

Organizational Capacity Building and Strategic Growth for Environmental NGOs: A Primer

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Abstract

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), as major actors of the civil society, play a vital role in promoting conservation of natural resources, environmental protection, sustainable development, and environmental justice. While their location, size, organizational forms, scope, and impacts can vary widely, all of them operate towards the same mission of protecting the environment from degradation due to industrialization, uncontrolled development, depletion of bio-diversity, and over consumption of natural resources. Although environmental conservation has been a part of civil society involvement throughout history, environmental NGOs have emerged as a major sub-sector of the NGO sector during the past three decades. Their impacts are among the most visible contributions to humanity by the global NGO sector.

Key words :

Non Governmental Organizations, Actors of the civil society, A vital role, Conservation of natural resources, Environmental protection, Sustainable development, Environmental justice.

Introduction

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), as major actors of the civil society, play a vital role in promoting conservation of natural resources, environmental protection, sustainable development, and environmental justice. While their location, size, organizational forms, scope, and impacts can vary widely, all of them operate towards the same mission of protecting the environment from degradation due to industrialization, uncontrolled development, depletion of bio-diversity, and over consumption of natural resources. Although environmental conservation has been a part of civil society involvement throughout history, environmental NGOs have emerged as a major sub-sector of the NGO sector during the past three decades. Their impacts are among the most visible contributions to humanity by the global NGO sector.

Environmental NGOs (mentioned as ENGOS throughout this article) focus on various aspects of the conservation of nature. Their scope and impacts vary based on their structure, resources and reach. They play a wide variety of roles that can be classified broadly into the following five categories: 1. Grassroots mobilization, 2. Social development, 3. Advocacy, 4. Watchdog function, and 5. Global policy negotiation.

Grassroots ENGOS: Grassroots and community based ENGOS inform people about various positive and negative aspects of local environmental conditions, with the goal of increasing their awareness to protect their own environment. Most environmental movements that result in profound impacts on environmental conservation are initiated by grassroots ENGOS. Although they may receive external support in the form of technical and financial resources, for the most part they operate within communities by community leaders and groups. Due to their strong connections with local communities, they enjoy community residents' trust and assist them in resolving environment related issues.

Examples: Guaruma, Honduras. This ENGO promotes environmental awareness and conservation through educational programs in the Eastern part of Pico Bonito National Park (www.guaruma.org). The Greenbelt Movement, Kenya. ENGO that empowers communities and conserve the environment by planting trees (www.greenbeltmovement.org).

Development NGOs: These NGOs are dedicated to improving the living standards of under-served communities through direct provision of various services in order to address existing issues. Although their primary focus areas are reducing

poverty, promoting health, education, equity and other development aspects of the society, most of them emphasize and adopt environmentally sustainable development practices. During the past decade, major development NGOs sought to address the adverse effects of climate change, especially in the developing world, by promoting mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Example: BRAC, Bangladesh. BRAC Promotes empowerment of poor and marginalized communities by creating an ecosystem based on the communities' own human and other resources (www.brac.net).

Advocacy ENGOS: Advocacy ENGOS take up environmental issues that affect communities to public dialogue and discourse. They provide voice for environmentally disadvantaged communities such as indigenous and rural communities. They bring various environmental concerns to the attention of policy makers, bureaucrats and the general public. During the past two decades, they have achieved considerable success by pressuring governments (for developing and implementing policies) and corporations (for adhering to the implementation of pollution control, environmental protection laws, etc.) regarding climate change.

Example: CECOEDECON, India. Works on issues related to climate change and organizes various national level advocacy events. In addition to increasing public and government awareness on climate change issues, this ENGO also documents the effects of climate change in rural communities for scientific purposes. Further, it actively participates in various international forums regarding climate change including United Nations' Climate Change Conferences.

Watchdog ENGOS: These ENGOS, similar to advocacy ENGOS, highlight environmental issues of affected communities for positive policy and regulatory interventions. In addition they hold government agencies, corporate entities, and individuals responsible until issues are resolved. They use media and other mechanisms to bring environmental issues to the fore front.

Example: Environmental Justice Foundation, UK. This ENGO promotes the concept of environmental justice which establishes that environmental security is a human right. It works internationally to protect the environment and defend human rights by holding violators responsible for their action (www.ejfoundation.org).

International ENGOS: ENGOS that have their operation around the world to promote environmental conservation. They negotiate international treaties for protecting the global environment and addressing climate change. They

also pressure regional and national governments to adopt and implement sound environmental policies.

