An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers

Peace Corps
2003

Information Collection and Exchange
Publication No. M0070

Acknowledgments

The *NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers* was one of the first technical training modules created for use primarily in community-based training (CBT) settings. It provides a format that can be used by trainees working individually or with a trainer. The Peace Corps acknowledges the contributions of all staff members, Volunteers and consultants who contributed to developing, writing and field testing this effort.

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for

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) is growing at a tremendous rate around the world, especially in developing and emerging nations. Working with indigenous NGOs has become increasingly popular in international development circles. In an ideal situation, these indigenous organizations:

1. Encourage grass-roots participation;
2. Build local capacity, and
3. Effectively use resources to provide their clients with needed services.

Unfortunately, numerous NGOs start up and then fail because the passion of the founder is not supported by a sustainable organization. There are countless examples of worthwhile projects that failed because steps were not taken to build an infrastructure to support service growth. Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) can make a difference by helping promising NGOs develop the organizational strength required to achieve their missions.

Volunteers in all sectors are working with NGOs. NGOs are citizens' organizations with missions to improve people's lives.

In the United States, NGOs are known as nonprofit or not-for-profit organizations. Although most Volunteers are familiar with the types of programs NGOs provide, from the Girl Scouts to the Salvation Army to the World Wildlife Fund, they have not worked on a day-to-day basis in NGO operations. By the time you complete *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers* you will have the knowledge, tools, and techniques to work with an NGO's staff, board of directors, clients, and donors to build the organization's capacity.

NGOs are not cure-alls for all the problems in the field of development. But they do some things very well, and with well-aimed support an NGO could do even more to help local groups move from powerlessness and isolation to self–help and mobilization. Picture American life without the Red Cross or the Salvation Army. When you consider the impact of the wide-ranging services they provide, it is difficult to envision these organizations as one-room, start-up NGOs that someone believed in before we were born.

NGOs spring into being when there is a need in a society that is not being met through private business or government intervention, as evidenced by the founding of the Red Cross or the Salvation Army. An NGO can continue to exist after it has met a certain need, but it will not survive without the leadership to successfully manage and adapt to the changing societal, economic, and political pressures that influence its efforts.

As you approach your work with NGOs, whether you walk into a small, ill-equipped start-up or an organized growing concern, you will be surprised at how many skills you already possess that are useful in working with an NGO.

An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers contains five modules.

Module 1	Looks at how NGOs contribute to a civil society and the Volunteer's role in working with an NGO.
Module 2	Discusses the advantages of Appreciative Inquiry as an approach for NGO development.
Module 3	Presents the NGO Capacity Profile*,* a tool used to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of an NGO and review the functional components of these organizations.
Module 4	Reviews two skills that a Volunteer needs to work with NGOs: facilitation and training.
Module 5	Explores the role of governance and planning in achieving a sustainable organization.

Each module in the series is similar to a travel guide. It provides an itinerary that leads you from one NGO site to the next. These self-directed modules allow flexibility in both the time spent and the opportunities to explore areas that interest you. Experiential activities, included in each module, are structured to encourage adapting what you know and topics discussed in the modules to the local NGO situation. To maximize learning, you are encouraged to share your observations, experiences, and conclusions with your fellow travelers—other training participants and Peace Corps trainers.

Travel guides often include sections on the local culture and some useful phrases of the local language. In *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers* key terms are defined and space is provided to write the local language translation. Questions highlighting cross-cultural issues are incorporated into experiential activities.

How much you learn during your visit to the world of NGOs is up to you. If you observe carefully, interact with the local people, and are open to new experiences, it will be a rewarding experience. Volunteers want to learn about their host countries and to work with the citizens to improve their lives. As you journey through these NGO training materials, it is useful to have a journal to record your observations, experiences, and thoughts; a camera; and an open mind.

HOW TO USE *AN NGO TRAINING GUIDE FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS*

Learning is not a spectator sport! To learn you must be actively involved. Your host community is a place for discovery, a place for observing, experiencing, processing, and implementing your learnings. Even "what you think you know" needs to be reevaluated in your new cultural environment.

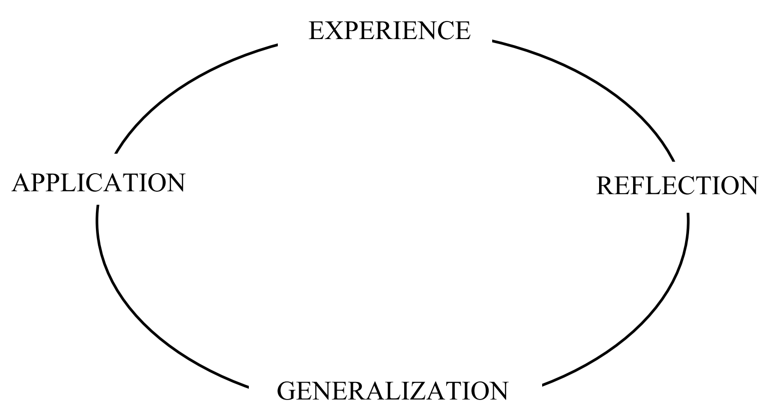
Throughout these five modules are activities to promote community interaction. Adults learn best through experience—the most relevant experiences are in communities similar to those where you will live during your Peace Corps service. Many activities include community observation, information gathering, and/or involvement.

Your technical expertise is nearly useless until you adapt and apply what you know to fit the local culture and you can share your knowledge and skills in the local language. At the beginning of each module is a list of objectives regarding knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

These learning objectives are provided for you to test yourself to determine if you can apply the ideas, skills, and attitudes presented in the module. After completing each module you should review the learning objectives to determine if you have understood the module contents and if you have mastered the knowledge, skills, and attitudes. You are reminded several times in each module to analyze what you know and what you are learning in the context of local conditions. Technical training is not complete without the integration of language and culture.

An NGO Training Guide Peace Corps Volunteers is designed for the self-directed adult learner. Self-directed does not mean you have to learn on your own, but rather that you take responsibility for mastering the knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Activities, case studies, and hands-on exercises are based on experiential learning methodology.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE



An experience that activates the experiential learning cycle may come from your past, an activity in your host community, a simulation game, or a written case study in a module.

Reflection is a special kind of thinking—it is both active and controlled. You are only reflecting as long as you stick to the problem or task at hand. Reflection is the kind of thinking that looks for the reasons for believing one thing rather than another, the kind of thinking that asks questions. It aims at making sense out of an experience. Practice reflecting on your experience, imagine the possibilities, and consider alternative meanings.

Many Volunteers find keeping a journal encourages reflective thinking. Try writing in a journal every day for two or three weeks to determine if this works for you.

Socrates believed
that it is through this kind of thinking
that people shape their lives.
He felt people need to think about
what they do and why they do it,
about what they believe
and why they believe it.
He said that a day should never pass
without such questions
and that a life
without such questions
is not worth living.

— reprinted with permission from Boostrom, Robert, *Developing Creative and Critical Thinking: An Integrated Approach.* National Textbook Company, Lincolnwood, IL, USA. p. 4

During generalization, you expand on what you learned to fit new and different situations. Generalization is an especially relevant step in the experiential learning cycle for a Volunteer operating in a new and different country and culture.

The last step of the cycle, application, requires that you use what you have learned. As you apply your learnings, you generate new experiences and the experiential learning cycle begins again.

As a self-directed learner, you are responsible for:

- Thoughtfully reading the modules.
- Actively participating in the suggested activities.
- Engaging with people in your host community to learn about NGOs in the local environment.
- Integrating culture and language to better understand technical subject matter in the local context.
- Provocatively seeking additional information to fill in personal knowledge gaps.
- Keeping an open mind to different ideas and ways of doing things.
- Ensuring that the knowledge, skills, and attitude objectives are achieved.

A mind is like a parachute—only useful if it is open.

Enjoy your journey into the exciting world of NGOs!

* * * * * * * * *

TRAINER'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

The role of the trainer: The trainer is responsible for facilitating the learners' understanding of nongovernmental organization (NGO) development by:

- Identifying opportunities and materials to enable learners to experience, observe, and gather information related to the activities and topics;
- Helping learners contextualize their experiences and observations based on the trainer's understanding of the local environment and culture;
- Encouraging learners to take an appreciative approach, looking for resources and strengths rather than problems and needs in their journey of discovery; and
- Facilitating the processes of reflection, generalization, planning, and application, using the trainer's technical, cross-cultural, and country-specific expertise.

How to use *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers:* The modules are written for Peace Corps trainees and/or Volunteers who expect to work with NGOs through their primary assignment or in community outreach activities. These materials also should be useful for Peace Corps staff in understanding the development possibilities associated with NGOs. *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers* can be adapted for indigenous NGO staff and local community development workers.

An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers will be used most often during Pre-Service Training (PST) and In-Service Training (IST). Because the modules are designed for the self-directed learner, they can be adapted to a center-based, a community-based, or a hybrid training model. Also, Volunteers can use them for self-study anytime during their Peace Corps service. Some sections can be used in NGO Counterpart trainings.

Although a training participant benefits from individual study, working with a small group is often more interesting and sharing ideas deepens understanding. Interaction with a knowledgeable skilled technical trainer is not essential, but highly desirable.

Continued

Trainer's Notes, continued

Writing training materials to fit every Peace Corps post and training situation is not possible. These modules are furnished electronically to facilitate making changes to better fit the local conditions, culture, and training model. We urge you to invest the time and effort to adapt *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers*. Work with the post's programming and training staff to:

- Rewrite sections not applicable to local conditions;
- Add country-specific examples and graphics; and
- Adjust activities to your training situation.

Trainer's Notes are found at the end of each module. They include the following:

- **Overview** of the topics covered in the module/activities to explain the reason for including the topics.
- **Time** to complete the module/activities. You may need to adjust times to fit the training schedule.
- **Materials** that should be on hand before starting the module/activities.
- **Preparation** that should take place before beginning the module/activities.
- **Hints for debriefing the experience and processing the learnings** of the module/activities to assist trainers in guiding training participants through the reflection, generalization, and application steps of the experiential learning cycle. Through debriefing and processing the experience(s), a skilled trainer adds value to self-directed learning.

At the beginning of each module are knowledge, skills, and attitude objectives. The learning objectives are stated in behavioral terms and stress the application of learnings developed during the module. Application is the final step in the experiential learning cycle. Key terms, listed at the end of each module, include significant words and phrases defined as they are used in the module. Space is provided for the local language translation of each key term. Encourage training participants to seek help from the language staff in translating and learning the key terms.

At the end of each module are resources from the Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange (ICE) catalog and from selected Internet sites. These readily available materials allow trainees and trainers to acquire additional information on topics covered in the module.

Continued

Trainer's Notes, continued

The following three books, available from ICE, are recommended for *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers* trainers.

Methods for Development Work and Research: A Guide for Practitioners. Britha Mikkelson. (Sage Publications.) 1995. 269 pp. (ICE No. TR074)

Describes and analyzes different development research models, devoting special attention to the participatory approach, but also considering conventional and quantitative research methods that can complement this approach. Discusses the development issues that are being researched, with a separate chapter on poverty and gender analysis. Offers detailed information that can be useful in training field workers to do research.

The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry. Sue Annis Hammond. (Kodiak Consulting.) 1996. 61 pp. (ICE No. TR110)

Simple, practical explanation of Appreciative Inquiry and how to use it. Also includes useful information on project planning and nongovernmental organization development.

Training Trainers for Development—Conducting A Workshop on Participatory Training Techniques. CEDPA Training Manual Series Volume I, 1999. (ICE No.TR111)

[Distribution to Peace Corps In-Country Resource Centers Only]

Compilation of training activities that CEDPA has used in many programs to strengthen the training capacity of reproductive health and other types of development organizations. Manual prepares managers and trainers to conduct interactive, learner-centered training of trainers.

TRAINER'S NOTES

GUIDELINES FOR PLACING VOLUNTEERS WITH NGOS

Because the NGO environment differs from country to country and the Peace Corps' reasons for working with NGOs may also differ, posts need to write guidelines for working with NGOs that reflect the reality of the local situation. Post-specific NGO guidelines are useful in developing project strategies, selecting NGOs to work with, training Volunteers, and helping Volunteers understand their roles in working with NGOs. The information below is provided to assist programming and training staff in the development of post-specific guidelines for placing Volunteers with NGOs.

Increasingly, Volunteers are working with NGOs in their primary assignments or in community outreach activities. This is not surprising given the impact of NGOs in global development. In an article published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1998, Jessica T. Mathews reported "NGOs deliver more development assistance than the United Nations." Today, NGOs are working and making a difference in developing and redeveloping countries worldwide. They help formulate policy, change societal mores, and collaborate with counterpart agencies to form effective international coalitions, alliances, and partnerships. They have become local enablers, doing what governments and private industry cannot do.

No less impressive than the globalization of NGOs and the sheer number of voluntary associations is the bewildering variety of missions they serve—environmental awareness, community improvement, economic development, health education, recreation, social services, women's issues, and youth empowerment. Such organizations have taken the lead in organizing public concerns about environmental and ecological issues, whether at the local, national, or international level. Education, long seen as the exclusive domain of the state in most countries, has also grown increasingly open to independent initiatives. Many areas where NGO activity is increasing are the same areas served by Peace Corps' economic development, education, environment, health, and youth projects.

At Peace Corps' NGO workshops held in 1998, field staff requested guidelines for addressing a number of issues related to placing Volunteers with NGOs.

Continued

Guidelines for Placing Volunteers With NGOs, continued

NGO Volunteer placements are complicated by the diversity of NGOs; their role as social advocates; the lack of organizational structure and financial stability of NGOs most in need of Volunteer assistance; and the changing relationship of NGOs and government, together with the Volunteer's willingness to take on multiple tasks in assisting these community organizations.

The following guidelines respond to post staff requests and reflect discussions with program and training specialists, regional management, as well as field staff experienced in NGO Volunteer placements.

There is general agreement that where relationships with NGOs result in a mutual benefit—helping the NGO achieve its mission and enabling the Peace Corps to achieve its mission of "world peace and understanding" and its three goals—the following programming efforts should be encouraged and supported. The remainder of the guidelines discuss various factors to consider in deciding if a particular Peace Corps/NGO working relationship will benefit both organizations.

Definition of an NGO: The broad definition holds that every organization in society that is not part of government is an NGO. The narrow definition, generally used in the Peace Corps, refers to an NGO as a specific type of organization that is not part of government and that possesses the following four characteristics:

- Works with people to help them improve their social and economic situation and prospects;
- Was formed voluntarily;
- Is independent, controlled by those who have formed it or by management boards representing the organization's stakeholders; and
- Is not-for-profit; although NGOs engage in revenue-generating activities, the proceeds are used in pursuit of the organization's aims.

Not all organizations that call themselves NGOs meet these four criteria. Often, an NGO is in reality controlled by a parent body that is not an NGO. First, they may not have been organized voluntarily, and second, they may not be independent, because there is a controlling link between the organization and the parent body, which is not an NGO. These organizations include GONGOS (government-organized NGOs), QUANGOS (quasi-autonomous NGOs), BONGOS (business-organized NGOs), and FONGOS (funder-organized NGOs). Before collaborating with these types of organizations, it is necessary to assess not only the NGO but also the parent body.

Continued

Guidelines for Placing Volunteers With NGOs, continued

Host country government relations: Most country agreements are silent on the issue of the Peace Corps working with NGOs. Because collaborations between the Peace Corps and NGOs are neither approved nor disapproved in the country agreement, caution is warranted in establishing working relationships with NGOs. Peace Corps staff and Volunteers should be aware and considerate of the host country's policies regarding NGOs. Collaboration with NGOs opposing the government's policies could hinder the implementation of the Peace Corps' program. For example, political parties, often organized as NGOs, are not appropriate partner organizations.

NGO legislation and official procedures for the registration and public accountability of NGOs continue to evolve in most developing and redeveloping countries. Legislation and official procedures established by governments should, but do not always, enable the formation and operation of organizations that possess the four defining characteristics of NGOs. No matter how restrictive or impractical the laws of a country may seem, a Volunteer should never advise NGO colleagues or those forming a NGO to evade the law. During Pre-Service Training (PST), Volunteers need to become aware of the general status of NGO laws in their host country.

Cultural sensitivity: Many NGOs have been active in raising awareness of social issues. As guests in the host country, Peace Corps staff and Volunteers should be sensitive to the cultural and religious values of their hosts. There are times when Volunteers may be sympathetic to a cause that conflicts with the country's traditional social or religious values. In these cases, it is the role of the post staff to ensure that Volunteers collaborate with culturally appropriate NGOs.

