new contracting procedures, which were formulated to prevent corruption. As a gesture of goodwill, Citizens Fighting Corruption offered to do this with its own funding and not ask the government for funding.

Building a cooperative relationship with a government ministry takes time. You need to find allies — people in the ministry who have influence and share your values, vision and goals. Then you need to work to build trust with them.

NGOs must think carefully and strategically about their relationships with government ministries and elected officials. When you build strong relationships with people in government and make them your allies, you can accomplish a lot together. But you also need to maintain balance and perspective so you can speak up when the government does not do its job. And sometimes collaboration with government may not be in an NGO's interest if the government does not have citizens' trust or if the government is oppressive or corrupt.

REMEMBER...

GOVERNMENTS NEED NGOs

Governments need NGOs to accomplish their missions as well as vice versa. Because they often have very deep relationships in the communities they serve, NGOs can reach people governments can't. With the ability to operate with high levels of flexibility and creativity, NGOs can fill gaps where governments have difficulty reaching.

WHAT'S THIS?

AN NGO'S MONITORING ROLE

When an NGO monitors government, it watches and documents its practices to bring attention to problems and identify solutions. Sometimes, an NGO's monitoring work focuses on a specific problem and leads to the recommendation of a new law or policy. Other times, an NGO monitors how well a law or policy is implemented. To be effective and credible, NGOs must ensure that the staff and volunteers who carry out the monitoring are knowledgeable, well-trained and impartial.

CONCLUSION

Strong relationships are based on shared goals, trust or mutual benefit. Regardless of where your NGO is in its lifecycle — just starting up or well established — you need to invest time and energy in building relationships with other NGOs and your governments. Your relationships with them will certainly change over time, but they are always critical to your NGO's sustainability.

7 THE FUNDERS – FOUNDATIONS, CORPORATIONS, INDIVIDUALS

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An NGO needs money to pay salaries, buy supplies and fund programs. As a small, poorly funded NGO, how do you find the resources to do all these things? You do them by building relationships with three sources of funding:

- Foundations
- Corporations/businesses
- Individuals

Ask yourself whether government funding will compromise your NGO's credibility or undercut its effectiveness because of conditions attached to the grant. Your NGO must weigh the particular opportunities, benefits and disadvantages associated with government funding.

As for foundations, corporations and individuals, each has advantages and disadvantages as funding sources. Foundations and corporations are easier to approach than individuals, give larger grants, and often provide funding for a long time. Down the road, your organization might be able to raise a lot of money from individuals, but, generally speaking, it takes a long time before an NGO can raise the bulk of its funds from individuals. The important thing to remember is that your organization should never depend on one source of funding. Build a diversified base of funding so that if one source goes away, you will have others to sustain your mission.

This chapter introduces the hypothetical NGO WE CAN! Federation of People with Disabilities. Its mission is to empower disabled people to become contributing, respected members of society through literacy and job-training projects, as well as advocacy. This chapter presents examples of how WE CAN! goes about building relationships with foundations, corporations and individual donors.

WHAT'S THIS?

RESOURCES

Resources are all of the things an NGO needs to carry out its mission, including money, people, meeting space, equipment, materials and supplies, skills, expertise and relationships. You need to raise money to pay for resources. It's important to recruit volunteers, but NGOs typically need paid staff to run projects.

For other things, you can try to get in-kind donations. When a business, another NGO or individual donates items such as meeting space, computers, or food for a community meeting, these are called in-kind donations.

FOUNDATIONS

Like NGOs, foundations exist to improve society and make positive changes in people's lives. Rather than directly serving or advocating for people, they provide funding to NGOs to do this work.

In another similarity to NGOs, each foundation has its own mission and priorities. Some are set up by wealthy families who want to give back to society. The family controls the mission and priorities of its foundation. A family with a handicapped child may channel its grants to NGOs that serve people with disabilities. Or a family that started out as impoverished immigrants before accumulating great wealth may direct its foundation to fund groups that help immigrants or migrant workers.