Example: Nature Conservancy, USA. Operates in 35 countries with the mission to “conserve the lands and water on which all life depends.” The IENGO has been addressing climate change and related environmental issues as one of its priority urgent issues (www.nature.org).

Climate change and its adverse effects are the most serious environmental issues confronting humanity. Realizing the seriousness of climate change, almost all ENGOs around the globe have launched various efforts to address climate change and its potential consequences. In order to be successful on their roles in climate change and other environmental issues, it is vital that ENGOs enhance their organizational capacity.

While their roles (and scopes) differ, there are some commonalities in the operation and functions of all ENGOs. 1. All ENGOs have missions to improve some aspects of the environment, 2. They rely heavily on volunteerism of individuals and groups, 3. They depend on philanthropy of individuals who believe in their causes. These three characteristics separate NGOs from public (government) sector agencies and private (corporate) sector organizations who also have obligations to protect the environment. These characteristics also make ENGOs to fulfil their environmental protection mission more effectively than the other sectors, with limited resources.

ENGOs, like any other NGOs, are established by individuals or group of people who are passionate about resolving certain environmental issues within certain geographical areas. After the establishment of the organization, concerted and often innovative efforts of the founders usually result in initial success for the organization's programs and services. However, early enthusiasm and short-term successes, by themselves, are not sufficient to sustain the long-term success and growth of the organization. Strengthening the organization through a series of capacity building initiatives is key to the continued success and expansion of its scope. There are numerous ENGOs that, after initial successes, languish or become dormant and ineffective due to lack of engagement with capacity building. Furthermore, donors and other funders are more likely to invest in ENGOs that have optimum organizational capacity. This is especially important due to increasing competition from the fast-growing NGO sector for the same sources of funding. Irrespective of their roles, scope and size, all ENGOs can and should focus on capacity building for the maximum achievement of their objectives, goals and the mission.

Capacity assessment and capacity building for ENGOs

ENGOs are unique organizations that play a vital role to educating, empowering and building the capacity of individuals, groups, and communities to resolve environmental issues. In general, an ENGO's organizational capacity is its capability to achieve environmental protection that forms the core of its mission. In other words, capacity measures the ENGO's performance in its programs and services to address environmental issues. Thus, an ENGO's capacity building is about improving its capacities to build the capacities of its beneficiaries.

Major ingredients of an ENGO's capacity are people (including board members, employees, volunteers, donors, and clients), revenue from various sources, tangible and intangible assets owned by the organization, and its reputation or goodwill in the society in which it operates. The first step in ENGO capacity building is the assessment of the NGO's past and current capabilities in various functional aspects of the organization. These include but not limited to: 1. board composition, responsibilities, and governance; 2. executive leadership and administrative structure; 3. fund raising and financial management; 4. program/project planning and evaluation; 5. accountability and transparency; 6. client/stakeholder participation and satisfaction; 7. volunteer recruitment and management; 8. collaborative partnership with ENGOs and other organizations.

When a group of key players assess each of the above organizational capacities in terms of what is the ideal for the organization versus what is the actual state of affairs, specific areas of improvement for increasing overall organizational efficiency and effectiveness can be identified. In order to be meaningful, the capacity assessment process needs to be conducted by a group of individuals drawn from the board, administration, volunteers and other stakeholders of the ENGOs.

Capacity building is the explicit effort to improve the ENGO's operational performance in relation to its mission, context, resources, and feasibility. For the most part, capacity building is a self-managed process, with some external technical assistance, of organizational change in which the ENGO's leaders and key stakeholders learn to assess various organizational weaknesses, plan and implement necessary changes, and evaluate to make sure the actions achieve intended results. Capacity building requires changes in the organization's skills and behavior in terms of structure, policies, procedures, strategies and decision making. Creativity and resourcefulness are key characteristics of capacity building.

Organizational capacity building includes

enhancements in various aspects of an ENGOs' governance, management and operations. However, this article focuses on only four areas of ENGOs' capacity building that are vital but often neglected by environmental NGOs. They are: good governance, strategic planning, resource mobilization and networking for collaborative partnership. Additional resources that are available online for free downloads are provided at the end of each of the four sections. Needless to say, ENGOs also need to focus on other management capacities such as human resources, project/program management, and community relations. Initiating the capacity building process with the four areas highlighted in this article will set the stage and lead to the overall capacity enhancement of organizations.