The NGO's ethics: Some countries have no legal mechanisms for registering NGOs, whereas in other countries registration consists of paying a fee with no evaluation of the organization's moral practices. Thus, legal registration of an NGO is an inadequate indicator of the NGO's ethics. The objectives of an NGO should be based on the desire to advance and improve the human condition. They should be evident in:

- Respect for the rights, culture, and dignity of men and women served or affected by the organization's work;
- Allocation of all available resources to the task at hand;
- The organization's commitment to its mission and objectives;
- The involvement, whenever possible, of beneficiaries as partners;

Continued

Guidelines for Placing Volunteers With NGOs, continued

- Willingness to collaborate and network with other agencies on issues of mutual concern and interest rather than compete with them; and
- High ethical standards at both an organizational and personal level.

Assigning Volunteers to international NGOs: Several questions need to be answered in determining if a Volunteer should be assigned to an international organization:

1. Will the Volunteer take the job of a host country national this large organization could afford to hire?
2. Will the Volunteer be working directly with host country nationals and not expatriates?
3. Will the Volunteer be working outside the capital city to extend the international NGO's services to those who would not otherwise have access to these services?
4. Is this the most appropriate NGO assignment for the Volunteer?

It is tempting to assign Volunteers to international organizations that do good development work, provide a stable site, have Counterparts who speak English, and can afford to pay the Volunteer's housing. However, is this the most effective use of the Peace Corps' most valuable resource, Volunteers, in building local capacity?

Housing: If the local NGO is unable to provide housing for the Volunteer, the Volunteer can share assignments between two NGOs, or between an NGO and a school or government organization. Volunteers should be prepared for the fact that home stays may be required if the NGO is unable to provide housing.

The role of a Volunteer: Whether the Volunteer assists the NGO with organizational development or delivery of technical (environmental, health, educational, etc.) services or both, the role of a Volunteer working with an NGO is that of facilitator or catalyst, not NGO manager, expert consultant, or "doer." Volunteers should never sign documents on behalf of the NGO, speak for the NGO, or have discretionary use of NGO funds.

In their desire to get the job done, Volunteers sometimes act inappropriately and assume a decision-making role such as that of executive director or a voting member of the board of directors. Counterparts often cite Volunteers' "can-do

Continued

Guidelines for Placing Volunteers With NGOs, continued

attitude" and model volunteerism as the greatest attributes of a successful NGO Volunteer.

Volunteers as an access to funding: Often, Volunteers are requested by NGOs because of their perceived access to funding instead of their capacity-building potential. The expectation that a Volunteer will provide access to funding must be addressed during site development and clearly stated in any documents signed between the Peace Corps and the NGO. The expectations of the host agency should be that the Volunteer will provide training opportunities for Counterparts and other NGO staff, and assist the staff in learning how to research and prepare funding proposals. Volunteers, too, should have a clear understanding of Peace Corps philosophy of providing human rather than monetary resources. A joint work plan developed by the Volunteer and the organization will clarify the Volunteer's fundraising role.

Sustainability of the NGO: A Peace Corps project manager should place multiple generations of Volunteers with an NGO to achieve sustainability. Most NGOs are not built in two years. Capacity building takes time, and interventions should be linked to an NGO's phase of development. In general, NGOs need to develop capacity in the following areas before they are sustainable: leadership, institutional development, financial management, fundraising capacity, networking, and access to information.

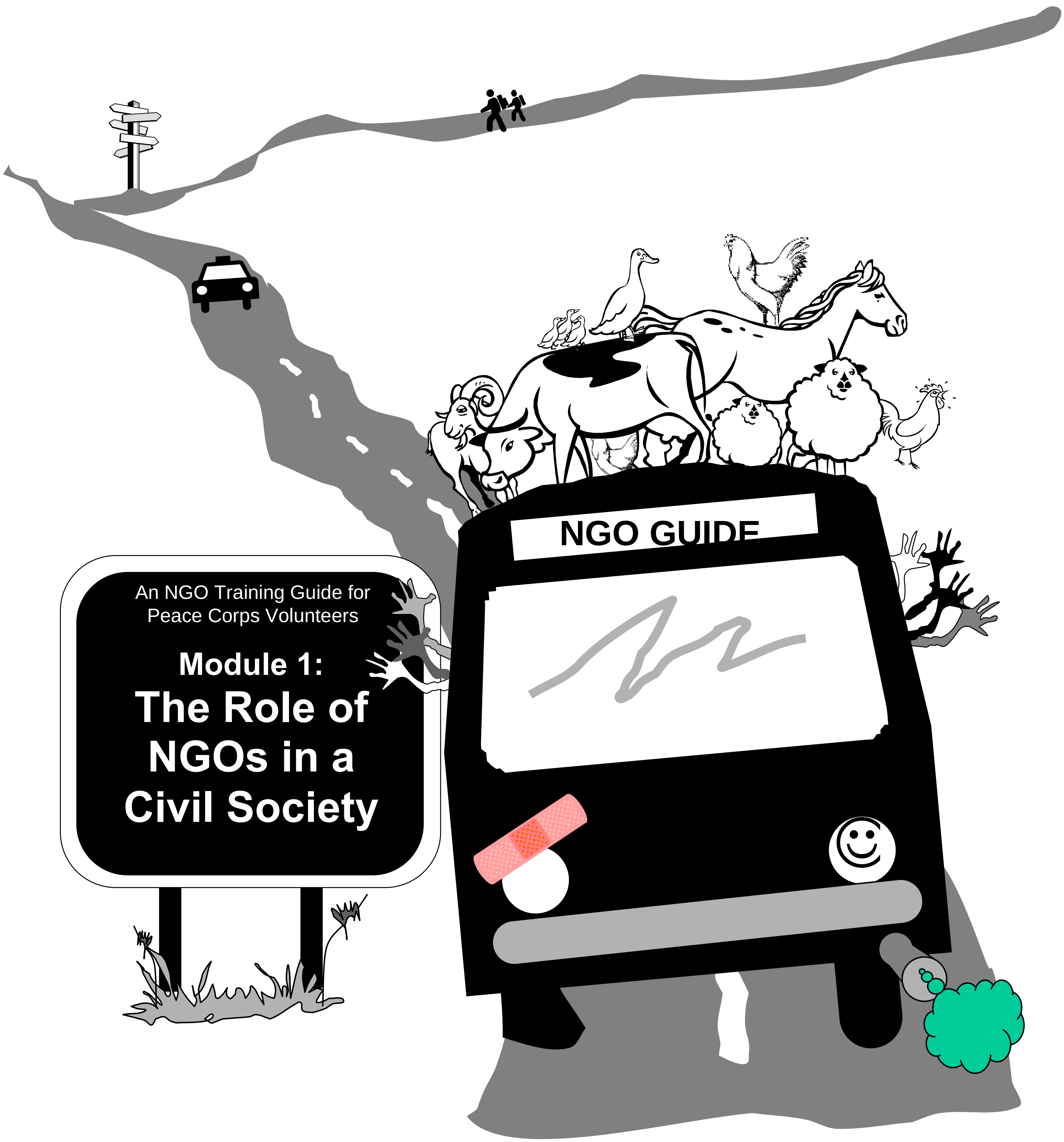
NGO networking: Posts should look for opportunities to encourage NGO networks and organizations that provide services to support and strengthen the management and organizational capacities of NGOs. Volunteer/Counterpart training which includes the introduction of technology skills can prepare them to promote collaboration between local NGOs and access to information.

* * * * * * * * *

Please discuss these guidelines with all of your Volunteers, since most will be involved to some extent with NGOs during their service. Any questions related to NGO placements can be discussed with your regional program and training advisor or with the program specialist for NGO development in the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research.

An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers

Module 1:
The Role of NGOs in a Civil Society



MODULE 1

THE ROLE OF NGOS IN A CIVIL SOCIETY

In this first module of *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers*, you build on your experiences with nonprofit organizations in the United States to gain an understanding of the critical role nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) play in developing civil societies. By the time you complete this module you should have acquired the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to:

- Describe four characteristics that differentiate NGOs from government organizations and for-profit businesses.
- Identify some major sectors (e.g., health, youth, or women's issues) where NGOs are active in your country of service.
- Explain in your own words how each of the six key elements of public participation increases the involvement of citizens in a civil society.
- Select three words that describe the appropriate role of a Peace Corps Volunteer in working with NGOs, and give examples of situations where each role would be useful.

A VOLUNTEER'S STORY

Peace Corps/Jamaica Volunteers work with a variety of NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs).

An environmental business Volunteer and her Counterpart realize that there are few better ways to inspire youths' interest in the environment than by involving them in hands-on projects to improve their environment. They helped youth at the Jack's Hill Community Center organize an environmental club. The new club decided to plant ferns at Jackson Spring.

The Volunteer reports. "The following Saturday, I arrived at Jackson Spring at 8:00 a.m. to find a group of six youth brushing the spring area and preparing it for planting. I was excited to see my Counterpart and the kids had taken so much interest in the environment and that our project was underway."

Service projects involving groups of students allow young persons to learn to work together and develop leadership roles. In addition, they offer opportunities for students to analyze problems and propose and execute solutions. Through participation, youth prepare to take on citizens' responsibilities in a civil society. When students are put in positions of responsibility, they are counted on to show up on time and ready to work and to see a project through to completion. They *learn the consequences of letting down those they intended to help. These "life skills" are important for later success.*

* * * * * * * * * *

WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS?

Initially, you may think that your experience with NGOs has been minimal. However, consider such organizations as Big Brothers/Sisters, Boy/Girl Scouts, Goodwill, Salvation Army, YMCA, and your local church or place of worship and the extent to which they are involved in your daily life. In the United States these organizations are called nonprofits or not-for-profits; in the rest of the world they are more commonly known as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). They play an important role in most communities.

As a Volunteer your service is likely to involve NGOs. A number of Volunteers report successful, satisfying experiences working with NGOs either in their primary assignment or through community outreach projects. Volunteers in all sectors (agriculture, business, education, environment, health, and youth) work with NGOs.

In this module, you will begin to learn more about NGOs. You will have opportunities to:

- Review and reflect on your previous experiences with nonprofit organizations;
- Read about the important role that NGOs play in development;
- Engage in short activities to explore how NGOs operate in your country of service; and
- Discover why and how PCVs work with NGOs.

Take a few moments to reflect on your experiences with nonprofit organizations. Many of you have provided services and assistance, and/or given money to these organizations. You may have donated blood to the American Red Cross. During Halloween some may have participated in the Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Education Fund) program that raised funds for children around the world. Others may have helped the local parent-teacher association (PTA), fraternity or sorority, Rotary Club, or the Sierra Club. And still others may have been impacted by the powerful message of a nonprofit founded by an individual with a passionate message, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).

"Never doubt that a small group of committed
citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
—Margaret Mead

ACTIVITY 1:1

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF NGOS

In this activity, you begin the process of transferring your knowledge and understanding of nonprofits in your home country to the workings of NGOs in your country of service.

1. Choose a nonprofit organization you are familiar with and answer the following:
   - What programs and services did the nonprofit offer?
   - Who were their stakeholders? Individuals who cared about or benefited from the organization? Why was the organization founded? Who founded the organization?
   - Who managed the organization: a board of directors, paid staff, volunteers?
   - How was the organization financed: donations, special fundraising events, fees from beneficiaries, grants, or a combination of these?
   - How did you become involved with the organization: contributor, volunteer, board member, beneficiary, or staff member?
   - What difference would it make in the community if the nonprofit organization did not exist?
2. Share your answers about the nonprofit organization with others in your training group.
3. Can the group agree on common characteristics of nonprofit organizations?

Note: You may wish to refer to the list of possible common characteristics of nonprofit organizations at the end of this module in Activity 1:1 Reference.

WHY THE PEACE CORPS PLACES VOLUNTEERS WITH NGOS

The Peace Corps is a unique government development agency with a history of working with community partners and colleagues to build capacity one person at a time. From its beginnings, the Peace Corps' philosophy has been that it is better to teach people to fish or raise their own fish than to give them fish to eat. This is what capacity building is about—empowering people to help themselves. Today, Volunteers continue to build individual capacity and the capacity of organizations and communities.

Increasingly, NGOs are recognized as important players in the formulation, design, and application of development strategies. International development organizations are placing greater emphasis on working with national and local NGOs to emphasize local knowledge and participatory development

The Peace Corps' development philosophy is similar to the philosophy of many NGOs. Ideally, a Peace Corps' project should:

- Increase local capacities;
- Target beneficiaries who are often among the needy;
- Seek sustainable solutions; and
- Involve beneficiaries in the development process.

When the interests of the Peace Corps and an NGO overlap, working together helps both organizations achieve their goals.

However, some NGOs' missions do not coincide with those of the Peace Corps. For example, the Peace Corps does not place Volunteers with an NGO whose mission is to elect political candidates, or an NGO with countercultural values. In many countries this is a very delicate balance. The Peace Corps strives to support civil societies, and NGOs generally contribute to building civil societies. Yet, in some countries NGOs question governmental authority and thus are seen as destabilizing influences.

"I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor."

——Henry David Thoreau

CHARACTERISTICS THAT DISTINGUISH NGOS

An organization may be correctly labeled an NGO if it has four characteristics identified by The Commonwealth Foundation, a London-based NGO study group. These characteristics are included here, with the permission of The Commonwealth Foundation, from its 1995 publication *Non-Governmental Organizations: Guidelines for Good Policy and Practice.*

1. **Voluntary:** NGOs are formed voluntarily by citizens with an element of voluntary participation in the organization, whether in the form of small numbers of board members or large numbers of members or time given by volunteers.

2. **Independent:** NGOs are independent within the laws of society, and controlled by those who have formed them or by elected or appointed boards. The legal status of NGOs is based on freedom of association—one of the most basic human rights. The International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, developed by the United Nations in 1966 and since ratified by 135 countries, grants the right to assemble.

3. **Not-for-profit:** NGOs are not for private personal profit or gain. NGOs may, in many countries, engage in revenue-generating activities, but must use the revenue solely in pursuit of the organization's mission. Like other enterprises, NGOs have employees who are paid for what they do. Boards are not usually paid for the work they perform, but may be reimbursed for expenses they incur in the course of performing their board duties.

4. **Not self-serving in aims and related values:** The aims of NGOs are to improve the circumstances and prospects of people and to act on concerns and issues detrimental to the well-being, circumstances, or prospects of people or society as a whole.

NGOs are not the only name used to describe organizations that have the four characteristics listed above. Other common names are listed in the chart below. You may notice that the names reflect one of the distinguishing characteristics of the group.

NAME	CHARACTERISTICS
Nonprofit or Not-for-profit Organization	The organization's goal is not to make a profit for the benefit of organizers, but can earn money to achieve the organization's mission.
Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) and Voluntary Sector	Acknowledges the importance of volunteers and voluntary action.
Independent Sector or the Third Sector	Distinguishes organizations from the business or government sectors.
Philanthropic Sector or Charitable Organization	Addresses the charitable nature of these organizations.
Social Sector	Underscores how the activities of this class of organizations enhance the social fabric of a country.
Community-Based Organization (CBO)	Stresses the participation of and benefit for local citizens.
Civil Society Organization (CSO)	An emerging and increasingly popular name that focuses on a desired outcome of these groups—the creation of a civil society.

"There can be hope only for a society
which acts as one big family,
and not as many separate ones."

—Anwar Sadat (1918–1981),
President of Egypt

Organizations usually belong to one of three sectors of society: the government sector, for-profit/private business sector, and the NGO/third sector.

For a society to achieve its full potential and for citizens to fulfill their goals, all three sectors must cooperate with one another. Each sector has strengths and weaknesses in providing what citizens need and want.

- The business sector most effectively delivers goods.
- The government sector drafts and enforces laws, and defends the country's borders.
- The third sector, which consists of nongovernmental organizations, provides services that the business and government sectors are unwilling or unable to provide, and they provide a venue for citizens to come together and be heard on issues that they feel are important.

It is not easy to identify which of the sectors an organization belongs to. When a business exerts significant influence over an NGO's operations, the term business-organized NGO (BONGO) is used. Governments often contract with NGOs to provide certain public services. If a government exerts significant influence over an NGO, it is called a government-organized NGO (GONGO) or quasi-nongovernmental organization (QUANGO). The divisions get fuzzy; it is often difficult to determine when an NGO is independent of a business or government partner and when its partner, in fact, controls the NGO.

In most NGO/business and NGO/government partnerships, the NGO retains its independence. For example, the Ford Foundation and the Soros Foundation are well known. These organizations engage in charitable activities and administer research grants while taking advantage of the tax law benefits. These foundations operate independently of the founding business; they are not BONGOs.

You are likely to encounter additional local language(s) names for NGO-type organizations.

Beyond providing services, a second and perhaps more important function of NGOs is as a facilitator of citizens' participation in their societies. NGOs enable all voices to be heard when individuals form a group with others who have similar values and interests. NGOs often aim to promote understanding between citizens and the state.

NGOs contribute to a civil society by providing a means for expressing and actively addressing the varied and complex needs of society. They are seen as serving several essential functions:

NGOs promote pluralism, diversity, and tolerance in society while protecting and strengthening cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other identities.