Other foundations are set up and funded by corporations. These foundations seek opportunities to enhance the visibility and public image of their parent corporations through acts of good neighborliness.

How Do You Find Foundations?

- Ask your colleagues. Talk to your peers at other NGOs and other partners. People who work in government or universities, for example, might be familiar with different foundations.
- Ask your current funders. If your NGO already has foundation support, ask your current funders for suggestions. Many will be more than happy to give advice.
- Use the Internet. You can look for foundations online. In addition to the Foundation Center, try this website: www.fundsforngos.org. You can also do a search on "foundations that support x in x country."
- Check the websites, annual reports and other publications of NGOs similar to yours for listings of their funders.

Once you have identified a foundation, review its website to determine the following:

- Does the foundation fund in your geographic area? Some funders focus on a whole country, some on small regions or even specific cities.
- Do the foundation's priorities align with your work? Some funders have broad interests that span a variety of issues, while others have a narrow focus. In addition to looking at a funder's stated priorities, look at the NGOs and projects it has funded. This information should be on the funder's website and will help you determine if your NGO is a good fit.
- Does the foundation make the type of grant you are looking for? One detail you should look at is the foundation's average grant size. Some make only

Foundations need strong leadership and vision, such as that provided by co-founders of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates couple visit one of their projects at a cassava processing plant in Karsana, Nigeria. *(© Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)*

WHAT'S THIS?

FOUNDATION

A foundation is an entity that is established for the purpose of giving money to promote a social good. Foundations make grants to support scientific, educational, cultural, religious, or other charitable causes. Not all foundations have the term "foundation" in their name, and not all organizations that have the word "foundation" in their name give grants.

very large grants, bypassing requests from small, startup NGOs. Others do the opposite, funding small, grassroots NGOs. Some fund new, experimental projects, while others fund only projects that have produced proven results.

Once you have identified foundations to target, make sure you find out the application procedures and deadlines. Does the funder want a brief letter of introduction first or should you send a full proposal? Does the funder have deadlines or does it review letters and proposals at any time? Finally, find out the names of staff in charge of your activity or geographic area. If that information is not on the website, you can call or email the foundation to ask.

How Do You Get Foundations to Fund You?

Getting a foundation grant is not easy — especially your first one! It takes time to identify and research foundations, to build a relationship and to develop a strong proposal that meets the foundation's guidelines and criteria.

Your NGO will be more likely to get funding if you have built a relationship with the foundation. How do you do this?

- Ask others who know the foundation to introduce you.
- Invite foundation representatives to come see your work in action. Check the funder's website to find out their preferences on direct personal contact. Some funders encourage NGOs to contact them, while others discourage it. If the guidelines do not say anything, you can call the funder or send an email or a letter to introduce yourself.
- If you have a printed or electronic newsletter, send updates to prospective funders.

When funders are familiar with your work and know its quality, chances are better that they will support your organization.

Finally, remember that while relationships are important, they are not all you need. To get funded you must be doing good work that meets identified community needs and demonstrate

TRY THIS...

IF YOUR NGO IS NEW

What do you do if you are a newly founded NGO and do not yet have experience managing projects or funding and cannot yet demonstrate a record of results? Here's what you can do:

- Show that you have documented the need for your NGO and its proposed projects.
- Show that you have a clear, well-thought-out plan for addressing the needs with measurable outcomes of success.
- Show the qualifications of the founders, board members, and staff — even if the NGO is new, the people who founded it have experience!

Remember, as noted in Chapter 6, you can also build your capacity and experience by partnering with a larger NGO first, then approaching foundations on your own.

TRY THIS...

ASK FOR FEEDBACK IF YOUR REQUEST IS DENIED

If your request for funding is denied, you can contact the foundation and ask for feedback on your proposal — some will be willing to speak with you, while others will not. Sometimes, your first proposal serves as a way to introduce your NGO. So if you are turned down the first time, don't be discouraged. Keep trying to build a relationship. It sometimes takes several submissions to get a grant.

measurable results. And, you should be able to communicate this in a clear, concise and compelling proposal.