Good governance

Governance is the process of collective and participatory decision making. In the context of ENGO operations, governance plays a very important role because the mission and operations of the organization have several stakeholders. While it is not possible for an ENGO to seek the participation of every stakeholder in its management decision making, governance for the overall operation is generally vested upon the board of directors of the ENGO. Initial board formation is based on the process of incorporating or registering the ENGO with relevant government authority. Such process provides certain indemnity (protection from liability) for the board that governs the organization to fulfil its mission.

ENGOs, like all other NGOs, are led by a small group of volunteers called board of directors, board of trustees, or board of governors. Although they do not involve in day-to-day administration and operations of the ENGO, they play a vital role in the overall function of the organization to fulfill its mission. Roles and responsibilities of ENGO boards vary based on the legal framework from country to country, but in general all ENGO boards have certain legal, ethical, and financial responsibilities in governing the organization. Good governance is key for the success of an ENGO and it encompasses the following eight principles: consensus oriented, participatory, adherence to the rule of law, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, responsive to client and stakeholder needs, transparent, and accountable (UNESCAP).

Governance structure

Governance of an ENGO should reflect its vision, core values, and the mission. An effective governance structure is crucial for the effectiveness

of the ENGO and its achievement of the mission. The board of directors hold ultimate responsibility for all activities and resources of the ENGO, although they do not involve in its specific operational management functions. The board, in a broad framework, determines the ENGO's programs, monitors its compliance with legal requirements, sets financial and administrative policies and procedures, and steers the organization constantly towards its mission (Kumaran, 2012).

The structure of the board often determines its effectiveness. The actual size (number of board members) differ from ENGO to ENGO based on its mission, resources, and operations. Small ENGOs can have five to seven members on their boards and larger ENGOs may need anywhere between 19 to 29 members. In any case total board membership has to be in odd numbers to avoid ties during voting. Qualifications and diversity of board membership are very important for board effectiveness. Unfortunately, many ENGOs tend to recruit high-profile individuals, such as politicians or celebrities, who may not contribute to the governance. Aside from commitment to the organization's mission, board membership should include individuals with professional qualifications in line with the mission. For example, individuals with financial, legal, environmental and other expertise. All boards need to have a chair person, elected by the members of the board. Other officers of the board include a vice-chair, a treasurer, and a secretary. The chair serves as the leader of the organization with responsibilities to organize regular board meetings where decisions are made. Vice-chair, in essence, is the future chair in training. Treasurer oversees all fiscal policies of the organization including budgeting, and the secretary functions as the custodian of all records of the organization. Medium and large NGOs also have standing and ad-hoc committees due to the fact that all members of the board cannot oversee all governance aspects of the ENGO. The board elects or appoints qualified members to serve on these committees that oversee specific aspects of governing the organization and report recommendations to the board for final decision. Standing committees may include: executive committee, finance committee, program committee, fund raising committee, etc. Ad hoc committees may include: auditing committee, nominating committee, strategic planning committee, etc.

Controlling documents

There are two major formal documents that legitimize an ENGOs board. They are: "articles of incorporation" and "bylaws". The primary document that establishes the board as legal governing body is the articles of incorporation or similar document

filed with designated government authorities based on the national legal framework of ENGOs. Typically, this document states the purpose (mission), location and duration of the ENGO, its initial board of directors with designations, and physical addresses of the organization and board members. Roles and responsibilities of the board are usually written into bylaws, which are essentially policies and procedures by which the board operates. Like the articles of incorporation, bylaws are also filed with the designated government entity in order to secure tax exempt status for the nonprofit. While articles of incorporation remain fairly constant, bylaws can be modified by the board based on changes in governance process and other operational needs.

Bylaws provide detail information on the frequency of board meetings, decision making process, roles of officers, election process by which they are chosen, their term and term-limits, membership and responsibilities of committees, code of ethics, conflict of interest policies, etc.

Roles and responsibilities of the board

Members of the board of an ENGO have certain legal duties and moral responsibilities that cannot be delegated to any other individual. Unlike their counterparts in the corporate sector, ENGO board members are not paid for their service to the organization. Their service is entirely voluntary due to their commitment towards the organization's mission. Board members' responsibility fall into four broad categories: legal, fiduciary, oversight, and representation of constituency.

Legally, all members of an ENGO board are expected to have a duty of good faith (acting honestly and fairly on behalf of the ENGO), duty of care (acting prudently, attend all board meetings and make informed decisions), duty of loyalty (acting in the best interest of the ENGO), and duty of obedience (take only the actions that further the mission). When any of these duties are breached, individual board member and the board collectively cannot be effective.