NGOs advance science and thought; develop culture and art; protect the environment; and support all activities and concerns that make a vibrant civil society.

NGOs motivate citizens in all aspects of society to act, rather than depend on state power and beneficence.

NGOs create an alternative to centralized state agencies and provide services with greater independence and flexibility.

NGOs establish the mechanisms by which governments and the market can be held accountable by the public.

Why are NGOs important? The short answer: NGOs increase "social capital" by providing people with opportunities to build trust in each other and the capacity to work together toward common goals.

In recent years the presence and number of NGOs has grown. However, the influence and importance of NGOs differ depending on the national context in which they operate.

What follows are a few examples of the focus and scale of NGOs in countries where Volunteers have served or are serving:

- In Jordan, local NGOs enjoy royal patronage, and many work with youth and women's issues.
- Kenya has more than 600 NGOs, many working in grass-roots community development.
- In the Philippines, 500,000 registered Philippine NGOs try to make a difference in a variety of sectors, including AIDS education and environmental preservation.
- In Russia, NGOs deliver business services, assist battered women, and work on environment education.
- In Slovakia, there are more than 350 NGOs, many working toward the development of an effective civil society.

ACTIVITY 1:2

LEARNING ABOUT LOCAL NGOS

Discuss with other trainees, language instructors, and/or technical trainers the best methods for learning about NGOs in your host country: individual discussions; field trips to NGOs; panel discussions with NGO staff; Volunteers working with NGOs and their Counterparts; reading articles about local NGOs. Develop a plan to gather the information you need.

Below are questions to help you learn about NGOs in your host country.

1. How many different NGOs can you identify that are active in your host country?
2. How does the work differ for each organization?
3. What kind of work could Volunteers do with each organization?
4. What is the historical, cultural, and economic context of NGOs in your host country?
5. When were NGOs developed in the country—after independence, after Communism?
6. What are the political ramifications of NGOs in the country? What are the sensitivities, issues, and concerns?
7. How do most NGOs receive their financial support? What implication does this have on how NGOs work in the country? How do the economics of your host country affect NGOs?
8. Are NGOs a cultural norm? Are they new to the cultural landscape? What are the ramifications of their position in society?
9. Why are NGOs important to the country's development? Do they play a significant role?
10. What is/are the local language name(s) used to describe NGO-type organizations?

WHAT CONSTITUTES A CIVIL SOCIETY

What constitutes a civil society varies from culture to culture. A civil society can be defined by one culture in terms of the results or behaviors produced. Another definition may focus on the preconditions or foundations for civil society. A third culture may describe it as a desirable state for all society. And a fourth may emphasize the composition of civil society—who is and is not included. Within these four broad categories are many variations. Another consideration in discussing civil society is the cultural context. What are considered essential elements for a civil society in one culture may not be essential elements in another culture.

Determine what local citizens consider key elements of a civil society. The following elements reflect a Western point of view and can serve as a starting point for a conversation with citizens of your host country. These elements are thought to promote an active, inclusive, and diversified public participation process.

1. The government is proactive in expanding opportunities for public participation. All individuals have the right to be part of the decisions influencing their quality of life.

2. Special efforts are made to include women, indigenous people, youth, and other traditionally marginalized groups, such as disadvantaged racial and ethnic minorities. Being inclusive involves engaging the for-profit business and government sectors. Being inclusive is fundamental to achieving long-term solutions that are equitable and therefore sustainable.

3. The three sectors of society share responsibilities to ensure public participation. Effective partnerships between NGOs and/or businesses and government require concerted efforts to become and remain accountable, transparent, and inclusive.

4. Continuous public participation throughout the process of design, implementation, and evaluation of projects, policies, or programs legitimizes decisions and enriches outcomes.

5. Transparency ensures all motives and objectives are apparent and information vital to a decision is presented and is reliable.

6. Cooperation among national, regional, and local government authorities and NGOs is essential for effective coordination of public participation. It is not sufficient to have cooperation at only one or even two levels.

7. Openness to informal as well as formal routes of communication broadens the scope of public participation.

In a developing civil society, an ever-increasing number of people are involved in all types of activities and decisions. These citizens come from all the different parts of the society and represent its diversity. Each country, including the

United States, is at a different place on the continuum of a “developed” civil society. None is a society in which all citizens participate on a regular basis.

NGOs are strengthening the fabric of civil societies in still-fragile, emerging democracies. They are essential partners for governments, the private sector, and development organizations in meeting people’s needs. NGOs are an expression of people’s belief that through their own initiative, they can better fulfill their potential by working together, and in so doing reduce the opportunity gap that exists between the advantaged and disadvantaged in society.

“Courage happens when people unite.”

—Anonymous

ACTIVITY 1:3

ANALYZING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING A CIVIL SOCIETY

Organize a diverse focus group of five or six local citizens, including old/young, men/women, and members from different social or ethnic groups. You should ask people who trust you to take part—perhaps host family members or friends.

A training participant can act as facilitator. Briefly explain what the term civil society means to an American, then appreciatively ask the following questions. Each member of the focus group should be given the opportunity to voice an opinion. Do not force group members to speak.

- What do you consider the essential elements of a civil society? Are some elements more important than others?
- What progress has your country made in developing a civil society?
- What groups actively participate in the decision-making process?
- Which groups are not allowed or encouraged to participate?
- What efforts are being made to increase public participation?
- Who is making efforts to achieve participation?

Reflect on the information you have gathered either individually or in small groups.

- What did you learn about civil society in your host country?
- What is the level of participation (use voting, community involvement, and volunteer activities as a benchmark)?
- What are the implications to your work as a Volunteer?
- How does a heightened awareness of the importance of participation affect how you plan to function as a Volunteer?

HOW PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS WORK WITH NGOs

Earlier in this module, you reflected on your experiences with nonprofit organizations in the United States and investigated how NGOs operate in your host country. You explored the important role NGOs play in a civil society through reading, activities, and discussions. Now it is time to discuss the role of Volunteers in working with NGOs.

What are Volunteers expected to accomplish and how are they expected to accomplish it? The "what" is about results. The "how" is about process.

Some Volunteers assist NGOs with organizational development—basic computer literacy, learning English, and building financial, human, and program capacities. Other Volunteers are directly involved in the delivery of services—AIDS education, youth programs, environmental awareness, etc. Many Volunteers report that they become involved in both organizational development and service delivery.

"What" specifically you do in working with an NGO depends on the interaction of three things:

1. your interest, skills, and expectations;
2. what types of assistance the NGO needs; and
3. how the first two fit with the goals of your Peace Corps project.

The how, not the what, is often more difficult. It is generally easier to figure out what needs to be done than how to do it.

Catalyst, facilitator, coach, mentor, partner, and learner are words that describe how. Exactly which word(s) denotes the right role(s) for you as a Volunteer depends on your personal style and the work style of your NGO Counterparts.

A catalyst is a change agent. Catalysts speed up a reaction, but are not used up in the reaction. A Volunteer who acts as a catalyst has a similar role, suggesting how changes can occur smoothly and quickly. A catalyst Volunteer generates ideas and networks to make links with other organizations. Some of the Volunteer's ideas will be picked up and implemented. Most will not. This is a good "how" role when the NGO staff have basic skills but are discouraged from working in a tough regulatory, economic, and/or cultural environment.

A facilitator acts as a guide, helping the group achieve their agreed-on goals effectively. A facilitator balances achieving results with learning from the process. If the process moves too slowly, some in the group become impatient to see the results; if the process moves too quickly, others are frustrated that the project is not being carefully thought out and creative options explored. Experience shows that more capacity building takes place during the process than through results.

A coach aims to enhance the performance and learning ability of others. Coaching involves feedback, motivation, effective questioning, and consciously matching your style to a person's readiness to undertake a particular task. It is based on helping people to help themselves. A good "how" role when you need to teach skills.

A mentor is similar to a coach, with some slight differences. A mentor is usually older or more experienced than the person being mentored. There is a high level of trust between the person being mentored and the mentor. A mentor often provides emotional support as well as coaching technical skills. A good "how" role for an experienced Volunteer and certain individual staff members at the NGO.

A partner is an equal. Partners may have complementary skills. They share. A good "how" role for you when working with an individual whose skill level is nearly equal to yours, but whose skills may be different.

A learner asks people what they do, how they do it, when and where they do it, why they do it that way, and how he/she can help them do it better. A learner is the best "how" role during your first three months at the site. The role of a learner is always appropriate. Almost every Returned Peace Corps Volunteer says, "I learned more than I taught."

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In this module you have explored:

The role NGOs play as one of the three sectors in a society,

The concept of a "civil society," and

How and why Volunteers work with NGOs.

The other four modules in this manual provide additional information, useful tools, and activities to help you develop your capacity to work with NGOs.

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KEY TERMS

Key terms are defined as they are used in the module. A <u>space</u> is provided to write the translation of a word or phrase into the local language. Work with your language teachers to find the right translations and build your technical vocabulary as you study this module.

Capacity is the ability to put an idea into action.

....

Capacity building is the process of increasing the ability of an individual, organization, or community to put an idea into action.

....

Civil society generally consists of organizations that fall between the family and the state. A civil society is characterized by active, diverse, inclusive citizen participation. Political organizations and for-profit businesses are usually not considered civil society organizations.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) are those whose mission is primarily focused to meet a specific social or human service need within a given community. The need may be a national concern as well. In fact, the CBO may be part of a national association. CBOs tend to be more focused on a community and more informally organized than NGOs.

Nongovernmental organization (NGO) is the most common name used internationally for an organization formed to help others. NGOs are not governmental organizations or for-profit businesses.

Social capital is the ability of people to trust each other enough to work together toward agreed-on goals.

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RESOURCES

These resources are available through the Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange (ICE). The citations are presented as they appear in *The Whole ICE Catalog.*

Roles of the Volunteer in Development: Toolkits for Capacity Building. (Peace Corps ICE.) 2002. 225 pp. (ICE No. T0005)

This unique publication is a series of toolkits that can be separated into seven booklets. The introductory booklet provides an overview of the Peace Corps' philosophy of development, introduces the capacity-building roles a Volunteer might play, and then provides guidance for Volunteers in identifying what roles they will play. The other six booklets each address one of the roles: Learner, Co–Trainer, Co–Facilitator, Mentor, Change Agent, and Co–Planner. In each booklet, there is a chart delineating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for the role; background readings on the role; and activities to learn more about and gain skills in carrying out the role. The booklets can be used as self-study, or used in conjunction with training sessions.

Internet:

www.idn.org – a source for information on NGOs and development

ACTIVITY 1:1 Reference

INFORMATION

Nonprofit organizations address a variety of people's needs and interests. The following is a sample of common characteristics of nonprofit organizations.

Nonprofits address a variety of people's needs and interests:

- People participate voluntarily in these organizations.
- Boards of directors, staff, and/or volunteers who give their time manage these organizations.
- The organization fundraises or solicits donations from people and other organizations that care about the nonprofit's mission.
- Each organization provides targeted programs and/or services to focus on its constituents' needs or interests.
- The organizations are independent and are generally known for "the good work" they do.

TRAINER'S NOTES

MODULE1:
THE ROLE OF NGOS IN A CIVIL SOCIETY

Overview:

This module allows participants to build on their experiences with nonprofit organizations in the United States to gain an understanding of the critical role that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) play in developing civil societies. Volunteers and trainees can better appreciate why so many Volunteers work with NGOs as they begin to understand the nature of NGOs and how these organizations contribute to the well-being of society.

Time to Complete Module:

Reading	1 hour
Activities (including field trip) and debriefing activities	7 hours

Materials:

Copies of Module 1 for each training participant, blank journals, copies of relevant local NGO articles, copies of articles on citizen participation, flip chart paper, and assorted markers for each small group of training participants.

Preparation:

- Review the module and adapt readings and activities to better fit the local NGO environment and training logistics.
- Gather local information on NGOs from newspapers, magazines, and books. Translate materials if needed. Work with the language instructors to determine if some of the NGO information can be incorporated into language classes.
- Design a training plan for the module that includes how materials will be copied and distributed to trainees and arrangements for field trips and/or guest speakers.
- Display a training schedule in a location accessible to training participants and training staff. Include time for activities, debriefings, and meeting with trainees to assess the extent to which the module's learning objectives have been achieved.
- Check with the country director to determine if guidelines for Volunteers working with NGOs have been drafted. If not, work with post staff to

Continued

Trainer's Notes, continued

complete local guidelines. Because of country-specific issues, generic NGO guidelines do not suffice. See "Guidelines for Placing Volunteers with NGOs" in the Trainer's Notes section of the Introduction.

- Schedule a time to discuss with trainees what they have learned from reading Module 1 and completing the activities. Are they confident they have achieved all of the learning objectives? If not, what questions remain? What additional experiences or materials would be useful in filling any gaps in learning?

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Both Volunteers and Counterparts benefit from an understanding of a post's guidelines for working with NGOs. After training participants finish this first module, you may want to discuss post's guidelines for working with NGOs. Another option is to defer the discussion until the end of the NGO training.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY1:1
COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF NGOS

Overview:

This activity is designed to remind training participants of their experiences with nonprofits, assist them in reflecting on the critical role nonprofits play in a community, and help them identify some common characteristics of a nonprofit organization.

Time: 1 hour

Materials:

Flip chart and markers.

Preparation:

Identify a time and a place where training participants can meet to discuss their experiences with nonprofit organizations and discuss common characteristics of nonprofit organizations. Select a training participant to facilitate the group discussion.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

Encourage training participants to draw on their experiences and reflect on what they know about nonprofit organizations. The next step in the Experiential Learning Cycle is for the small group to generalize: "what are the common characteristics" of these organizations?

The following is a sample of some common characteristics of nonprofits:

- Address a variety of people's needs and interests.
- People participate voluntarily in these organizations.
- Managed by boards of directors who volunteer their time.
- Fundraise or solicit donations from people and other organizations that care about the nonprofit's mission.
- Provide targeted programs and/or services to focus on constituents' needs or interests.
- Independent and generally known for "the good work" they do.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY1:2
LEARNING ABOUT LOCAL NGOS

Overview:

This activity is designed to promote an understanding of local NGO realities from the NGOs' perspective.

Time:

Depends on activities selected by training participants and trainers.

Materials:

You may want to gather brochures or written information from NGOs visited, presenters, and other sources.

Preparation:

Local information resources will determine the best methods for gathering information about indigenous NGOs.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

After gathering information, get feedback from training participants to ensure the information collected is accurate. Discuss any misconceptions. Try answering these questions:

- What are the key learnings?
- What major challenges do local NGOs face?
- What are the implications when Volunteers work with NGOs in this country?

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY1:3
ANALYZING PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING A CIVIL SOCIETY

Overview:

This activity explores and reflects on the country's progress toward becoming a civil society.

Time: 2 hours

Materials:

Handouts on the "state" of local public participation. Provide trainees with translations of relevant media articles and/or have the language instructors use local language articles in their classes.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

The questions in this activity should generate a lively discussion. The activity is intended not to judge, but to promote an inquiry into values around and generate a discussion on the concept of a civil society and what is happening locally to develop a civil society. All countries have areas of their civil society that can be improved.

To reflect on the information that has been gathered, discuss the following questions.

- What are the major learnings about civil society in your host country?
- What is the level of participation (use voting, community involvement, and volunteer activities as benchmarks)?
- What are the implications to your work as a Volunteer?
- How does a heightened awareness of the importance of participation affect how you plan to function as a Volunteer?


NGO GUIDE
An NGO Training Guide for
Peace Corps Volunteers
Module 2:
Empowering People &
Strengthening
Organizations through
Asset-Based
Approaches

MODULE 2

EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH ASSET-BASED APPROACHES

Asset-based approaches, also known as strength-based approaches, encourage people to look at what they have rather than what they do not have; they empower individuals and groups to look at possibilities rather than problems. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an asset-based approach that Peace Corps staff and Volunteers have found to be especially useful in working with organizations and communities over the last several years. After reading Module 2, "Empowering People and Strengthening Organizations Through Asset-Based Approaches," you should have acquired the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to:

- Explain why asset-based approaches are more empowering than the traditional problem-based approach in development.
- Identify three uses for Appreciative Inquiry in working with an NGO.
- Demonstrate an ability to develop a set of questions and conduct an appreciative semi-structured interview. (If training participants interview each other, a suggested topic is, "The interviewee's personal qualities and experiences that will be useful in empowering people and strengthening NGOs." These interviews help soon-to-be Volunteers identify the personal assets they bring to their Peace Corps assignments.)

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

"Nothing is constant but change" describes the essence of a Volunteer's life. Not only do Volunteers experience innumerable changes in their own lives, but also they work with people and organizations to make positive changes. Change takes people out of their "comfort zone." It requires energy to overcome the inertia of the status quo. Here we investigate new and better ways of approaching change by looking first at an individual's or group's assets rather than their problems.