CORPORATIONS

The private sector, local businesses, and national and international corporations can provide support and resources to NGOs. They can be partners in developing solutions to societal problems and allies in advocacy efforts. Nevertheless, NGOs should proceed with caution in seeking support from the business community. Make sure the potential corporate partner's business and image are consistent with your values and that the relationship truly benefits the community you serve.

How Do Corporations Support NGOs?

Just as NGOs scan their environment for opportunities, corporations also watch for opportunities to give back to the community — contributing not just money but time and expertise. Such contributions enhance a corporation's public image. In addition, governments in some countries have tax incentives to encourage corporations to donate to NGOs.

Corporations generally give to NGOs through one of the following channels:

- A corporate foundation that operates independently from the corporation.
- A corporate contributions program managed within corporate headquarters.
- A marketing office, through which a corporation can sponsor events. Event sponsorship is considered advertising rather than a charitable contribution.
- Corporate field managers who can make small gifts — cash or in-kind donations — to local NGOs at their own discretion.

WE CAN! has identified a corporation that manufactures products and technology that benefit people with disabilities. This raises a number of possibilities. If the corporation has its own foundation, WE CAN! might submit a proposal to the foundation to fund its life-skills training program. Or, WE CAN! could approach the corporate contributions program and request an in-kind donation of, say, mobile phones that the corporation adapts for people

REMEMBER...

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Learn as much as you can about your potential funders before approaching them. All foundations and corporate giving programs have their own missions, priorities, application guidelines and procedures. Some of the information you need might be in a funder directory. If the foundation or corporation has a website, you will find this information there. Don't be afraid to talk with funder staff. Make sure that you have the right contact and "do your homework" so you can ask informed questions.

Funding comes from international NGOs, agencies and governments. At this "Rural Women Speak Out" event sponsored by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women at the U.N. Church Center in New York City, representatives from NGOs, local leaders, U.N. agencies and others meet for roundtable discussions. Events like these are good places to gain new contacts. *(UN Women/Ryan Brown)*

with limited vision. Lastly, if WE CAN! is working with other disability NGOs to organize a job fair, WE CAN! might invite the corporation to sponsor the event. In return, WE CAN! could put the corporation's name on the event banner and program.

How Do You Find Corporate Funders?

You certainly know the national, regional and international corporations present in your country, city and community. Perhaps you buy their products or, if they have a factory or office in your community, you know people who are employed by them. Look around your community at the various products that people buy and use. What brands of mobile phones, snack foods or tennis shoes are most common? The corporations that produce these goods are connected to your community, which provides a market or a workforce for those corporations. Find out how those corporations support NGOs and how you might access that support.

Ask your colleagues at other NGOs to share their corporate contacts, especially the names of individuals who are likely to be helpful. Remember, if you ask others to share information, you must be willing to do likewise. NGOs need to work together to bring added resources to further your objectives.

WHAT'S THIS?

FOUNDATION DIRECTORIES

The Foundation Center, which is based in the United States, has been collecting information about U.S.-based and international foundations for decades. The Foundation Center's materials are accessible online. Go to the website www.foundationcenter.org and click on "Find Funders" for information about international funders.

- We provide education and training that enhance the skills of your future workforce.
- We hold public events (such as health and job fairs, cultural celebrations, art exhibits and performances) that provide opportunities for corporate visibility.
- The community we serve is a potential market and we can help corporate sponsors learn more about it.
- A relationship with our NGO has educational value to your corporation's employees and the public.

How Do You Get Corporations to Fund You?

Just as with foundations, you must build personal relationships with key employees of corporations. However, your messages to corporations will be different from your messages to foundations. Corporations tend to take a business approach to giving and want to see a "return" on their "investments." Your NGO must show that return.