Board has the responsibility to ensure that adequate resources (funds) are raised by the organization and they are effectively managed. This includes: approving annual budget, carefully reviewing regular financial reports, ensuring that required reports are filed with government agencies to be compliant with laws, authorizing and reviewing annual audit report. For these purposes and to fulfill other responsibilities, the board needs to meet frequently and regularly.

The oversight responsibility of the board requires

that it ensures organizational policies such as human resources, conflict of interest, fee structure, and risk management policies are in place. In setting the organization's priorities and goals, the board need to work closely with the Executive Director, who is the administrative head of the organization. In fact, the only employee of the organization that the board hires is the Executive Director, and the rest of the staff are hired by the Executive Director in consultation with other administrators.

Transparency and accountability

ENGOs around the world are being increasingly recognized due to the visibility and impacts of their operations, but they have also garnered mistrust among general public due to the lack of transparency and accountability of their operations. While a great majority of ENGOs are honest in their functions, unfortunately a small group of them operate in a corrupt and misleading manner. These ENGOs tarnish the overall image of the civil society for the people and government officials who are required to regulate them. Even the good ENGOs, because of poor transparency and or accountability to their stakeholders, end-up not gaining the good will they deserve. Transparency is the concept of openness and willingness to share all information about the operations of the ENGO, and accountability revolves around its responsibility to answer and address concerns of stakeholders regarding resources and operations. Ultimate responsibility of the ENGO's transparency and accountability rests on the board.

ENGOs are held at high levels of transparency because they are mission driven, depend on the goodwill of stakeholders for financial and volunteer support, and are tax exempt. An ENGO's credibility depends upon the level of transparency it exhibits. In addition to compliance with all legal requirements (such as filing reports), transparent ENGO makes available to public regularly updated information regarding its governance, administration, programs, services, sources of revenue, level of revenue, expenditures, etc. Internet provides an excellent avenue where an ENGO can post all these information on its website under appropriate sections. Regular electronic or printed newsletters and annual reports that include program, financial and audit report details are also good ways to promote transparency and accountability. Establishing a communication channel through an effective public relations system will also improve stakeholder trust on the organization.

For further information on good NGO governance practices, refer to the following online sources:

A handbook of NGO governance. Wyatt, M. (2004). The Central and Eastern European Working Group

on Nonprofit Governance. Available at: http://ecnl.org/dindocuments/455_Governance_Handbook.pdf
 Effective NGO governance, Peace Corps. Available at: http://files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/library/M0070_mod5.pdf

Strategic planning

Capacity building of ENGOs must take into consideration the constantly changing political, social, economic and other conditions within which they operate. Strategic planning is an excellent method for changing an ENGOs' mode of operation from being reactive to external conditions to being proactive and active in responding to them. Being strategic means being clear about the organization's goals, aware of its resources, and incorporating both into a responsive organizational system. Strategic thinking is a prerequisite for strategic planning which needs the following three attributes: 1. a definite purpose to make the organization stronger, 2. clear understanding on the organization's external environment, and 3. creativity in developing effective and efficient organizational responses to fulfill the mission.

Strategic planning is "a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what the organization is, what it does and why it does it" (Bryson, 1995). It is not a linear or static process, but a creative and dynamic planning process. The purpose of strategic planning is to produce a practical document (the strategic plan) that will guide the organization to improve its efficiency and effectiveness within a defined future. The strategic plan developed at the end of the process provides important action steps and measures of success.

Unlike the ENGO's individual program and project planning, strategic planning is an organization-wide planning process that encompasses all program services and their managerial functions of the ENGO including human resource management, financial management, volunteer management, client relations, risk management, etc. As strategic planning is system-wide, the first task in the process is to get the buy-in from every management function of the organizations. Strategic planning will not be successful unless it has participation and involvement from all key stakeholders of the ENGO.

Another unfortunate reality is that with the primary mission focus, many ENGOs fail to study and understand external conditions (social, economic, political, environmental, etc.) and realities within which they operate. Often times, this leads to limited achievement and limited reach of the organization towards its environmental cause. In

order to engage with their fullest potential within their operating conditions ENGOs need to think strategically, plan strategically, and implement their programs strategically. ENGOs of all sizes can develop and implement strategic plans.

In order to be meaningful, strategic planning should be embraced as a dynamic and cyclical process that continues to promote the ENGOs efficiency and effectiveness. Typically, a strategic plan has a time frame of 3 – 5 years depending on the size and goals of the organizations.