We are not suggesting ignoring problems. They exist. We are proposing that it is more energizing to start out by thinking of what an individual or group has (assets) rather than what they do not have. Individuals are encouraged to decide what is the ideal situation. Now that they know their assets and where they want to end up, they are in a better position to overcome the barriers (problems) to get where they want to be. Asset-based approaches put problems in perspective—problems need to be dealt with but they are not the biggest part of the picture.

When people use a problem-based approach, they often get "stuck." Attention and energy are centered on solving various problems rather than making progress toward the chosen goal.

Consider the question, “Is the glass half full, or is it half empty?” What do you think? Will more be accomplished by worrying about the glass being half empty (the problem) or figuring out what can be done with the contents that half fill the glass (an asset)? Focusing on problems tends to sap people’s energy and lead to feelings of hopelessness. Positive approaches are empowering.

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A LEARNING MOMENT

Is there a part of your life you would like to change—physical fitness; relationships with family, friends, or a significant other; intellectual pursuits; hobbies; or other? Choose one thing in your life you would like to change for this “Learning Moment.”

First, think about your problem, what is lacking in your life, or what needs to be changed. Concentrate on what caused the problem, how might you have avoided the problem. Now consider possible solutions to your problem. How hard will it be to solve your problem?

Second, close your eyes and think of a time when you felt happy about the area of your life you now want to change. Take time to visualize a clear picture of where you were, who was with you, the colors, smells, and how you felt? Enjoy the picture. What made that time special? What were the elements that contributed to your sense of well-being? What actions might you take to incorporate some of the same elements into your life today? How might the lessons learned from reflecting on past success help you change the current situation?

Did these two approaches feel different? Which is more empowering? Which approach is more motivating?

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All organizations have problems; their proverbial glasses are not full. Organizations also have at least some past successes or they would not still be operating. New organizations have founders with past successes. The Peace Corps and many other development organizations have come to realize that organizational development results are greater and longer lasting when the individuals involved with the organization (stakeholders) become active participants in a positive change process.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and other asset-based approaches are at the cutting edge of thinking in change management. It is a new and decisive direction. These approaches change our language and theories of organizations—organizational development—by looking at what works in an organization and what a group has, rather than what it lacks.

Sharpening your skills in interviewing and listening will help you hear people's stories and find the language to use these methods more effectively. Appreciative Inquiry and other asset-based approaches are equally applicable in a Volunteer's work with individuals, organizations, and communities, as well as NGOs.

Train your Counterparts, co-workers, and community partners in these asset-based techniques. Training them has dual benefits:

1. Local capacity is built so the methodologies are available after you leave.
2. Your Counterparts' and co-workers' cross-cultural and language abilities enable them to better use the methodologies in the local community.

In the last 10 years, much has been written about AI and asset-based methods. If you are interested in exploring further, see the Resources section at the end of this module.

ASSET-BASED APPROACHES

Asset-based approaches, also called strength-based approaches, concentrate on what organizations have and how the organization can build on what it has. We spend a considerable amount of time in this module discussing one asset-based approach, Appreciative Inquiry (AI), where the major asset is the learnings generated from past peak experiences. AI illustrates the general concepts of asset-based approaches—positive attitude, active participation, and focusing on strengths rather than problems.

Asset-based approaches first determine an organization's assets:

- Hard assets—buildings, equipment, supplies;
- Personal assets—the skills, knowledge, and commitment of the board, staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders; and
- Intangible assets—the organization's respected name and networks of cooperating and partner organizations and institutions.

Next, ask the organizational development question, "How can the organization's assets best be used to build a stronger organization with the capacity to achieve its mission?"

Traditionally, organizational assessment identified needs and problems within an organization. The problem-based approach, sometimes called the deficit model or liability model, helps us develop strategies to solve problems but does not encourage expanding on possibilities. Thinking is limited by focusing on fixing what is broken, not building what could be in the future.

The problem-based approach is also fragmented in terms of obtaining resources. Resources that are acquired by the organization are directed at solving problems that resulted from past actions, not at building an ideal organization.

Identification of problems still has its place. Problems must be solved before the organization can move from where it is today to where it envisions itself in the future. For example: An NGO is about to lose the lease on its office space. This is a problem. If the board and staff focus only on the office lease problem rather than on achieving their vision for the NGO, they may end up with a new office that fits the "old organization" but not the "new organization." Yes, they do need to solve the office lease problem, but in the context of their vision for the NGO.

An asset-based organizational development model has three simple principles:

1. The first principle defines the process as "asset-based." This strategy starts with what is present in the organization, the capacities of its board, staff, and volunteers, as well as hard assets and intangible assets. People become aware of the organization's strengths, an empowering insight. This is differentiated from what is problematic, or what the organization needs, which encourages organizations to look outside the organization for advice, expertise, and someone to solve its problem, because the organization is lacking in resources.

2. Because the process is asset-based, the second principle is, by necessity, "internally focused." This development strategy concentrates on the agenda-building and problem-solving capacities of those within the organization. The strong internal focus stresses the importance of decisions, creativity, hope, and control.

3. Because the process is asset-based and internally focused, the third principle then will be "relationship driven." The central challenge for the asset-based approach is to constantly build and rebuild the relationships between and among stakeholders, other organizations, and local institutions.

In facilitating organizational development, concentrating on "assets" rather than "deficits" or "problems" may seem like an exercise in semantics. Where you start the thought process may appear insignificant, but the result is a very significant shift in the way people see the world, and how others think and behave. Appreciative asset-based thinking is positive and future focused and it encourages people to participate.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

AI represents a paradigm shift, away from viewing organizations as stable, enduring, and logical, where we can fix anything, to viewing organizations as organic, products of the moment, open to continuous change and reconstruction. David Cooperrider and his colleagues at the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, developed Appreciative Inquiry in the mid-1980s. AI suggests a different approach to change management and organizational development

The theory behind AI holds that our beliefs about social systems have a powerful effect on the nature of social "reality." Not only do we see what we believe, but also the very act of believing creates it. From this point of view, new and evocative theories of groups, organizations, and societies are a powerful way to aid in change and development.

Focusing on . . .

Values

Appreciative assets

strengths

best practices

what has worked

Find out

Ask questions

\+ **Inquiry** Discover

Appreciative Inquiry

The old paradigm—the "problem-oriented" view of organizing and inquiring into an organization—suggests that groups and organizations not only have problems, but also are problems to be solved. The old approach reduces the possibility of new ideas and thoughts emerging. The new paradigm suggests a shift away from looking at organizations as problems to be solved to looking at them as miracles to be appreciated.

Drawing on research and writing from diverse fields such as organizational behavior, psychology, sociology, and education, as well as his own experience working with organizations, Cooperrider challenged the traditional change-management theories and created a new set of ideas that have been tested by organizational development practitioners throughout the world. The body of knowledge and experience with AI continues to grow, shaped by the contributions of many who, attracted by its potential, add their own ideas and experiences to create an ever-expanding global learning forum. What follows is an introduction to the widely accepted parameters for AI.

Contrast Between Problem-Solving and AI Approaches

Problem-Solving Approach	**Appreciative-Inquiry Approach**
Felt Need: Identification of the Problem	Appreciating and Valuing: the Best of "What Is" (Discovery)
Analysis of Causes	Envisioning "What Might Be" (Dream)
Analysis of Possible Solutions	Dialoguing "What Should Be" (Design)
Action Planning (Treatment)	Innovating "What Will Be" (Delivery/Destiny)
Basic Assumption: An organization is a problem to be solved.	Basic Assumption: An organization is a mystery to be embraced.

(Reprinted with permission from Cooperrider, D. L., and Suresh Sirvastra, *Collaborating for Change: Appreciative Inquiry*. Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco. 2000. p. 23.)

AI builds capacity. It begins by valuing the organization and the culture; by learning about the organization, its relationships, and its environment; and by identifying and building on existing strengths rather than examining problems and deficiencies in detail. AI attempts to generate a collective image of a new and better future by exploring the best of what is and has been. Appreciative Inquiry puts organizations back in touch with their "deepest living values." AI is based on the premise that if those who are impacted participate in the change process their commitment to the organization is deepened. It can help an organization create its niche by identifying its collective hopes and dreams, and then designing a process for realizing them.

AI has several applications. It can be used to understand specific organizational issues such as gender, teamwork, project monitoring, leadership, or client service. Volunteers and the NGOs they work with use the AI approach to change a function of the NGO governance (personnel management, financial management, etc.). If the organization is small, an AI facilitator can work with the whole organization. How you use AI depends on at which stage of organizational development the NGO is, what stakeholders want to change, and how creative you are in applying this approach.

The AI process is broken down into four steps called the 4-Ds (discovery, dream, design, and delivery/destiny), which guide members of an organization, group, or community through the AI process. Unfortunately, the 4-Ds do not often translate neatly into another language.

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A LEARNING MOMENT

Martin Luther King, in his famous "I have a dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial, did not say, "I have an action plan."

Dreams inspire and motivate. Martin Luther King knew this, and so do those who use Appreciative Inquiry as a development tool.

Action plans are important, but they come in the design phase after an individual or group has clarity on their dreams and is committed to making their dreams come true.

* * * * * * * * * *

DISCOVERY

Through appreciative interviews, gather the stories that give life to the organization, find out about moments of excellence, core values, best practices, peak experiences, and what people appreciate most.

First, select a topic the group feels would benefit from an appreciative inquiry. This topic might involve all or a part of an organization. Frame the topic in an affirmative way—a simple positive statement. For example, "Create an inclusive team environment." Because a topic can be emotionally charged or have a negative history, take extra care to focus on creating a positive statement.

Second, write a set of appreciative questions that inspire and encourage people to frame their organizational stories (e.g., "Can you tell of an experience you had with your team or group that made you particularly proud?"). Simply talking about one's "peak" experience can easily degenerate into social banter and clichés. The creation of the right questions is a critical aspect of the process.

Third, conduct the interview. Collect the group's stories through appreciative interviews. Remember the interviews are as important as the data collected. It is in having the conversations that the organization is changed, and the view of the future becomes more hopeful.

Limiting the process to a few topics or a smaller group (versus the whole organization) appears to make the process more manageable and understandable to others. Deciding how broad the scope should be depends on what the group wants to accomplish.

Having the group tell their stories helps create a sense of wonder. Hearing a good story fills you with delight. Stories get beyond the hard, quantifiable data of organizational assessment to the group's most inspiring moments. The stories carry meaning and truths that elude even the most sophisticated information systems. From the stories, the group then extracts core values and best practices on which to build a vision of the future.

> *"I've come to the conclusion*
> *that getting the stories that people have*
> *about the topic is what is most important.*
> *Fresh images and insights come*
> *from exploring the real stories*
> *people have about themselves*
> *and others at their best."*
>
> — Bushe, Gervase,
> *Organizational Development Journal,*
> Fall 1995, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 14–22.

DREAM

Envision positive possibilities, results, what might be—conduct visualization.

The group then finds the best examples of satisfying and inspiring experiences with the organization, and, in detail, determines what possible circumstances made the best happen. The group takes the stories, envisions the future, and writes affirmative statements, dream statements, which describe the idealized future as if it were already happening. (Note: In some of the earlier AI work, dream statements were called "provocative propositions.")

Criteria for affirmative dream statements. The dream statement is:

Grounded—it grows from the best of our experiences in the past.

Creative—it stretches and challenges us.

Desired—if it could be fully realized we would want it. Is it something we are willing to work to make happen?

Stated in affirmative and bold terms.

In the present tense—as if it were already happening.

The dream stage works best when it involves as many members of the organization or group as possible. The group uses the interview data as an artist uses a palette of colors—to create an image. The process of coming to agreement on a set of affirmative statements creates a compelling vision of the organization at its best, and this in itself motivates new behavior. People take initiative and act differently because these statements align organizational visions with people's internal sense of what is important.

Grounding the group in historical tradition and facts distinguishes Appreciative Inquiry from other visioning methods in which dreams serve as the primary basis for the vision. Because the appreciative statements are reality-based, people connect to them and are inspired to do what works.

Dream statements will vary from group to group, but, if done with care, they will reflect the power, drama, and excitement of the group. Here are some examples of NGO dream statements:

- We provide an important service to the community.
- We know our service is appreciated by many, and it is our commitment to service that helps others.
- We are respected for our knowledge in the field and our willingness to share it.
- We devote time to learning more to keep our expertise current.

DESIGN

Create the structure, processes, and relationships that will support the dream—what should the ideal be? How can we create an organization that supports our ideal vision of the future?

The next step is to design the ideal organization or part of the organization so that it can support the dream statements. The essential question that focuses the work is this: "What would our organization look like if we realized our dreams for the future?" An NGO working with youth might have the dream statement, "Youth are included in all levels of decision making in this organization." An organization with this ideal would have youth representatives on the board of directors and as members of various committees.

DELIVERY/DESTINY

This stage of the process is evolving from the development of an implementation plan, or delivery, to a more free-form approach, destiny, which applies AI throughout the organization and lets the process take over, rather than a plan.

The delivery or destiny stage focuses on the momentum for change and keeping the AI process going throughout the organization. In this way, the process itself changes the organization into the type it envisions itself to be. The organization can sustain itself through the momentum of the process, bringing other stakeholders into the process and acting on the group's dream statements.

ACTIVITY 2:1

OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

The topic for our Appreciative Inquiry is: How do you create an effective team of Peace Corps Volunteers? Work with a group of three to five other training participants. Take turns conducting appreciative interviews and using the information to create an effective team of Volunteers.

DISCOVERY

Ask the interviewee, "What was the best team experience you ever had?" Ask the interviewee to use that experience to answer the following questions:

- What was truly exceptional?
- What went right?
- What were the elements that made it exceptional?
- How did you feel about being involved?
- What did you hear others saying?

Listen to the stories.

Take a few minutes to reflect on the interviews. What are some of the common themes of people's peak team experiences? Write them in the space below or on a flip chart.

Common Themes of Peak Team Experiences

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________

Continued

Activity 2:1, continued

DREAM

Based on the common themes that emerged from the interviews with fellow trainees write three to five appreciative statements. Use the criteria for appreciative statements in the previous table to assess their strength. Note your dream statements below or on a flip chart.

Dream Statements

1. Our team ______________________________

2. Our team ______________________________

3. Our team ______________________________

DESIGN

In the design phase, we brainstorm ideas and develop strategies. It is during this phase that we think about action. What can we do to move closer to our dreams? Consider the dream statements your team developed. What ideas or strategies could you implement to create an effective team of PCVs? Write them below or on a flip chart.

Ideas and Strategies

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

4. ______________________________

5. ______________________________

6. ______________________________

7. ______________________________

Continued

Activity 2:1, continued

DELIVERY/DESTINY

In this step of the 4-D cycle, we develop a plan for how to proceed. It is important to make a plan that excites and energizes your team and makes use of the unique talents and interests represented by your team members. Write your action steps below or on a flip chart.

Action plan to deliver our dreams and achieve our destiny

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________

Imagination is more important than knowledge.

— Albert Einstein

As Peace Corps Volunteers, you may be interested in some of the underlying concepts of Appreciative Inquiry. The concepts are pulled from many different areas and have evolved into a powerful development methodology.

Image and action are linked. David Cooperrider's research shows this relationship quite clearly, with many examples from diverse fields such as medicine (the placebo effect) and education (Pygmalion effect or the halo effect). The behavior of human beings is influenced not only by the past and current environment, but also by our images of the future. Successful organizations have a widely shared, positive guiding image that galvanizes action. Therefore, in the Appreciative Inquiry 4-D process, a great deal of time is spent in creating a shared dream or vision for the organization.

Organizations move in the direction of the questions they ask. The seeds of change are sowed in the first questions asked. The kinds of questions you ask of each other determine what you find, and what you find determines the journey's direction. How you approach organizations or communities has tremendous implications. What is the starting point? Does one look for what is wrong or look at what works, where the innovations are, what excites people about the place, what they are most proud of, and their deeply held values? The first step in the 4-D cycle is to discover what works in an organization.

All organizations have something about their past to value. Organizations, no matter how conflicted at the moment, can find a best practice, a set of experiences, or a time in history when things worked well. Instead of spending all of the time searching for deficits, balance things out by spending time analyzing what has worked well in the past. This work provides a platform from which to spring toward the future. The stronger the focus on what worked in the past, the further out and more vibrant the dream of the future. Organizations are not fully aware of their own potential. By beginning the visioning process with an inquiry aimed at discovering moments of excellence, the stage is set to allow richer and more provocative possibilities to emerge.

Organizations are not fixed. So often organizations are maligned rather than appreciated and understood. They are seen as problems or, worse yet, as unavoidable evils that are needed to make things happen in the world. It is easy to start thinking about organizations as if they cannot be changed; yet human beings created them. Virtually any pattern, system, or structure created by humans is open to alteration.