For example, WE CAN! quantifies the number of people with disabilities it has trained to find jobs and live on their own. WE CAN! demonstrates long-term impact through surveys. For example, it heightened public recognition that people with disabilities are contributing members of society.

NGOs also need to show how corporate support of NGOs enhances a company's image and business goals. WE CAN! stresses the following points in making its pitch to corporations:

There are many kinds of fundraising events. The Empty Bowls Project, a grassroots program to raise money for people in need, organized this event at a church. Potters donate handcrafted bowls, which are given to invitees who buy tickets for a soup and bread meal. Proceeds go to charity. *(© AP Images/The Tribune Democrat/John Rucosky)*

TRY THIS...

SEARCH THE CORPORATION'S WEBSITE

When you go to the home page of a corporation, you should look for a link such as one of these:

- Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR
- Human Rights
- Labor Rights
- Community Initiatives
- Community Relations
- Giving Back
- Touching Lives

These kinds of links offer basic information about the corporation's giving practices.

Corporations are eager for good publicity, and WE CAN! shows it can deliver that. WE CAN! has convinced a corporation to fund the construction of a training center for people with disabilities. What persuaded the corporation to decide favorably was the NGO's promise to put the corporation's name on the center.

Keep in mind that some funders like to be the first to invest in "the next big thing." Present your request for support as an opportunity to invest in an exciting new idea that has great growth potential. Then, when that potential materializes, the corporation can rightfully claim its portion of the credit.

INDIVIDUALS

Individuals can be a major source of support for NGOs — not just in countries with strong economies or among people with high incomes. Increasingly, across the globe and across income levels, individuals are supporting the NGOs that make a difference in their lives and communities. Individual donors account for much of the private money donated to NGOs.

All cultures and faiths have long traditions of giving. But the concept of giving to NGOs is recent. To build a base of support of individual donors, you start by educating people about the NGO sector and your NGO's work. Work out a solid plan and thoughtful approach. Try gathering staff, board, volunteers and community members to discuss traditions of giving in your community and identify when, where, how and why people give.

How Do You Involve Individuals?

Individual donors can be anybody — people from your own geographic, ethnic or faith community, and those outside it. They might be friends, neighbors or co-workers of the board members, volunteers or staff. If you look around, you will see that you are surrounded by people who support you and will be willing to give something, if you ask.

Bring together a group of board members, staff, volunteers and project participants. Make a list of people you already know who believe in your work and could make a contribution, however big or small. Think about members of your community who have been helped by your services, who have volunteered their time, made in-kind donations, or offered guidance, such as a university professor or business owner.

WHAT'S THIS?

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporations now widely embrace the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility. This is essentially a set of principles through which a corporation pledges to be a good corporate citizen by promoting the public interest and giving back to communities.

TRY THIS…

A WRITTEN POLICY ON DONATIONS

This is useful for a number of reasons:

- A written policy is a document that staff, board and volunteers can use in all circumstances, minimizing confusion.
- When new staff, board or volunteers join your NGO, a written policy helps them learn about the organization.
- If you have to reject a gift but want to keep the relationship with a donor, a written policy makes handling the awkward situation easier.

Make a list of people who do not know about your work, but might be interested in it if they did. To compile this list, go beyond listing individual names and consider categories or networks of people who are potential contributors.

How Do You Get Individuals to Give?

Asking for money isn't easy. It's much easier to ask foundations and corporations than individuals. Foundation and corporate websites indicate whether they support your mission and would be receptive to your application for a grant.

With individuals, you need to take a more nuanced approach that does not put them in an uncomfortable spot. For example:

- When you hold an event — such as a graduation for project participants, a community celebration or an open house for a new center — invite all of your stakeholders. At the end of the event let them know that contributions are welcome.
- At least once a year, announce to the community, stakeholders and supporters that your NGO is carrying out a fundraising campaign. You can do this through letters, emails, text messages and websites, giving detailed instructions on how to make contributions. Hang a poster in your office!