First of all, the entire strategic planning process needs to be monitored and supervised by a core group of individuals who are passionate about the organization's mission and are committed to the organization's success in the long term. Ideally, this strategic planning committee can be comprised of selected board members, executive leaders, long term volunteers, staff members, and clients who can guide the strategic planning process from different perspectives. It is also advisable that the ENGO chooses a facilitator, ideally an external expert, who can enable the entire process.

There can be several steps in developing a strategic plan for an ENGO, that can vary in intensity and technical and other input. However, at a minimum every ENGO strategic planning process should have the following major steps:

Establishing the context within which the ENGO operates

The first step in strategic planning is to review the mission of the ENGO, which is the reason for its existence. Usually the mission of the organization is captured in a broad and succinct mission statement, which states the purpose for the organization. By looking back and reviewing the history of the organization, clarifications need to be made about the following: the need or condition which resulted in the original mission and establishment of the organization, changes in the mission of the organization, if any, and their effects on the organization; relevance of the current mission to the organization, its clients and services; need, if any, to make changes to the mission. If it is determined to make changes to the mission (statement) due to changes that have occurred, mission needs to be revised appropriately. This step provides refines the mandate of the organization and the context within which it operates.

SWOT analysis

An important step in strategic planning is the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats analysis also known as the SWOT analysis. The key requirement of SWOT analysis that it should be done by constantly considering the external conditions (social, political, economic, environmental, etc.)

within which the ENGO operates.

SWOT analysis begins with the inventory of all strengths the ENGO possess and its internal weaknesses. Strengths and weaknesses are internal to an organization and expanding organizational strengths and addressing issues that contribute to organizational weaknesses can be done at the current/present time. Based on the prioritized inventory, immediate or short-term attempts to capitalize on the strengths and mitigate or improve weaknesses need to be carried out to make the organization stronger. The next step in SWOT analysis is to inventory all potential opportunities for organizational growth in the near and far future and threats for organizational improvement during the same time frame. Opportunities and threats for the growth of the NGO, unlike strengths and weaknesses, are external to the organization and need to be addressed in the future. SWOT analysis can be followed by market analysis, in which details of how other ENGOs with similar mission are operating, do they compete with this ENGO, can they complement the ENGO through mutual partnerships, etc.

At the end of this step, some broad issues that need to be addressed and some themes for the overall growth of the organization within the strategic plan implementation timeline will emerge.

Strategic plan and the action plan

Based on the broad themes identified and infusing the organization's strengths, resources, and opportunities, realistic goals (which are general results to be sought) need to be developed. These goals frame the strategic directions that will lead the organization into the future. It is important that each goal is in alignment with the mission of the organization and be attainable within the timeframe. Each goal is then broken down to objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (also known as SMART objectives) in order to be meaningful. Objectives also include clearly stated strategies that will be followed towards achieving a corresponding goal.

The next step is to develop the action or implementation plan that, for each objective, provides clear answers to questions such as: What are the specific activities for each objective? When will each activity be implemented? Who is responsible for the specific objective? What are the qualifications of the staff? How will each activity be implemented? How much resources are allocated for specific projects under the objective? What will be accomplished at various stages of the project timelines? and, what are the expected outputs and outcomes.

Each objective's successes are measured not just by outputs (such as number of clients served,

number of trees planted, etc.) but with strong focus on outcomes in terms of immediate outcomes (change in client's knowledge and skills in resolving environmental issues, initial maintenance of the trees planted, etc.), intermediate outcomes (change in client's behaviors and attitude towards environmental conservation, continued maintenance of trees by the community, etc.) and long term outcomes (change in overall environmental conditions, expansion of green space for sound environmental quality of the community, etc.).

A logic model needs to be developed to establish the linkages between inputs (the resources that go into the program) for each objective, throughputs (specific activities/programs carried out by the organization) for that objective, outputs (number of people served, actions taken, etc.) and outcomes. Logic model is a road map that helps the strategic planning team, implementation team, and the evaluation team to understand the entire process in a simplistic diagram or table.