Building appreciative skills is a key leadership task. Appreciative leaders are those who notice and heighten positive potential within an organization and see radical possibilities beyond the boundaries of problems. Appreciation has a tremendous mobilizing affect. Effective leaders understand how to use this to bring people together around issues of mutual concern.

Appreciative leaders are able to engage organizational members in dialogue by asking the right questions. For example, "If we were able to do one thing tomorrow, and if we did it superbly well and consistently, would it have significant positive results in our work?" They ask questions that encourage people to recognize what is good and positive. These leaders engage in dialogues to learn, to be creative, to dream, to act.

Appreciative Inquiry works in different cultures. The experiences of many that have used this approach confirm that AI works well in different cultures. AI has been used in Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Egypt, Peru, Panama, India, Senegal, Uganda, and Russia. In some cultures storytelling, a valuing of the best of the past, and community-wide processes for consensus building are common.

What about "fatalistic cultures?" (A fatalistic culture tends toward accepting without question that something cannot be changed.) Those who have worked extensively in such cultures say that it is particularly important to stimulate hope where people are already overcome by the weight of fatalism. An unbalanced focus on problems and their structural causes can be overwhelming. It is precisely in cultures where fatalism is dominant that approaches centered on positive attitudes and values make the greatest contribution.

To understand what is happening today
or what will happen in the future,
I look back.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

AN NGO'S STORY

A Peruvian NGO participated in the Global Excellence in Management (GEM)'s Organizational Excellence Program. As a part of its visioning work, it developed a provocative proposition about creating a network of NGOs in Peru and changing its own role from that of a provider of direct services to one of capacity-builder of other organizations. In a bold attempt to take action, it organized a workshop called Imagine Cono Norte that brought together NGO staff and grass-roots leaders of Cono Norte (Northern Cone region of Lima, with a population of about two million people) to identify assets of the region and create propositions for the future.

(From *Getting Comfortable with Appreciative Inquiry;* reprinted with permission by Claudia Leibler, director of Global Excellence in Management) Internet: www.geminitiative.org/getting.html

The power of AI is the "can-do" attitude it fosters. You are likely to have only a few opportunities to use the full-blown AI process. But there will be many opportunities in your Volunteer service to start a conversation by asking people about their peak experiences; to dream together about a future grounded in the reality of past successes; to design a project, program, and organizational structures that support people's vision of what "should be."

Appreciative Inquiry fosters positive attitudes for approaching change.

INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Asking the right questions is magic. Who answers the questions, when they are asked, how they are asked, how the answers are listened to, and how answers are collected, interpreted, and used makes a difference.

At the heart of all good appreciative and participatory approaches is sensitive interviewing—listening to others "generously." Without it, no matter which methods and approaches we use, the conversations and discussions will yield poor information and limited understanding.

Strong interviewing skills largely depend on self-awareness, perceptive listening, and careful observation. These qualities take time to develop and refine.

Interviewing in a culture and/or language different from your own presents additional challenges. We suggest that you identify and train local individuals with good "people skills" who want to improve their interviewing skills. This way you transfer skills and increase local capacity. Below is a set of interviewing tips you may want to share.

INTERVIEWING TIPS

The interviewing planning process should be a team effort.

- Identify the major topics/issues.
- Determine what the team thinks is important to understand more about.
- Decide who will be interviewed, where, when, and how.
- Plan how interviews will be conducted and information recorded.
- Assign roles and responsibilities and promote good group dynamics.
- Carefully formulate open-ended and nondirective questions, using:

  Who . . .?

  Where . . .?

  When . . .?

  What . . .?

  Why . . .?

  How . . .?

Raise awareness on the importance of setting, timing, body language, seating arrangements, biases. Encourage sensitive listening and an open attitude among all participants.

Develop an “opening statement” on who the information is for, why the information is being collected, how the information will be handled, and confidentiality. (One AI practitioner found that attributing quotes on appreciative dream statements substantially increased positive conversations throughout the organization.)

Sequence the questions to achieve a conversational rhythm. Start with descriptive questions about present behaviors, activities, and experience. Later, move to tougher questions about interpretations, opinions, or feelings about behaviors and activities described. Ask questions about knowledge and skills bearing on the issue at hand. Ask questions about past activities first, then about the present, then the future—do they see applications for the future?

Be quiet and let the person talk—do not be afraid of a bit of silence. If you ask a question that demands some thought, give your respondents a moment to collect their thoughts before answering. Ask questions one at a time; avoid double questions that require respondents to figure out your meaning before answering the question. Avoid asking “why” too often. Use questions that are neutral (nonjudgmental). Consider asking people to respond via role-playing or ask simulation questions (e.g., “Suppose ...”).

Preface questions when required. Do so to focus people’s attention and to give them time to prepare to change the subject. Make transitions easy: Announce the beginning of the next section of an interview.

Summarize to bring closure to a section. Ask if the respondent has anything to add. You can also make a direct announcement: “What I’m going to ask next …”

Ask probing and follow-up questions if required. Ask these kinds of questions to obtain additional detail, to fill in information that seems to be partial, and when you think the answer could use elaboration or clarification.

Support and recognize your interviewee’s responses. Make sure you give cross-culturally appropriate verbal and nonverbal support. Your interview has to be two-sided, not an interrogation.

Facilitate obtaining the information you need. Listen carefully to make sure the interview is working. Adjust your questions, your approach, your style, or your focus if you are not getting the information you need. This is distinct from the fact that data may simply not exist—make sure you know the difference. Give signals to encourage the respondents, redirect, and move on as required. As the interview winds down, let respondents know how long you think the interview will take. If it is taking much longer than anticipated, negotiate additional time or schedule an additional visit.

Record data. Before you begin, ask permission to record. Tape-record the interview and transcribe it; to do this you will need reliable recording equipment and a person who knows the issues well enough to faithfully transcribe. Or you can take notes during an interview (and, rarely, after the interview), which is a much more common way to record the data.

“The important thing is not to stop questioning.
Curiosity has its own reason for existing.
One cannot help but be in awe when one
contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life,
of the marvelous structure of reality.”

— Albert Einstein

ACTIVITY 2:2

TRY OUT YOUR QUESTIONING SKILLS

Work in groups of two or three to reword/rearrange the following “yes-no” questions to be affirmative and open-ended. What problems arise from each of the “yes-no” versions?

- Talking with a person who looks disappointed:
  “So you didn’t like that, huh?”
- A pilot to a new copilot:
  “Do you know how to fly this thing?”
- A nurse to a patient:
  “Have you been taking your medication?”
- Parent to teen:
  “Don’t you think it would be better if you did your homework first?”
- One colleague to another:
  “Do you think that plan will work?”

Note: Sample answers are found at the end of the module.

Can you think of ways to use open-ended appreciative questions in your daily Volunteer life? How might the ability to ask open-ended appreciative questions affect your ability to work with NGO stakeholders?

EXAMPLES OF POWERFUL QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Why do you feel this is important?
2. How does it feel when you achieve a personal goal?
3. How would you describe your success?
4. What can you do to replicate your success?
5. How would you describe the path to the future?
6. What do you see as your role in the future?
7. What has worked? Describe what you have learned.
8. Have you experienced anything like this before? What did you do?
9. What can you do yourself? With others?
10. What do you hope for?
11. If you could make one change, what would it be?
12. Imagine a successful point in the future. What does it look like?
13. What part would you want to play in the future?
14. What would you want to share?

Appreciative interviewing is not limited to the discovery phase of the AI process. Use these interview techniques anytime you need to to gather information. As a Volunteer you are constantly asking questions to learn about the culture, how the local economy functions, how your host agency works, etc. Ask your questions appreciatively.

Over and over again Counterparts and host country NGO partners express their appreciation for PCVs' enthusiasm, optimism, and "can-do" attitude. AI and other asset-based approaches compliment these Volunteer strengths. Use your personal strengths and the asset approaches when building individual, organizational, and community capacity—they will serve you well.

One last thought as you use asset approaches. It is essential to consciously seek to involve those who are often ignored—the poor, women, minorities, the very young, and the very old. They too bring unique assets to the development process.

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KEY TERMS

Key terms are defined as they are used in the module. A __space__ is provided to write the translation of the word or phrase into the local language. Work with your language teachers to find the right translations and build your technical vocabulary as you study this module.

Appreciate refers to the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, best practices, success, and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems.

Appreciative Inquiry "refers to both a search for knowledge and a theory of intentional collective actions which are designed to help evolve the normative vision and will of a group, organization or society as a whole." (Cooperrider, D.L., and S. Sirvastra, *Collaborating for Change: Appreciative Inquiry*. Berrett–Koehler, San Francisco. 2000. p. 159)

Asset refers to something that has a future value. An NGO's assets are not limited to money, buildings, and equipment; they include committed people, a respected organization, and the capacity to put ideas into action.

Inquire is the act of exploration and discovery: to ask questions, to be open, and to see new potentials and possibilities. Synonyms: discovery, search, systematic exploration, and study.

Stakeholders are those who work with, benefit from, and/or care about an organization.

Vision refers to a shared idea of the results to be achieved.

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RESOURCES

These resources are available through the Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange (ICE). The citations are presented as they appear in *The Whole Ice Catalog.*

The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry. Sue Annis Hammond. (Kodiak Consulting.) 1996. 61 pp. (ICE No. TR110)

Simple, practical explanation of "Appreciative Inquiry" and how to use it. Also includes useful information on project planning and nongovernmental organization development.

Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets. John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. (ACTA Publications.) 1993. 376 pp. (ICE No. CD051)

Guide to asset-based community development, summarizing lessons learned by studying successful community-building initiatives in hundreds of U.S. neighborhoods. Outlines what local communities can do to start their own asset-based development, including how to rediscover their local assets; how to combine and mobilize these strengths; and how "outsiders" in government can effectively contribute to the process of asset-based development.

Internet:

www.mapnp.org/library an Internet library source for many topics including AI.

www.mgeneral.com — source for innovative management concepts including AI.

www.idealist.org — a site with links and information to the world of NGOs and AI.

www.geminitiative.org – organization funded by USAID that works with the AI and asset-based approaches.

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ACTIVITY 2:2 Reference

SAMPLE ANSWERS

There are a number of possible answers. The open-ended questions need to lead to a more detailed answer than a yes or a no, and the affirming question needs to have a sense of the positive and possible.

Talking with a person who looks disappointed:

Closed: So you didn’t like that, huh?

Open-ended: How do you feel about what happened?

Affirming: What did you learn from what happened?

A pilot to a new copilot:

Closed: Do you know how to fly this thing?

Open-ended: How did you learn how to fly?

Affirming: What is your most exciting flying story?

A nurse to a patient:

Closed: Have you been taking your medication?

Open-ended: Tell me about your medication?

Affirming: What improvements have you seen with your medication?

Parent to teen:

Closed: Don’t you think it would be better if you did your homework first?

Open-ended: What is your plan for homework?

Affirming: What success have you found in completing your homework?

One colleague to another:

Closed: Do you think that plan will work?

Open-ended: How do you think the plan will work?

Affirming: What indicators of success do you feel the plan provides?

TRAINER'S NOTES

MODULE 2
EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH ASSET-BASED APPROACHES

Overview:

In this module participants learn about and practice methods using the asset-based approaches, including Appreciative Inquiry (AI), to empower people and strengthen NGOs. Interviewing skills are covered as a necessary component of the asset-based approach.

Time:

Reading	1 hour
Activities and debriefing activities	3 hours

Materials:

Flip charts, markers, and a map of training community or a typical community.

Preparation:

- Review the module and adapt readings and activities to fit the local circumstances.
- Asset-based approaches are about an attitude toward approaching change. This attitude is especially critical for Peace Corps Volunteers. The Volunteers are more likely to be accepted into the community as partners when they approach people at their sites in an appreciative way, looking for what is good rather than what is wrong. Find examples of the assets of local people, their organizations, communities, and culture to share with training participants.
- Visit some of the websites listed in the Resources section at the end of the module to access current information on AI and asset-based methods.
- Arrange for additional resource materials to be available for training participants.
- Design a training plan for the module that includes how materials will be copied and distributed to training participants and a training schedule. Make special arrangements for activities, if needed. Schedule activity debriefings, and schedule time with training participants to assess the extent to which the module's learning objectives have been achieved.
- Display the training schedule in a location accessible to training participants and staff.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 2:1
OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Overview:

To master a technique people need practice. This activity provides training participants with the opportunity to practice all four steps of the Appreciative Inquiry process and gain an appreciation of the power of appreciative thinking.

Time: 2 hours

Materials:

Flip chart and markers.

Procedure:

Ask each training participant to recall the best team experience they ever had. Each participant is then asked to tell the story of that experience while the rest of the group is encouraged to engage in dialogue with the speaker. The facilitator encourages members to set aside their clichés and preconceptions, get firmly grounded in their memory of the actual experience, and fully explore what about themselves, the situations, the task, and others made this a "peak" experience.

Using information from the discovery phase, training participants move through the three remaining phases of the AI process to realize their vision of an effective team of Peace Corps Volunteers.

Note: The topic of this activity can be changed to explore a local issue. An Appreciative Inquiry topic related to local youth could be interesting.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

The group is likely to get excited and charged as they discuss their experiences. When people are engaged in stories and positive experiences, they tend to "come alive" and share more of themselves and their insights. The group may find the dream statements a challenge to write. Once the group "breaks through" and comes to a consensus of what is meaningful, exciting, and important to them as a group, they will see and/or experience the power of a common vision and understanding of the future. Pulling from their own positive experiences and stories can help Volunteers in many situations throughout their Peace Corps service.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY2:2
TRY OUT YOUR QUESTIONING SKILLS

Overview:

In this activity participants practice developing appreciative open-ended questions.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

Flip chart and markers.

Procedure:

In groups of two or three work through the questions below. Translate each of the "yes-no" questions into an "open-ended" question. Have the trainees discuss the problems that may arise with each of the "yes-no" versions. Ask them to make each of the questions affirmative. Note: Sample answers are found at the end of the module.

- Talking with a person who looks disappointed:
  "So you didn't like that, huh?"
- A pilot to a new co-pilot:
  "Do you know how to fly this thing?"
- A nurse to a patient:
  "Have you been taking your medication?"
- Parent to teen:
  "Don't you think it would be better if you did your homework first?"
- One colleague to another:
  "Do you think that plan will work?"

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

- Was it easy to convert each question into an open-ended question?
- Was it more difficult to make it an affirming question?
- Can you think of examples in your own life where you could use more affirming questioning skills?
- How might changing your questioning style help in your work with NGOs?


NGO GUIDE
An NGO Training Guide for
Peace Corps Volunteers
Module 3:
NGO
Organizational
Development

MODULE 3

NGO ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Readings and activities in Module 3, "NGO Organizational Development," are designed to familiarize you with organizational development (OD) as it applies to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). You will learn about and practice using the "NGO Capacity Profile," an OD tool adapted by the Peace Corps and used successfully by Volunteers and their Counterparts in their efforts to strengthen NGOs. By the time you finish this module you should have developed the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to:

- Summarize in one or two sentences the responsibilities of each "functional system" in a well-managed NGO.
- Demonstrate an ability to interact with an NGO stakeholder by facilitating the assessment of an NGO's capacity.
- Describe what it means to use the NGO Capacity Profile in an appreciative and participatory manner.
- Give examples of how the NGO Capacity Profile can be used: to assess the strengths and weakness of an NGO, to develop a plan for the NGO's organizational development, to monitor progress of an NGO's development, and to identify how a Volunteer can work with an NGO.

A VOLUNTEER'S STORY

I work with a women's organization called Shohola—it means a ray of sunlight, and these women are that. They were a small group of women doing volunteer work for the community. We started collecting work materials from people in the village of 13,000 people and managed to set up a proper NGO. We designed a two-year plan.

Eighteen months later Shohola has a large office and a "food security" program that provides meals for housebound people. We teach classes in nutrition, hygiene, sanitation, and sewing and weaving. We have established a locally controlled microcredit union with Shohola as the mother organization. We also have a small restaurant and store in the bazaar, grow our own poultry, and produce yarn and garments to generate income. We've also managed to get some grants.

Our latest project is an information center with a library of daily newspapers, computers, and computer classes. Tax consultants come to our village to teach classes in the center.

We worked together, we worked hard, we faced some hardships, and we overcame them.

"To achieve greatness:
Start where you are,
Use what you have,
Do what you can."

— Arthur Ashe, tennis champion

STRENGTHENING NGOS' ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organizational development of NGOs requires:

- Understanding how an NGO functions—determining where the organization is.
- Using the NGO's human and monetary resources to build a viable organization—use what you have.
- Planning and implementing actions that enable the NGO to improve people's lives—do what you can.
- Strengthening an organization's ability and capacity to effectively provide services to its various clients, stakeholders, and constituents.
- Becoming a learning organization.
- Continually adapting to changing internal and external environments.
- Sustaining its finances, operations, and benefits.