Make sure your fundraising campaign is well matched to your audience. You do not want to try to sell baked rolls to a person who is fasting or on a diet. Your appeal for funds must suit the way of life and traditions of your audience.

Set a goal for how much you want to raise from individuals and announce it. Tell people you will be able to accomplish X if you raise Y amount of money.

Keep track of all the people you meet and who attend your events so you can keep inviting them! Keep a record of who makes contributions so you can thank them. Saying "thank you" shows people that their help is appreciated. Most people who give money want only three things:

- To receive a personal "thank you" soon after their gift is given.

WHAT'S THIS?

GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING

The term "grassroots" refers to the communities and people directly affected by an issue or problem. So, the term "grassroots fundraising" means raising money from these communities and people.

Many organizers think, "How can my organization raise money from individuals? We don't know any wealthy people!" Most community-based organizations have broad support from lots of people who are willing to give a little something, if asked. This is the heart of grassroots fundraising. Even people with very modest incomes can give a little bit or can help in an activity to generate funds. Many small contributions put together become large amounts.

TRY THIS…

PRACTICE ASKING!

Asking for money can be intimidating, especially when you do it face-to-face. A shy person probably needs a bit of training in fundraising to learn how to do it gracefully. Make sure your NGO is equipped to provide this training.

- To know that the money is being used as planned.
- To know that their gift has made a difference.

INVOLVING YOUR COMMUNITIES

As you make fundraising plans, think about how to involve your community. Don't assume that they are not able to make financial contributions or participate in fundraising activities because they have low levels of income and formal education. Often, those who benefit from an NGO are among the most willing to support it and give whatever they can.

WE CAN! is forming a fundraising team of project participants, their family members, and volunteers. They have decided to make desserts and sell them to support the NGO. Remember that you need to spend money to make money. So, WE CAN! buys the flour, eggs, sugar and other things to make the desserts. They might not make a profit the first time. But in grassroots work, friend raising is almost as important as fundraising. While WE CAN! volunteers are selling the desserts, they'll tell people about their wonderful organization and make new friends who might support the NGO in the future by giving money or volunteering.

KEEPING DONORS

All donors — foundations, corporations and individuals — value honesty, transparency and respect. The best, longest-lasting and most productive relationships are based on trust. How do you earn that trust?

- Be as accurate, truthful and clear as you can be. This protects your reputation and that of the sector as a whole.
- Make sure that all your written materials and all the people who speak on behalf of your organization are accurate in what they say.
- Be prepared to explain how you spend your NGO's money. Have clear, accurate and up-to-date financial reports.
- Make sure you understand and adhere to the conditions stipulated by your donors. Are you allowed to use the money as you see fit or is there a requirement to spend it over a specific period of time or to implement a certain program or activity? Are there specific outcomes that the donor expects to see? Are you required to mention the donor's name in materials produced using the donation? Make sure there is agreement

REMEMBER…

NGOS NEED TO LOOK AT THE CORPORATION'S TRACK RECORD

Just as a prospective corporate funder will look at your NGO's track record, you should look carefully at the corporation's track record in your community and beyond. While all corporations want to enhance their public image, you might not want to be associated with a corporation that is trying to repair its image after having caused harm to people or the environment.

on the conditions before you accept a donation.

FUNDRAISING MANAGEMENT

Building relationships and securing funding from foundations, corporations and individuals is a lot of work. You need to involve staff, board, volunteers, project participants and other community members. Consider a division of labor in which the executive director or other staff develop the proposals to foundations and corporations, while board members and volunteers handle raising funds from individuals. Board members are often able to make convincing appeals because they are not paid for their NGO service. Funders may think that if these people volunteer their time and energy, the organization must be worthy.