Evaluation mechanism for strategic plan cycle:

Another major part of the action plan is the built-in evaluation to assess the success of each objective and goal towards the overall success of the organization. During the development of a strategic plan and its corresponding action plan, a comprehensive evaluation process needs to be developed within the plans' framework with benchmark of success, outcome measures and indicators during and after the implementation of specific objectives. Throughout the implementation of the plans, individuals responsible for specific objectives should make sure that relevant data are collected data, through survey observation and other methods, to facilitate 'process evaluation' during the implementation in order to make sure that the implementation is moving in accordance with the action plan and to facilitate the 'outcome evaluation' after implementation. Utilizing a logic model and data collected, an evaluator or a team of evaluators can assess the level of success of the programs at various durations within the strategic plan's time frame.

The final evaluation of the strategic plan period will lead to the process of the next strategic planning cycle that will utilize evaluation results. Thus, strategic planning is a continuous cyclical process that prepares the ENGO for constantly changing conditions within which it operates.

For further information on strategic planning for NGOs, refer to the following online sources:

Strategic Planning Tool Kit, Shapiro, J. Civicus. Available at: <http://www.civicus.org/view/media/Strategic%20Planning.pdf>

Ten Keys to Successful Strategic Planning for Nonprofit and Foundation Leaders, TCC Group (2002). Available at: <http://www.tccgrp.com/pdfs/>

per_brief_tenkeys.pdf

Developing a Logic Model: Teaching and training guide, Taylor-Powell, R., and E. Henert. (2002). Available at: https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/uploaded_files/Logic%20Model%20Guide.pdf

Resource mobilization

Generating adequate revenue for administrative and program/service expenditures has become a major challenge for ENGOs, especially given the fact that the number of ENGOs have been growing rapidly during the past two decades but the available funds remain scarce. Resource mobilization through various fund raising mechanisms has become very competitive. Unless ENGOs become creative and diversify sources of their revenue, they are in danger of not fulfilling their programs, services and ultimately the mission.

Revenue sources for ENGOs include philanthropic donations, fees for services, membership dues, government grants and contracts, foundation grants, cause related merchandise, special fund raising events, and corporate grants. Although global recessions have diminished levels of philanthropic giving for causes such as environmental protection, still there are numerous wealthy individuals who are willing to donate for such causes. Overall, ENGOs have not benefited from philanthropic donations like numerous development NGOs. This is primarily due to the lack of knowledge on why and how wealthy donors give for causes they believe in.

According to Stanley Weinstein, a well known American nonprofit fund raising expert and author, organizations need to understand the following five principles of fund raising: 1. Individuals do not donate for the institutional growth of nonprofits, they give for causes that help people. So ENGOs need to have clear messages to potential donors on how the organization helps people or the planet. 2. People donate relative to their affordability. This may sound simple, but many NGOs do not really understand this principle and follow 'average gift' strategy of appealing all potential donors for one specific amount. They need to follow a pyramid gift strategy where donors are requested different levels of donations depending on their wealth. 3. In order to motivate people to donate for the organization, individuals closest to the organization (such as board members, major volunteers, etc.) must set the pace by giving to the organization. 4. In major fund raising, 80% of the donations come from 20% of the donors approached and so, the organization must identify these high-value donors and make the appeal for donation. 5. Fund raising strategy should also focus on individuals who make small

donations, because small donations from a large number of people will yield good results (Weinstein, 2017).

Hank Rosso, another American scholar and author recommended that NGOs understand five concepts of philanthropic giving. 1. They need to identify their constituents including current donors, volunteers, clients, etc. Not all of them make donations, but they can influence others to do so; 2. Organizations need to develop a list of all potential donors and analyze their linkages and ability to donate for a particular project; 3. Through prospect (prospective donors) research need to be done before approaching high-value donors; 4. When it comes to soliciting donation from a high-value donor, it should be done by the right person at the appropriate time for the appropriate amount; 5. Appropriate methods for solicitation (such as face to face meeting, personal appeal letter, etc.) needs to be used (Tempel, et. al. 2016). Even small ENGOs can cultivate the donor base by reaching out through direct mail or email appeals. Initial donor base can be established with the assistance from board members, employees, and volunteers who can reach out to their personal and professional network. Formally recognizing donors for their donation and keeping them informed about how their donation is being spent are important steps in stewardship.

Many ENGOs do not market themselves to their actual and potential constituents. The simple logic is that if people do not know about the organization, its mission and programs, even well intended programs will not generate needed support. Marketing and public relations need to be considered as methods of resource mobilization. Small organizations get the word about their projects and resource needs through electronic bulletins, distributing flyers in the community and discussions during community events. With the rapidly growing information technology, even small ENGO's presence on internet has become a necessity. Developing the organization's website and updating information about its various programs are critical. The organization's website is also a great tool for online fund raising and volunteer recruitment. Medium and large ENGOs must develop marketing material that can be combined with direct mail donation appeals or through local media outlets such as news papers and television networks. As the organization grows, its marketing mix needs to be expanded to include branding and logo development to create a unique position for the organization that people will remember, respect, and more importantly donate to.