The functioning of a human body and the functioning of an NGO may at first appear to be unrelated. Yet, both rely on the interaction of a number of functional systems. Our body quits functioning if one of its systems—nervous, circulatory, skeletal-muscular, digestive, etc.—fails. Doctors often find it necessary to check the functioning of different systems before prescribing treatment. Treatment can be targeted once the source of the health problem is clearly identified. The same applies to improving the health of an NGO. It is useful to look at each of the organization's systems before planning changes to increase the NGO's capacity. Remember, "capacity is the ability to put an idea into action." The idea an NGO wants to put into action is expressed in its mission statement.

Diagnosing how an NGO functions, identifying the organization's resources, and strengthening an NGO requires observing, studying, and analyzing the organization over time, taking into account the many and varied facets in the organization's internal and external environment.

> *"It profits us to strengthen nonprofits."*
>
> — Peter F. Drucker
> *The Wall Street Journal*, 1991

You will probably be struck by a number of similarities in OD between for-profit businesses and NGOs. A well-run business and a well-run NGO have much in common. Peter Drucker and others have consistently pointed out that NGOs need to adopt business practices. This is good news for Volunteers—your business knowledge can be put to use to increase the operational capacity of NGOs.

THE NGO CAPACITY PROFILE, AN OD TOOL

Organizational development is a challenging process. Several OD instruments have been developed in recent years to diagnose organizational ills and help design strategies to strengthen organizations. The Peace Corps acquired and modified one of these tools, the NGO Capacity Profile, to assist Volunteers and their Counterparts with NGO organizational development. It facilitates change by enabling users to look at an NGO's systems in a structured way and providing indicators of healthy systems that point the way to positive change.

There is a copy of the NGO Capacity Profile in the Appendix to this module. Please look over this tool to get a general idea of how it is organized before continuing your reading.

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A Learning Moment

Fold your hands together with one hand on top of the other. Notice which hand is on the top. Now reverse hands——if your right hand was on top, fold your hands with the left on top. How does it feel?

Most people report that it feels strange, not quite right. Changing the position of your hands is about the smallest change you might make in life, and even this minichange takes some getting used to. Be sensitive to the discomfort NGO stakeholders are experiencing as they make changes in their organizations.

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The NGO Capacity Profile is a modification of the Foundation for Civil Society's "NGO Characteristics Assessment for Recommended Development" (NGO CARD). It has been simplified and adapted to reflect the asset approach to development that the Peace Corps recommends. The NGO CARD was tested with the cooperation of more than 200 NGOs in Slovakia in 1996–97 by the Foundation for Civil Society. Other development organizations in different parts of the world have designed similar diagnostic instruments.

Since 1998, Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, and NGO partners have used the NGO Capacity Profile and previous versions of this tool to:

- Educate Volunteers about how NGOs develop and what are the indicators of an NGO with a high level of capacity.
- Assist programming staff during site development in determining the types of activities a Volunteer might accomplish at a site.
- Build the capacity of the NGO to organize scarce resources, and to justify actions to donors or authorities.
- Facilitate communications between Volunteer and Counterpart when a local language copy of the NGO Capacity Profile is available.
- Help Volunteers and their Counterparts identify how the Volunteer's skills can help the NGO.
- Provide a vision for NGO leaders and Volunteers of how a well-run NGO operates.
- Promote deeper staff understanding of NGO operations.
- Plan NGO staff development and design staff trainings.
- Create organizational operating and/or strategic plans.
- Develop an organizational monitoring and evaluation plan.
- Report to donors on NGO operations.

The NGO Capacity Profile is most effective when it is used "appreciatively." Use Appreciative Inquiry methods (discussed in Module 2 of *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers*) along with the NGO Capacity Profile to identify an NGO's strengths, help establish a vision for an NGO, and monitor progress in building organizational capacity.

We focus now on familiarizing you with an NGO's functional systems and showing you how to use the NGO Capacity Profile. Activity 3:4 at the end of the module provides you with an opportunity to use the NGO Capacity Profile.

AN NGO'S FUNCTIONAL SYSTEMS

What follows are the six major systems common to most NGOs, if not all:

1. Programs
2. Governance
3. Management
4. Human Resources
5. Financial Resources
6. External Relations

Below is an overview of each functional system. (For a more in-depth treatment of these topics, see the Resources section at the end of this module.) You may already have noticed that the NGO Capacity Profile is divided into these same six functional systems. The capacity levels may well differ from system to system. This is to be expected. In fact, some struggling NGOs may not realize that a particular system is necessary. The NGO Capacity Profile contains a series of questions concerning each functional system followed by a number of indicators to determine the system's capacity level.

Programs are the strongest signal of the success and value of an NGO. The organization may have excellent governance, effective administrative procedures, and a highly skilled staff, but it must use these resources to deliver quality services to its constituents and community. A well-run NGO ensures that its programs are sustained in addition to being appropriate quality services delivered in cost-effective ways.

Most NGOs provide services rather than products, and the variety of services NGO programs deliver is truly amazing. They provide activities for youth, increase awareness of the environment, deliver relief services, sponsor cultural events, promote health practices to prevent HIV/AIDS and other diseases, engage in micro-lending, and address women's issues. One NGO in Thailand even collects bodies and gives them a proper burial. This list only begins to indicate the scope of NGO services.

Providing effective quality programs requires an understanding of community needs, specialized technical knowledge, and unique approaches to service delivery. A for-profit service business faces similar challenges. However, one characteristic of NGO service delivery differs from for-profit businesses—the efficiency of service delivery is measured by client benefit/cost, not sales dollars/cost.

Assessing the impact—what changes in clients' lives as a result of an NGO's services—is an integral piece of program capacity. The following story illustrates why impact assessment is important.

AN NGO STORY

An NGO receives funding for a project to address Vitamin A deficiency by encouraging women to grow spinach in their kitchen gardens. Two years later, hundreds of households are growing spinach. Is this an example of a successful project? "There is not enough information" might be the answer of many NGOs and their donors who are seriously considering how to assess the impact of their projects and programs. There is no real sense of how much spinach is actually being eaten, whether the people enjoy the spinach, whether they plan to grow and eat spinach after the project ends, and, most important, whether there is a reduction in Vitamin A deficiency.

Is the intended impact of the spinach project being achieved? Is Vitamin A deficiency decreasing in families that grow spinach? Are there other positive or negative impacts of the project: increases in women's blood iron level, decrease in the family's calories because they grow spinach instead of a more calorie-rich food, or increase in family income because the spinach is fed to rabbits that are sold?

The moral of the spinach story is, "Build impact assessment into NGO projects beginning at the planning stage." Look for ways staff and volunteers can easily collect data over time. Impact data help NGOs design better projects and persuade donors to support those projects.

Often NGOs request Peace Corps Volunteers with technical expertise and know-how to assist them in improving their programs and services. Often these Volunteers find that improving service quality also requires building the capacity of the NGO's other five functional systems.

Governance provides the leadership, direction, and legitimacy for an organization. Typical NGO founders are charismatic individuals with a strong commitment to a cause or purpose and a definite set of ideas about how to serve that cause. However, other staff and constituents need to share the founders' understanding and commitment if the organization is to be sustained.

Leadership is more effective if it is open to a wide variety of opinions and talents. Effective NGO leaders use the talents and enthusiasm of all NGO stakeholders—board members, staff, community members, clients, and even donors. Leaders are also more effective if they are focused and consistent, so they will be trusted and followed. Above all, good NGO leadership fosters the involvement and participation of the NGO's stakeholders and the community.

NGO leadership must articulate and maintain the organization's mission. An NGO's leadership includes members of the organization's board and staff in management positions. The board's function is to provide policy direction, ensure organizational planning, and hire and direct the NGO's senior manager. The board customarily performs fundraising and public relations functions.

Management is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization and implementing the board's policies and plans. Both the board and management monitor the internal and external environment and are responsible for adapting to change.

All too often, boards tend to micromanage and managers take on the role of the board in setting the NGO's direction and policies. A common issue in NGO governance is the different roles of the board and management. This issue and other governance topics are covered in Module 5 of *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers.*

ACTIVITY 3:1

LEADERSHIP

Think of five or six people from all walks of life, past or present, from business, government, religion, education, etc. (including the host country), whom you consider “real” leaders. Write their names on a sheet of paper.

Compare and contrast your leaders list with the lists of your fellow trainees. Why were certain leaders included on the lists? Do they have common characteristics? Do some names appear on more than one person’s list, and, if so, were they included for the same reasons? How do you think your list might differ if you did this five or even 10 years ago?

Management is responsible for coordinating activities that implement the governing body’s plans and achieve the organization’s mission. Managers of small NGOs oversee all aspects of the organization with little need for systems and procedures. As the NGO grows, there is increased reliance on procedures and information systems to keep management informed so they can coordinate the organization’s activities.

Systems should not exist for their own sake. In addition to determining if there are basic operational and management systems, it is particularly pertinent to ask which systems are helpful and which are not. Also, are there significant differences between the formal systems and procedures and the ways that things really get done?

Human resources: Volunteers are a distinguishing human resource characteristic of NGOs and why these organizations achieve their missions at relatively low cost. Volunteers serve on governing boards, deliver services to clients, and often act in management positions. As the organization grows, the NGO’s human resources become a mix of paid staff and volunteers.

The model NGO determines what functions need to be performed to achieve its mission and allocates the work or assigns tasks. Management regularly updates assignments in light of changing plans and priorities. Management aims for an optimum match between the human resources (staff and volunteers), their skills and expertise, and the tasks they are assigned..

An NGO’s human resources (staff and volunteers) need skills, motivation, and opportunities to make the best contribution they are capable of. It is necessary to organize staff and volunteers so they relate to each other in ways that are most conducive to productive outcomes. How these people make decisions, resolve conflicts, communicate, and conduct meetings is as important as how the work is designed and how jobs are organized and work allocated.

There is no single motivator of people in any organization. There are many types of motivators, such as money, a sense of service, the opportunity to use or maximize a skill or interest, opportunities for recognition and advancement, etc. Effective motivators appeal to the individual and reward behaviors that make it possible for the organization to achieve its mission.

ACTIVITY 3:2

WHAT MOTIVATES?

Brainstorm ways you are motivated that are not related to financial compensation. What are your top three or four nonfinancial motivators? Writing the answers to this question and those below on a note pad or in your journal may help you clarify your thinking and prepare you to share your thoughts with others.

Does motivation have cross-cultural implications? Do you think your host country Counterpart will be motivated in the same way you are? Discuss with your host family, language instructor, and/or host country friends how they are motivated.

What are the similarities and differences between what motivates people in your host country and what motivates people in the United States? Check with your Peace Corps trainers and PCVs who have been in the country for several months to see if they concur with your conclusions.

What techniques do you think will be effective in motivating NGO stakeholders at your Peace Corps site?

Financial resources: What an organization can achieve depends to a certain extent on the financial resources it has available and how well they are managed. A viable NGO has systems and procedures in place to ensure it has the funds to purchase the goods and services needed to conduct its affairs and is delivering services to constituents in a cost-effective manner.

NGOs cannot be burdened with unnecessarily complicated procedures or systems. An NGO will be better served if it has simple mechanisms in place for organizing cash disbursements and receipts, maintaining ledgers/journals and bank accounts, and meeting payroll, petty cash, and daily expenses. It is critical as well that the financial systems meet the requirements of donors, lenders, or clients who pay for the goods and services. Separate accounts probably will be needed for each significant donor, so that the funds can be tracked to assure money is spent in accordance with the conditions of the gift.

It is a mistake to rely on the goodness of NGO people and ignore “internal control.” To avoid the misappropriation of cash and other assets, simple procedures such as requiring two signatures on checks, keeping a lock box for petty cash, and authorizing expenditures based on budgets go a long way.

In addition to having adequate resources and necessary cash flow, an NGO should have a diverse resource base and long-term plans for meeting its financial needs. Reliance on one or a few funding sources may result in serious problems. An NGO is more financially sound if it can diversify its funding base, secure multiyear rather than short-term grants, and build up reserves to see the organization through tough financial times. It is also helpful if the organization can recover from constituents or clients some of its costs with fees and charges, or if it can generate other forms of support such as in-kind contributions or revenue from income-generating activities.

PCVs often help organize financial systems and work with Counterparts to put an NGO’s “financial house in order.”

External relations: External relations are essential for an NGO to build links and supportive partnerships. These relationships depend on the NGO becoming known within pertinent communities and establishing an image and track record that reflects its achievements. Building these types of relationships will strengthen and widen its impact through partnerships and collaboration with government agencies and other organizations and NGOs active in the same sectors and geographic areas.

The NGO’s primary relationship is with the community or constituency it serves, whether as an advocate or as a direct service provider. Additionally, the NGO will want to make contacts and enhance its reputation with government agencies and officials, with other NGOs, and with the for-profit business sector. Communities and the NGO’s constituents are best served when the government, business, and NGO sectors cooperate to deliver the goods and services citizens need and want.

ACTIVITY 3:3

BUILDING AN NGO'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Volunteers have well-deserved reputations for their ability to network and build relationships among organizations. Your Peace Corps project—agricultural, business, education, environment, health, municipal development, water and sanitation, or youth—will serve as an example of how to transfer your networking skills to a situation in your host country.

How would you build external relationships with other organizations that can help your Peace Corps project achieve its goals and purpose?

At home you might begin an environmental action project by contacting all the local organizations, the mayor, the local high school environmental club; then national organizations like the Sierra Club; and finally international organizations like Greenpeace.

Which government agencies, NGOs, and other organizations in your host country would you approach to collaborate with your Peace Corps project? How would you approach them? What types of cooperation would you suggest? Seek the assistance of your technical trainer, language instructors, and host family to develop a list of networking ideas. Try to understand the organization's function and the role it might play in making it possible for your project to achieve its purpose and goals. What are the cultural effects on networking and organizational collaborations?

USING THE NGO CAPACITY PROFILE

The NGO Capacity Profile may be introduced to NGO's leaders during a site development visit by Peace Corps staff. However, the decision to use the profile usually starts with a discussion between a Volunteer and his or her NGO Counterpart(s) about the organization, the organization's goals, what parts of the organization need strengthening, and what will be the Volunteer's role in working with the NGO.

At some point in the conversation, the Volunteer may suggest using the NGO Capacity Profile to analyze the organization's operations before deciding on a plan of action to strengthen the organization. The next step is to explain how the NGO Capacity Profile can be used as an OD tool—it serves as a map to guide the OD process. If possible, a local language version of the NGO Capacity Profile should be made available.

Note: If the NGO Capacity Profile seems too complex for the NGO you are working with, simplify the document to fit the situation. Perhaps only one or two targeted questions need to be asked about each of the six functional systems. A copy of the NGO Capacity Profile is found in the Appendix to this module. It is available electronically at Peace Corps posts to facilitate modification and adaptation to local situations.

Planning to use the NGO Capacity Profile: An interviewer gathers the information by asking the questions listed in the left column of the NGO Capacity Profile about each of the organization's functional systems. NGO stakeholders answer the questions. Three important decisions must be made before data are collected:

1. Which functional areas of the organization will be investigated, all six or only selected systems.
2. Who is the best person(s) to ask the questions, record the answers, and fill out the profile.
3. Who are the appropriate stakeholders to answer the questions.

A complete picture of an NGO's capacity requires collecting data for all six functional systems. But this may exceed the NGO's current needs. It may be more productive to concentrate on a few functional areas where there is the greatest possibility for positive change. The NGO's leaders should look through the NGO Capacity Profile to determine a suitable scope for the analysis.

PCVs involved in interviewing NGO stakeholders learn about the organization and, at the same time, collect information that will be useful for the organization's leaders. PCVs who have difficulty with the local language may need the assistance of a more experienced Volunteer, a Peace Corps staff member, or a local individual who can translate questions and answers. Also, consider using a local facilitator to ask the questions, and/or record responses.

As a PCV you can observe, assist in transferring information to the profile, and in assist in the analysis.

Careful consideration has been given to providing sample questions in the left column of the NGO Capacity Profile for every component of the NGO's operation. This does not mean, though, that every question must or should be asked by the interviewer. The interviewer may find that by asking one or two key questions relating to a component, sufficient discussion in the topic area will be generated to determine the organization's capacity.

In a small NGO, one or two founders may be able to answer all the questions. Still, it is useful to talk with some clients or beneficiaries of the organization concerning the quality of the NGO's programs and services. The interviewer for a larger NGO may need to talk with board members and senior NGO management about governance, an accountant about the financial resources, a program manager and clients about programs and services, and so forth.