Develop systems and procedures to track all aspects of fundraising, such as objectives, tasks, timelines and responsibilities. Keep records of:

- Your fundraising prospects. For example, create a file for each one that includes contact information, notes on conversations you have had with them, materials you have sent and proposals submitted.
- Funds received from foundations and corporations. Once you receive a grant from a foundation or a contribution from a corporation, pay careful attention to requirements for documenting project activities, managing the money and submitting reports.
- Contributions from individuals. Keep a list of donor names, their donation amounts and their contact information. Make sure to thank them so you can go back to them next year and ask for another contribution.

REMEMBER…

IT'S ALL ABOUT TRUST!

You must win trust in order to raise funds. It's that simple. Whether donors are community members of modest means or institutions and individuals with deep pockets, they must believe in the value of your NGO's work. You earn their trust through your integrity.

CONCLUSION

When your NGO is just beginning to raise money, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. There is a lot to learn and a lot to do. Build a team of people to develop fundraising plans, carry them out and learn together. As with other aspects of your NGO's work, evaluate your fundraising efforts. After you have your first meeting with a funder, evaluate what you did well and what you could have done better. If you hold a fundraising event, assess how well it met your objectives and what can be improved. The most important rule of fundraising is that you have to ask! The worst that can happen is a foundation, corporation or individual will say no. If they do, find out why.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Numerous tools useful for research, development and operation of nongovernmental organizations are available. Many of these are online. Here are a few of those resources.

Mosaica
http://www.mosaica.org
Mosaica: The Center for Nonprofit Development and Pluralism provides organizational development tools, including training, to multicultural NGOs. Materials are available in Spanish, Bosnian-Croatian, Hebrew, Arabic and Farsi/Dari.

NGO Cafe
http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/
This website was created by the Global Development Research Center (GDRC), an independent, nonprofit think tank focused on broad-based global development. It offers a venue "for NGOs to discuss, debate and disseminate information on their work, strategies and results."

NGO Connect
http://www.ngoconnect.net/resources
NGO Connect has assembled a wide range of resources for NGOs, including information on best practices, a searchable database that includes case studies, project reports, toolkits and links to recommended websites. Some materials are also in Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish.

NonProfitExpert.Com
World NGO Resource Page
http://www.nonprofitexpert.com/world%20ngos.htm
This compendium of resources offers guidelines on all aspects of NGO operation, including sources of funding in the United States and advice on filling out grant applications.

PEPFAR
http://www.pepfar.gov/
The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) partners with governments and private organizations, including NGOs, to help save lives and bring treatment to those infected with HIV/AIDS by supporting education and public health efforts internationally. It is part of the President's Global Health Initiative.

President's Global Health Initiative
http://www.ghi.gov/
The President's Global Health Initiative managed by the U.S. Department of State focuses on better integration and coordination among programs supported by the U.S. government with countries, donors, NGOs and communities. The emphasis is on building sustainable programs, gender equality, healthy children and HIV/AIDS.

The Foundation Center
http://foundationcenter.org/
This foremost source for information about philanthropy worldwide, The Foundation Center, publishes books, maintains an online database and runs workshops to inform and facilitate connections between foundation funders and prospective grantees. It operates library/learning centers in five U.S. cities and maintains the Foundation Directory Online. Subscription required.

The Foundation Directory Online
http://fconline.foundationcenter.org/
Developed by The Foundation Center, this database connects grant seekers with grant makers by providing information about more than 100,000 U.S. foundations and corporate donors. It includes details of more than 2.4 million recent grants and thousands of key decision makers, and is updated weekly. Subscription required.

USAID Partnership Opportunities
http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/partnership-opportunities/ngos
The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) works with NGOs large and small throughout the world, funding programs that deliver humanitarian assistance, build infrastructure, develop and support public health programs, implement environmental conservation programs and many other projects.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Grants
http://www.fws.gov/international/grants-and-reporting/
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) actively engages in building capacity of and supporting wildlife conservation NGOs. Wildlife Without Borders has 10 grants programs that fund international wildlife conservation projects.

WANGO
http://www.wango.org/
The World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations aims to give "support needed for NGOs to connect, partner, share, inspire, and multiply their contributions to solve humanity's basic problems."

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