Grants and contracts from agencies at different levels of government (local, state, and national) are increasingly becoming a major part of ENGO

revenues. Nonprofit foundations and corporate organizations also make grants available to ENGOs for specific projects. However, such grants are highly competitive and require technical knowledge to write sound grant proposals. It is important to train one or a group of employees in grant seeking and grant writing. Fortunately, several NGOs and association of NGOs offer workshops and training for other NGOs to seek and write grant proposals. ENGOs, regardless of their size and scope should make use of these resources. Grant makers also tend to fund projects that have collaborative partnerships between ENGOs.

Diversifying revenue sources is important for organizational sustainability and expansion.

At a minimum, all ENGOs should develop a basic annual fund raising plan that covers sections such as: statement on the organization (including mission, history, past success, etc.), annual fund raising plan, marketing, developing and maintaining the donor base, sample direct mail donation appeal letters, online fund raising strategies, a grant proposal for potential foundation, and an evaluation plan.

ENGOs should have well defined and planned modes of raising funds. There are two broad segments for the overall fund raising effort. One, sustaining funds and the other enabling funds. Sustaining funds are annual revenue needed to operate the organization including all administrative (salary, bills, rent, etc.) and program expenditures. Enabling funds help the organization to expand its operation, provide more services, etc. Annual fund drives focus on membership dues, large number of requests for donations, and increase the donor base. Enabling funds are raised through capital campaigns that typically raise large amounts for purchasing buildings and other property, special projects that are time specific and raise seed funds for new projects, and planned giving through which potential donors can leave a portion of their assets for the organization in their wills or bequests. Another fast growing trend of fund raising in western countries is endowment. Through this mode, wealthy individual donate large sums to the organization as endowments. The principal funds donated cannot be spent by the organization, but they can be invested in stocks and other appropriate investments, and their annual dividends or interest can be used by the organization for programs. Endowments provide self-sustained funds and financial stability to organizations at present and the future.

For further information on fund raising for NGOs, refer to the following online sources:

NGO Marketing: "Getting Attention", a website that helps nonprofits succeed through effective

marketing: www.gettingattention.org

NGO online fund raising: "Network for Good", a website that provides free fund raising guides to nonprofits: www1.networkforgood.org

Collaborative partnership through networking

Networking with other organizations for mutual benefits is another important capacity building tool. Unfortunately, most ENGOs have the 'territorial' mentality that prevents them from reaching out to other organizations for networking. In the face of dwindling resources, collaborative networking with NGOs with similar mission provide opportunities to pool revenue, human, and technical resources for efficient service delivery for all partners involved. Collaborations provide opportunities for all partners to benefit from others' organizational strengths and learn from one another in resolving common issues. Collaborations also raise both partners' profile within the NGO sector and pave ways to expand opportunities to venture into new and innovative projects. Further, funding agencies are increasingly expecting ENGOs to develop collaborative partnerships in planning, designing and delivering programs and services.

The strategy of strength through unity definitely holds true for ENGOs. Collaboration with right ENGOs and other organizations is key to build mutually beneficial partnerships. Establishing a network with individuals from potential partner organizations is the key step in collaborative partnership building process. Strategic partnerships to maximize the ENGO's impacts can be sought both at horizontal level (with other ENGOs) and vertical level (with government and private sector organizations)

Horizontal partnerships

Horizontal partnerships are those an ENGO can establish with other ENGOs and International ENGOs that have similar mission, programs and services. Such partnerships can focus only one service or area of the organization's NGO or over multiple programs. Due to the inherent territorial mentality among ENGOs, there are several challenges that need to be overcome before meaningful partnerships can be launched. Some of these challenges include: building trust among key officials of the organizations involved; attaining agreements on the goals, objectives, and strategies on collaborative projects; managing communication and logistical specifications; sharing resources and agreeing on rules around resource allocation; and sustaining the collaborative partnership. A good starting point to promote horizontal partnership is that each ENGO must consider all other ENGOs

as overall partners in environmental protection and conservation. Such mind-set will prevent treating each other as competitor or even adversary.