Interviewing: In advance of the interview select questions from the left column of the NGO Capacity Profile that are appropriate for the NGO. Modify questions, if needed, and translate into the local language. Interviewing involves asking questions, listening to and accurately recording responses, and following up with additional appropriate questions. Some issues to consider in developing interviewing protocols are:

- Establish rapport with the interviewee as quickly as possible.
- Explain the goals of the NGO assessment.
- Explain your role.
- Have nothing with you except the materials needed for the interview (questions, note pad, and pen). Don't ask the question and give multiple choice answers from the indicators in columns two, three, and four of the NGO Capacity Profile. This procedure might bias responses; the interviewer is seeking honest opinion from the interviewee.
- Begin the interview with noncontroversial questions. (The program area was listed first in the NGO Capacity Profile because NGO stakeholders are usually a lot more comfortable talking about programs than financial issues or personnel policies.)
- Ask questions appreciatively—what does the NGO do or what resources does the NGO have, not what doesn't it do or have.
- Allow the person time to think, then listen carefully to what he or she has to say. Do not rush on to the next question.
- Tell the interviewee if information will be confidential or not. If you want to tape the interview, ask for permission to do so.
- Think about the interview from the respondent's point of view.

- Be sure to write the date and identify the respondent on the first page of your interview notes. Review your notes and make sure they are legible. Make sure that every question that should be answered has a response.
- End the interview by asking if there are any other relevant and important issues that were not covered in the interview, or if there is anything that the respondent wants to ask you.

Processing and analyzing the data: After the interviews are completed:

- Use composite interview information to select and mark the indicators in columns two, three, and four of the NGO Capacity Profile that represent the interviewees' responses.
- Review with the NGO's decision makers what the NGO Capacity Profile shows about each functional area that was investigated.
- Use indicators in higher capacity levels to suggest what improvements might be made.
- Decide on an OD action plan—what will be done, who is responsible for doing it, by when will it be done, what resources will be needed, and how the resources will be made available. Note: At this point it may be necessary to do additional reading on NGO OD (see the Resources section at the end of this module) or seek the assistance of individuals experienced in NGO management to develop a realistic OD plan.
- Implement the plan.

As with all tools, practice is needed to use the profile with skill. The following activity provides the opportunity to practice using the NGO Capacity Profile.

ACTIVITY 3:4

PRACTICE USING THE NGO CAPACITY PROFILE

This is a major experiential activity, a practicum in using the NGO Capacity Profile. We suggest you work in teams of three or four. Your Peace Corps trainers will help you arrange to interview individuals who are working with an NGO. They may arrange for you to meet with a current PCV and his or her Counterpart(s). Ask your trainers to describe the NGO to you in general terms so you can prepare to use the NGO Capacity Profile.

With your partners:

- Carry out the steps listed above using the NGO Capacity Profile found in the Appendix to this module.
- Interview the NGO representatives selected and arranged for you by your Peace Corps trainers.
- Process and analyze the information.
- Discuss what you learned with the people you interviewed, or, if that is not possible, with your fellow trainees and trainers.
- In what areas do you think you might be able to assist the NGO? How would you determine if this is an area the NGO is interested in changing? Who in the NGO would you talk with and how would you approach them for assistance in this area?

Module 3 is an introduction to NGO organizational development. Most Volunteers do not work with all of an NGO's functioning systems—they concentrate on one or two. This will depend on the NGO's needs and the experience and talents of the Volunteer. A number of excellent publications are available through ICE to assist you. If you have access to the Internet, the sources for NGO OD information are expanded.

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KEY TERMS

Key terms are defined as they are used in the module. A space is provided to write the translation of the word or phrase into the local language. Work with your language teachers to find the right translations and build your technical vocabulary as you study this module.

Board of directors is a common name for an NGO's governing body. It can take on many different forms, depending on the cultural or national context. The board's main function is to provide leadership, vision, and legitimacy to the NGO.

Client is a noun used to refer to someone who is the recipient of an NGO's services. "Client" or "constituent" conveys a more empowering relationship between the NGO and service recipient than "beneficiary."

Constituency refers to the group or groups who receive services from an NGO. (The words clients and constituents are used interchangeably.)

Collaboration is the process of actively working together with other organizations/institutions and individuals to achieve shared goals and objectives.

Mission statement is an expression of the fundamental reason for the existence of an organization. A mission statement should clearly, concisely, and in inspiring words communicate:

1) who the organization serves,

2) what the organization hopes to accomplish, and

3) in general terms, the services the organization will provide.

NGO Capacity Profile is an appreciation, assessment, analysis, and action planning tool, which has been adapted by the Peace Corps, to facilitate Volunteers' work with NGOs in building organizational capacity.

Organizational development (OD) is a discipline that specifically addresses the capacity building of human organizations. OD has its roots in psychology, sociology, business administration, economics, and, to some extent, environmental science.

Ownership describes the amount of attraction and identification one has for an idea or organization. The use of participatory approaches is thought to increase ownership and therefore commitment.

Participatory refers to development approaches that assume people have a voice, good ideas, and a capacity for managing change in their lives. Participatory approaches are based in the belief that people are their own experts and know best what needs to be done.

Stakeholders are those who benefit from the activities of the organization as well as those who care about the activities of the organization. Stakeholders often include board members, staff, volunteers, and donors as well as the NGO's clients.

Sustainability refers to the long-term continuation of an organization, program, or project. The question of NGO sustainability must be viewed from two different perspectives, namely:

- **Benefit sustainability**—the services provided to the NGO's clients lead to sustained changes in their lives.
- **Organizational sustainability**—all the organization's component systems, governance, management, human resources, financial resources, service delivery, and external relations operate effectively to support the organization's work.

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RESOURCES

These resources are available through the Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange (ICE). The citations are presented as they appear in *The Whole ICE Catalog.*

Networking for Development. Paul Starkey. (IRTD.) 1997. 104 pp. (ICE No. CD055)

Concise manual on the art of networking—the interaction of people or organizations to exchange information or undertake joint activities. Offers practical advice, guidelines, and examples of development networks, as well as analyses of network successes and failures in many parts of the world.

Essential Internet: Basics for International NGOs. Carlos Parada, Gary Garriot, and Janet Green. (InterAction.) 1997. 160 pp. (ICE No. RE032)

A simple guide for NGOs about how to incorporate Internet technology into their daily operations. Explains what the Internet is; provides information on Internet tools (Telnet, the World Wide Web, and intranets); and provides information on Internet resources for NGOs.

Internet Esencial Conceptos Basicos para ONGs Internacionals. Carlos Parada, Gary Garriot, and Janet Green. (InterAction.) 1997. 194 pp. (ICE No. RE031)

Spanish version of RE032, *Essential Internet: Basics for International NGOs.*

What Did You Say? The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback. Charles N. Seashore, Edith Whitfield Seashore, and Gerald M. Weinberg. (Bingham House Books.) 1997. 211 pp. (ICE No. TR115)

A concise manual for students and trainers on how to give advice, and how to interpret what others are saying to you and what you are saying to them.

Internet:

www.pactpub.com — Participating Agencies Collaborating Together

www.idealist.org — NGO information and links

www.interaction.org — Umbrella NGO for international development organizations

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TRAINER'S NOTES

MODULE 3
NGO ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Overview:

Trainees are presented with a holistic picture of the functions of an NGO's operating systems. The NGO Capacity Profile, a structured participatory tool for assisting NGOs in assessing their capacity and planning actions to strengthen their organization, is included in the Appendix to this module.

Time to Complete Module:

Reading	1 hour
Activities and debriefing activities	15 hours

Materials:

An adapted and local language translation of the NGO Capacity Profile is desirable. Make available to trainees the resources available from the Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange (ICE) catalog listed in the Resources section at the end of this module. Gather information on cross-cultural issues as they relate to motivating individuals. Gather information on national political, religious, and social issues leaders.

Preparation:

- Adapt Module 3 for the local NGO environment and the training situation.
- Become familiar with the NGO Capacity Profile. Consult with Peace Corps staff to determine if changes are needed to adapt it to the work Volunteers are doing with indigenous NGOs. If possible, work with the language cross-cultural coordinator and/or language instructors to prepare a translated version of the NGO Capacity Profile before the training begins.
- Review the backgrounds of trainees and determine if some have nonprofit experience and can lead/facilitate activities in Module 3.
- Arrange for training participants to meet with stakeholders of local NGOs and/or Volunteers working with NGOs to practice using the NGO Capacity Profile as an OD tool.
- Schedule time in the training calendar to debrief activities. Activity 3:4 will require an hour or more of debriefing.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 3:1
LEADERSHIP

Overview:

This activity encourages training participants to think about what dynamic leaders have in common and why we recognize certain people as leaders.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

You may want to prepare summaries of host country political, religious, and social activist leaders for trainees, or work with language instructors to have trainees read about these leaders.

Procedure:

Each training participant makes a list of people they consider dynamic leaders, and then discusses why these people were included on the list.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

This activity presents an opportunity to talk with trainees about past and present leaders of their host country and why these leaders are admired. Involve language instructors in the discussion and encourage trainees to discuss the topic of leadership with their host families to learn their perspective on leadership characteristics. How does culture affect leadership style and how leaders motivate?

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 3:2
WHAT MOTIVATES?

Overview:

The activity is designed to increase trainees' awareness of the potential cross-cultural factors influencing motivation. They are encouraged to consider how they will use motivation techniques as a Volunteer.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

Note pads or journals.

Procedure:

Ask trainees to read the questions in Activity 3:2 and record their answers and conclusions on a note pad or in their journal. Trainees' experiences in discussing motivation with host country trainers, friends, and family can lead to a rich discussion of cross-cultural differences in values and what is important.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

Open the discussion by asking:

- What motivated you to become a Peace Corps Volunteer?
- What other things motivate Americans to become Peace Corps Volunteers?
- Are people motivated differently in your host country?
- If so, why?
- What motivates them?
- What does not motivate them?
- How will you use this information at your NGO assignment site?

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 3:3
BUILDING AN NGO'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Overview:

This activity encourages trainees to transfer their networking and relationship building skills. The activity also provides a chance for trainees to become more familiar with the sector project and consider the network they will be operating in during their service.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

Note pads or journals.

Procedure:

Provide copies of the project plan. Review and discuss with trainees the list of agencies and organizations cooperating on this project as well as possibilities for new networking partners.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

Sustainable organizational relationships depend on each partner organization receiving some benefits. Explore with Volunteers the benefits each project partner receives from working with the Peace Corps and what benefits the Peace Corps receives from working with these partners. Discuss with trainees how culture affects networking and organizational relationships.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 3:4
PRACTICE USING THE NGO CAPACITY PROFILE

Overview:

This activity is a practicum in using the NGO Capacity Profile. Trainees have the opportunity to use knowledge and skills they have developed in studying *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers.*

Time: 10 hours

Materials:

NGO Capacity Profile in both English and local language (if available), note pad, and pencil.

Procedure:

Trainees work in groups of three or four. The Peace Corps trainer should arrange for them to talk with at least two NGO representatives. A current NGO Volunteer and Counterpart is one possibility. Language instructors may need to offer assistance if the NGO representatives and trainees have trouble communicating. The Peace Corps trainer will need to brief trainees on the NGO they are visiting so they can properly prepare their questions.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

Allow adequate time to debrief this activity. Have each small group report their experience to the larger group. Then take time to discuss with trainees:

- What went right?
- What do they wish they had done differently?
- How can they be more effective in using the NGO Capacity Profile?

There may be a number of other questions that come up in the discussion.

MODULE 3: APPENDIX

THE NGO CAPACITY PROFILE

HISTORY OF THE NGO CAPACITY PROFILE

Several versions of this useful organizational development tool have emerged to assist NGOs in assessing their capacity and formulating strategies for strengthening their organizations. The current Peace Corps version has its origins in the "NGO Characteristics Assessment for Recommended Development" (NGO CARD), designed and tested with the cooperation of more than 200 NGOs in Slovakia in 1996–97 by the Foundation for a Civil Society. In the summer of 1997, Peace Corps/-Slovakia acquired for the Peace Corps worldwide the rights to use, modify, and translate the NGO CARD into local languages. With modified or translated versions, the Foundation for a Civil Society should be given credit for developing the NGO CARD.

Peace Corps/Slovakia used the NGO CARD as the centerpiece of its 1997 Pre-Service Training (PST) technical training for business and environmental Volunteers who were assigned to NGOs. The staff concluded it is important to include community entry, interviewing and listening, facilitation, and presentation training to enable Volunteers to use the tool effectively. Like any tool, users become proficient only as they have opportunities to practice. A Volunteer's understanding of the nature of NGOs and how they function locally is enhanced through discussions of the role of NGOs in a civil society and information on the local NGO environment.

In the spring of 1998, the NGO CARD was introduced to Peace Corps staff at two NGO workshops, one in Romania and one in Thailand. The staff was enthusiastic about the CARD's potential and advised simplifying the tool to make it more user-friendly. In early 1999, a program specialist in the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research simplified the CARD and disseminated it to Peace Corps posts worldwide. In March of 2000, the name was changed to better reflect the purpose of the tool; it is now called the NGO Capacity Profile.

The NGO Capacity Profile reflects the Peace Corps' commitment to using asset- and capacity-building approaches in its development efforts.

Use of this organizational tool is now more straightforward. The first column contains questions to ask concerning the six functional systems of an

NGO: programs, governance, management, human resources, financial resources, and external relations. The remaining three columns list the typical responses given at each capacity level: limited capacity, growing capacity, and high level of capacity. These responses can be used to gauge the level at which the organization is operating and to guide the development workers and NGO stakeholders in determining which areas need to be strengthened to reach a higher level of capacity.

USING THE NGO CAPACITY PROFILE

Use the NGO Capacity Profile participatively and appreciatively to identify the NGO's strengths and help establish a vision of what an NGO can be. The NGO Capacity Profile is more effective when it is translated into the local language. The profile provides a picture of where the organization is and can help those working with the NGO (board members, staff, donors, clients, and development workers) decide which functional areas need to be strengthened and how to go about strengthening them.

When gathering information on an NGO, it is best to have only a copy of the questions column so participants are not influenced by typical answers at each capacity level. Once you have gathered the information, you can analyze the responses and compare them with the typical responses at each capacity level.

Following are some of the ways the NGO Capacity Profile has been used by Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, and their NGO community partners.

The NGO Capacity Profile:

- Assists programming staff during site development in determining the types of tasks a Volunteer might perform at an NGO.
- Is used as a training outline for Volunteers who are working with NGOs in their primary or community outreach projects.
- Serves as a language/communications tool when the Counterpart has a local translation and the Volunteer has an English version.
- Helps the Volunteer identify areas where his or her skills can be used to build the NGO's capacity.
- Provides a picture of how a well-run NGO operates by looking at the "Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity."
- Suggests to Volunteers and their NGO colleagues items that should be included in the organization's operating and/or strategic plan(s).
- Provides a mechanism to determine baseline data and indicators for monitoring and evaluation.
- Demonstrates to donors and potential donors the capabilities of the NGO.

1. PROGRAMS

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
To what extent do the NGO's programs reflect the real needs of the community or constituency it serves? Who is involved in designing, implementing, and monitoring program activities? How do NGO programs advocate for constituents as well as provide program services to them? Is there a demand for expansion of the NGO's programs?	Program development is largely donor driven. The founder(s) designs, implements, and monitors program activities. The NGO views constituents as worthy, but passive, beneficiaries of the services, not as potential partners. The demand for the NGO's programs has not been determined.	Programs are developed within an overall strategic plan. Constituents' role is usually as recipient. Certain influential members of the constituency may be consulted and/or invited to participate in some programming discussions. Demand for the NGO's programs is increasing. There is some awareness of the need for legislative and/or institutional changes and support for constituents.	Constituents are recognized as partners and regularly involved in comprehensive program design, implementation, and evaluation. Lessons learned are applied to future programming activities. Full-scale advocacy and lobbying functions are in place. NGO strives for continuous quality improvement of programs. NGO's services are often requested by constituents.

TECHNICAL SECTOR EXPERTISE

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
What are the technical strengths of the NGO's programs? Does the NGO have access to technical sector experience when required? How well is the NGO performing technically in comparison with similar NGOs?	NGO has a limited track record in the sector and area of service delivery but has some good ideas for meeting the needs of target constituencies.	NGO is recognized as having significant experience in sector and contributing to sector growth. Improved targeting of clients and redefined service/technical package. NGO has ability to access additional sector expertise when required.	NGO is able to adapt programs to changing needs of constituency and to extend service delivery to additional constituencies. NGO is recognized for sector expertise and asked to consult on similar projects.

PROGRAM EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
What changes in people's lives occurred as a result of the NGO's programs? How is the NGO's impact and performance measured? What information has been gathered to verify that the NGO's programs are meeting the community's/ client's needs? How is the NGO performing in comparison with other NGOs? How cost-effective are the benefits of the NGO's programs?	The NGO has not determined impact indicators or established baseline measurements. Members of the NGO can recount stories of how individuals have been helped by the NGO's programs.	The NGO is aware of the value of evaluating its programs and is exploring how to measure impact. Program objectives may or may not be measurable; they may be tangible or intangible. The NGO can determine cost per client served.	Measurable indicators of success and impact have been determined for each program goal. Studies are done that provide baseline measures, and these data are regularly confirmed and used. Monitoring and evaluation system are in place; conducted by staff on regular basis. Cost-benefit data are maintained. Trends are analyzed and used in decision making. NGO shares lessons learned and programming evaluation practices with other NGOs.