Building trust and transparency into the collaboration is a major step in organizational partnership development. It takes time, efforts, mutual respect, and the right individuals to discuss areas of cooperation that can infuse the capacities of both organizations. Based on each partner's organizational strength, roles to be played and expectations on performance on specific aspect of collaborative need to be established. Emphasizing on common values, missions and goals throughout this process will promote effective partnerships. Collaborative ventures must focus on mutual benefits for both organizations by avoiding unbalanced organizational benefits. Such agreements will lead to the collapse, and sour relationships, of the partnership.

Vertical partnerships

Horizontal partnerships are those an ENGO can establish with organizations from government (public) and private (corporate) sectors. Unfortunately, often times ENGOs have adversarial relationships with government and private sector organizations. This is due to the historic trends in ENGOs considering and treating government agencies as weak regulators of the environment and corporate entities as polluters of the environment. Continuing such negative relationship with corporate and private sector institutions will further compound the issue. Some of the challenges for ENGO – government agencies collaboration are: getting the attention of policy makers and bureaucrats about the ENGO's mission and services, and ensuring that the ENGO will continue its independence from government.

ENGO approach to collaborative partnership building should follow the following strategies: advocacy on the urgency of environmental problems (such as climate change) and their potential political/policy consequences for elected and appointed government officials, emphasizing that government alone cannot solve the problem and that ENGOs are in a unique position to assist, networking with bureaucrats to establish relationships, understanding and respecting government structure and system, and establishing clear expectations on responsibilities in collaborative partnerships. In the recent years, there have been several best and promising practices where ENGOs have collaborated with government agencies to address chronic environmental issues. There are also best practices of ENGO and corporate/industries collaboration to mitigate pollution and promote green growth.

Establishing horizontal partnerships also

takes time, patience, mutual respect, and constant engagement towards common goals and interpretation of environmental law and policies. ENGOs have numerous advantages that government and corporate sectors do not have. They include the grassroots connection, trust of communities, better understanding of community issues, and better solutions to local environmental issues. Government agencies can tap into these characteristics of ENGOs and provide resources to resolve issue effectively in a cost efficient manner. Likewise, industries can exercise their corporate social and environmental responsibilities by partnering with ENGOs and fund their projects.

For further information on NGO networking and collaboration, refer to the following online sources:

NGO Networks: Building Capacity in a Changing World. Liebler, M., and M. Ferri., (2004). Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. Available at: http://wikiciv.org.rs/images/9/9a/NGO_Networks.pdf

Recommendations

Organizational capacity building has become a necessity for ENGOs to sustain and expand their operations. In addition to helping ENGOs to increase their efficiency and effectiveness, capacity building has also become vital in the wake of the rapidly growing ENGO sector that has resulted in high levels of competition for available funding and other resources.

Capacity building is a systematic process that addresses various aspects of an ENGOs management and operations. Capacity building should also be a continuous process by which ENGOs strategically change their methods of operation through creativity and resourcefulness. This chapter highlights the four major areas of capacity building. However, there are other emerging areas of ENGOs capacity building that can be incorporated into overall organizational growth. Some of the important capacity building areas include:

1. Human resources and volunteer management: Hiring and training the right staff are important for managing ENGOs. Volunteers are life blood for almost all ENGOs, however, unless they are recruited and retained in a systematic manner with motivation and recognition, they will not provide their true potentials to the organization. Human resources and volunteer management have in NGOs have become specialized areas that must be adopted by ENGOs that are hoping to expand their impacts on the environment and societies.

2. Risk management: Just because ENGOs are mission oriented does not mean that they are

immune to organizational risk. Risk management benefits organizations to mitigate risks in their governance, administration, and operations.

3. Technology planning: The past few decades have been influenced strongly by the fast growing information technology. ENGOs should take advantage of the technological growth by utilizing software, the internet, social media and other tools to market themselves and manage administrative, operational and fund raising functions effectively.

4. Succession planning: Most ENGOs do not plan for near and far future leadership. This include both board leadership and executive leadership. Succession planning assist NGOs in grooming future leaders.

ENGOs that balance organizational capacity strengthening areas provided in this article and others that are relevant to their operation will definitely sustain and thrive because, there are direct correlations between capacity building and organizational impact. Thankfully, numerous NGOs and foundations provide technical assistance and free information on capacity building through their websites and through training opportunities. A few such online resources are provided in this article. ENGOs need to take advantage of these available resources to strengthen themselves. Networking and partnership building will also help ENGOs to learn from one another and share technical assistance to resolve their weakness in organizational capacity.

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