2. GOVERNANCE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
How does the board provide overall policy direction for the NGO? How does the board provide oversight of the NGO's management? How does the board provide fundraising leadership? How does the board assist with public relations activities? How often does the board meet? What is the expertise and experience of board members? How are board members selected?	Board members are identified. Board does not yet differentiate between oversight and management roles. Board is not active in influencing public opinion or legislators, or raising funds for the NGO. Board meetings are infrequent or irregular. The NGO's constituency is not represented on the board. Board members are founders or selected by founders.	Board membership is stable or improving. Board differentiates between board's role and that of NGO's management. Board is aware of responsibilities to provide oversight. Board is beginning to influence public opinion and/or legislators, fundraise, and perform public relations activities. Board membership represents some community diversity.	Board composition includes leaders in the field of the organization's mission as well as those capable of providing policy direction, fundraising, public relations, and lobbying. Board has mechanisms in place for obtaining appropriate input from constituency, for monitoring organizational planning, and functioning in relation to mission. Board terms are defined. Procedures are in place for selecting and orienting new board members.

VISION/MISSION

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
Does the NGO mission statement accurately reflect its vision/mission? Was the vision/mission determined through a participatory process? Is it possible for the NGO to realize its mission? How do the NGO's programs help achieve the stated mission?	The vision/mission is generally understood by the NGO's founder(s). Staff may perform functions that support the mission, but there is no systematic design of job functions based on the mission. There may be activities conducted by the members of the NGO that seem unrelated to the mission.	The mission is clear to board and staff; strategies, goals, and objectives are based on the mission. Operational planning is conducted by management and linked to vision/mission but without staff or constituents' input. Projects that do not relate to NGO's mission are sometimes undertaken to secure funding.	The mission is clear to board, staff, constituents, and interested parties outside the NGO. Operating plan grows out of the mission and translates into a set of clear program objectives supported by a realistic budget.

LEADERSHIP

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
Who takes leadership responsibility in the NGO?	Within the NGO there are one or a few dynamic individual(s) controlling most functions.	Most decisions are made by the board and management, with some input from select staff.	Board and management have clear understanding of their leadership roles and actively encourage new members to take on leadership roles. Staff is routinely involved in policy development and not just consulted on occasion. Constituents are encouraged to become involved in leadership roles.

3. MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
How does the NGO gather, disseminate, save, and retrieve client, program, and financial information? How is collected information used for planning and decision making?	No organized system(s) exists for the collection, analysis, or dissemination of data in the NGO. Information is usually collected randomly and manually.	A rudimentary electronic database system to manage information (MIS) is in place. MIS is used primarily for word processing and bookkeeping; some staff understand database capability. There is no mechanism for integrating MIS-generated information into the NGO's planning process.	MIS operation and data are integrated into operational planning and decision making. There is improved project planning based on analysis of information provided through the system. MIS information is readily available to staff management and board. The NGO learns from MIS information and shares these learnings with stakeholders and other NGOs.

PLANNING

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
Does the NGO have a long-term strategic plan? Does the NGO do short-term operational planning? How are staff and constituents involved in the planning process? Are all plans directed toward achievement of the NGO's mission?	Planning is ad hoc with limited participation from staff and constituents. Decisions and plans are made without reference to the mission or the agreed-on strategies to achieve the mission. Staff is responsible for plan implementation, and clients are not involved in planning. No assessment of needed resources is included in planning.	There may be some input from staff and constituents but they are not involved in decision making. Annual operating plans are developed and reviewed throughout the year primarily by management but without connection to review of previous year or analysis of resource availability.	NGO's leadership conducts short-term strategic planning. The board decides on program priorities and the use of available resources. Each NGO program has an annual operating plan that reflects the mission and is developed with staff and constituent input. There is a regular review of long-term plans based on previous achievements.

COMMUNICATION

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
How often are staff meetings held? Do staff meetings have an agenda? Are minutes taken at staff meetings and available for future reference?	Meetings are irregular and dominated by interests of a few. There is no predetermined agenda at staff meetings, and staff often does not reach concrete conclusions. Staff provides technical input only and is not involved in or informed of decisions. No systematic procedure for recording or storage of minutes of staff meetings.	Staff knows how to participate in meetings and is aware of how decisions are made. Mechanisms exist for vertical and horizontal communication. A meeting agenda and minute record keeping are standard operating procedures.	Staff is increasingly able to shape the way they participate in decision making. Communications are open and transparent. Client and other stakeholder input is included at staff meetings when appropriate.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
Does the organizational chart show the most significant units or functions of the NGO? Is work organized individually or by teams? Are job tasks and job descriptions consistent with the mission of the NGO? Is there a written employee manual? Is hiring a systematic, open process? Are salaries based on performance and market value of the jobs?	Supervisors organize work. There is little understanding of the necessity to organize work beyond issuing directives. Focus is on individual achievement; there is little understanding of need (or what it means) to work as a team. Hiring is based more on personal connections than applicant's job skills. Some essential tasks are not carried out because they are not assigned or because the tasks are beyond the expertise of the staff.	Organizational chart exists to explain relationships of work units. There is recognition of the need to create a collaborative work environment. Work plans are developed but not coordinated across positions, functions, or expertise. Staff is able to make suggestions about how their own work should be organized. Basic personnel administration systems exist, but informal employment practices persist.	There is a formal mechanism in place for inter-team links and intra-team planning, coordination, and work review. Teams are self-directed in that they organize their own work around clear understanding of the organization's mission and the team's role in achieving the mission. Volunteers and constituents are included as active participants in the NGO's work plan. Continued

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, continued

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
	Salaries are not determined on the basis of the market value of the work done or performance of individuals.	Salary and benefit reward system rewards staff according to job title, not work performed. Salaries are not necessarily competitive with those in market.	All personnel systems are formalized and understood by staff, and staff members opinions are part of policies and procedures. Written employment practices are used and reviewed so they support the NGO's mission, strategies, and policies. Hiring procedures are transparent.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES
STAFF

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
Are staff members motivated and committed to the mission of the NGO? Do staff members have the skills and competencies required to support the achievement of the NGO's mission? What are the training opportunities for staff to develop job-related skills? Are staff members assigned and promoted according to performance?	Staff consists of founders and/or unpaid volunteers. Staff is motivated and committed, but may lack knowledge and skills to implement appropriate programs to achieve the NGO's mission. Staff development opportunities are not yet available. No system in place for performance evaluation.	Some gaps exist between job skills required and of existing staff. Staff morale is sometimes affected by lack of clarity of their jobs or too much work for available staff. Performance evaluations are ad hoc, mostly when problems surface.	Skill areas are competently covered and capacity exists to contract out for other skills as needed. Interpersonal skills and group training are provided as needed. Staff have opportunities to contribute to the organization to the fullest extent of their abilities. Staff performance evaluation done on a regular basis; evaluation criteria are understood by the staff. Staff morale is high.

CONSTITUENCY/CLIENTS

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
Are constituents seen as human resources of the NGO? Does the composition of the board and staff reflect constituency? Are constituents treated equally and fairly? Is the NGO's constituency growing?	Links with constituency are weak. Staff and board do not represent constituents on the basis of ethnicity, gender, income, religious, or stakeholder interest.	There is a well-defined community base and constituency. There is understanding and interest among some board members, management, and staff as to the value and need for representation of constituents, but no policy in place. NGO serves existing constituents but does not actively seek new constituents.	Composition of board and staff reflects gender, ethnic, and religious diversity of constituents. There are regular surveys of constituency needs with results integrated into planning process. NGO welcomes and seeks out new constituents.

VOLUNTEERS

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
How do volunteers assist the NGO? Do volunteers have structured tasks? How are volunteers mobilized and trained? Is volunteer help regular and consistent? How are volunteers thanked for their service?	No, or only a few, volunteers are providing services. NGO staff members are unpaid volunteers due to insufficient planning and fundraising.	Volunteers are mobilized for specific programs/projects. Management identifies the difference between staff and volunteer duties and activities. The number of volunteers involved with the NGO is increasing.	High integration of volunteers with paid staff. Volunteers are integrated into the planning and evaluation process of the organization. Training programs are in place for volunteers. Volunteers are recognized and thanked for individual and collective achievements.

5. FINANCIAL RESOURCES
ACCOUNTING

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO with a High Level of Capacity
Is the accounting system automated? Do accounting records meet donor's and government financial reporting requirements? Are there procedures for reporting and recording in-kind contributions? Has NGO ever had an audit? Does NGO reconcile cash accounts on a regular basis? How often are financial statements furnished to the NGO's board of directors?	Accounting tracks only increases and decreases in cash. Financial procedures and reports are incomplete and difficult to understand. Internal reconciliation of bank accounts with cash is done only when there appears to be a problem. The NGO has not yet undergone an external accounting review or audit.	A system of accounts including assets, liabilities, fund balance, revenues and expenses is developed and operational. Financial reports are usually timely but still incomplete and with errors and tend to present an optimistic versus realistic picture. Internal reconciliation of cash is done more often. Even though NGO recognizes the value of independent audits or external financial reviews, they rarely have them done except to meet donor's requirements.	Financial systems and reports provide reliable current information. Reports are always timely and trusted, and feed back into financial planning process. Internal monthly or quarterly reconciliation of bank statements and accounting records are done. Independent audits or external financial reviews are performed with regular and appropriate frequency. The board of directors receives summary financial reports at every regular board meeting.

BUDGETING

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
Does the NGO have a regular budget-planning process? Do financial controls prevent expenditures in excess of budget? Are budgets constructed to facilitate cost-benefit analysis? Do budgets show actual costs when known?	Budgets are inadequate and infrequent; if they are produced it's because donors require them. Using budgets as a management tool is not understood, and the reliability of the projections is questionable.	Budgets are developed for project activities, but projects often go over or under budget by more than 20 percent. The executive director and/or accountant are the only staff members who know and understand budget information and do not delegate responsibility. Donors do not get notice of budget adjustments.	Budgets are an integral part of project management and are adjusted to reflect project implementation results. Budgeting is integrated with annual operating plan. Project staff members are responsible for preparation, justification, and management of project budgets. Donors are notified when budget adjustments are needed.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
Are reliable cash flow projections in place to facilitate financial planning? Are payroll, petty cash, and basic supply costs paid on time? Are restricted donors' funds placed in separate bank accounts? What internal controls are in place to prevent theft or misappropriation of cash and other assets? Are funds not currently needed invested to earn a return on the money?	NGO meets its expenses but not in a timely manner. Designated project funds and operating funds are not separated in the accounting system or in bank accounts. Cash flow projections, if done, tend to be inaccurate.	NGO meets its expenses in a timely manner. Accurate cash flow projections assist management in making cash management decisions. Account categories exist and project funds are separated, but some temporary project cross-financing may occur. Funds not currently needed are regularly deposited in a bank account for safekeeping.	NGO is expanding its programs and projects, and pays the increased costs in a timely manner. Adequate controls exist to avoid cross-project financing. The NGO uses an impressed petty cash fund to track small expenditures, requires two authorized signatures on checks, and uses a voucher system to record inflows and outflows of cash. The value of insurance to protect assets is recognized and purchased when available and cost-effective. Funds not currently needed are prudently invested to earn interest.

FUNDING BASE

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
What are the existing sources of the NGO's funding? What is the long-term plan for developing financial resources? What alternative sources of funding might be available for the NGO? What percentage of costs are covered by constituents? Does any one source provide more than 40 percent of the NGO's funding?	Funds are solicited for one short-term project and only from one source. Local fundraising for any income is untried and/or unsuccessful. Project funding is insufficient to meet plans or provide services. Constituents are not seen as an income source.	NGO's funding is from two or more sources with no one exceeding 60 percent. There is a developing awareness of local resources, but few resources are actually mobilized. Funding is available for short-term projects, and medium-term funding strategies exist within a funding plan. NGO is beginning to develop constituent support. Fee-for-service and other cost recovery programs are built into service delivery process.	NGO has funding from three or more sources with no source providing more than 40 percent. A long-term funding plan exists that results in the NGO's self-sufficiency. All projects have funding plans, and current funds meet project needs. Basic program delivery can continue even if there is a funding shortfall. Constituent support is evident from their willingness to pay for some services as well as their use of the NGO's services.

6. EXTERNAL RELATIONS
PUBLIC RELATIONS

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
To what extent is the NGO known to the public? What materials does the NGO have that describe its mission, programs, and achievements? does the NGO make of mass media to disseminate information about itself and its achievements?	NGO is little known outside of its direct collaborators. There is no clear image of the NGO articulated and presented to the public. There are no documents or prepared statements available that provide information about the NGO.	NGO is known in its own community, but does little to promote its activities with the general public and government. There is understanding that public relations are a function of NGOs but little understanding of how to implement public relations. The NGO has an annual report.	NGO mission, programs, accomplishments are clear and are documented. NGO's work is well known to public and policy makers and used to attract support when necessary. A public relations plan is implemented.

LOCAL COLLABORATION/SUPPORT

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
How effective is the NGO in assessing local financial, human, and other resources? How does the NGO make an effort to engage local citizens as volunteers or individual donors? How active is the NGO in seeking support from local businesses—donations, gifts-in-kind, and volunteers?	NGO sometimes views the private sector (businesses) with suspicion and distrust. NGO does not seek human or other resources, technical expertise, or advocacy support from the private sector. The NGO has a limited relationship with local citizens.	Community residents begin to support NGO through volunteerism. NGO seeks technical assistance from private sector and government sources. NGO seeks support from service agencies in the private and public sectors.	Local agencies assist NGO in obtaining and sustaining project results. Staff member serves as development officer and knows the private and public sector donor opportunities. Private sector and NGO cooperation is the norm, and the NGO is a full community partner. Individuals from the private and public sector are recruited to serve on board.

NGO COOPERATION

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
Does the NGO cooperate or partner with other local NGOs? Has the NGO established relationships with other national NGOs? Has the NGO established relationships with other international NGOs or development groups?	Organization does not have experience working with other NGOs—local, national, or international. NGO does not try to plan or deliver services in collaboration with other NGOs or see the value of partnering.	Organization is increasingly known and trusted by the NGO community but has little experience collaborating with other NGOs. NGO tries to work with other NGOs to plan services, but mostly on an ad hoc basis.	NGO takes the lead in promoting project coalitions and in sponsoring and participating in a formal NGO association. NGO is fully integrated into NGO community, which develops and supports formal group advocacy mechanisms.

GOVERNMENT COOPERATION

Questions to Ask About Service Delivery	Indicators of an NGO With Limited Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With Growing Capacity	Indicators of an NGO With a High Level of Capacity
What is the relationship between the NGO and the local government? What is the relationship between the NGO and the national government?	Relationship with government is based on a "we-they" perception. NGO cooperates little with government working in the same programming sector or geographic area. NGO has little understanding of its advocacy or public policy role.	NGO cooperates occasionally with different groups in specific areas of activity. Some understanding that the NGO can influence public policy, but efforts in advocacy are ad hoc, short-term, and not sustainable.	NGO performs specific project or sectoral collaboration or contacts for government. NGO provides input into policy process on issues related to its program areas and sector expertise. Through public contact, NGO is seen as an advocate in its area of expertise.


NGO GUIDE
An NGO Training Guide for
Peace Corps Volunteers
Module 4:
Empowering
People to Work
Together through
Facilitation and
Training

MODULE 4

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO WORK TOGETHER THROUGH FACILITATION AND TRAINING

Volunteers find facilitation and training to be essential skills in working with NGOs. In Module 4, “Empowering People to Work Together Through Facilitation and Training,” there are opportunities to learn about and practice techniques to develop facilitation and training skills. By the time you have completed this module you should have developed the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to:

- List five guidelines or techniques of facilitation, and provide examples of how you would use these techniques when guiding a group toward its goals.
- Describe a situation in your life when you learned something through experiential learning. Explain what happened in each of the cycle’s four steps:
    1. Experience
    2. Reflection
    3. Generalization
    4. Application
- Give six examples of how a Volunteer could use facilitation and training skills in an NGO assignment.
- Cite an instance from your personal experience that illustrates the concept of synergy.

A VOLUNTEER’S STORY

I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Moldova, assigned to work with an umbrella NGO. We were responsible for assisting and supporting young and start-up NGOs. Several of our clients approached us with concerns about financial and other resource needs, and asked us to write a grant proposal for them. This would have been a short-term solution to their funding problems. Instead, we became facilitators of development; we identified funding resources and designed training programs that enabled the NGOs themselves to target funding sources and write their own grants.

GROUP-PROCESSING SKILLS USED TO BUILD CAPACITY

Why does *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers* devote one whole module to the group-processing skills of facilitation and training*?* The answer is successful NGOs depend on people working cooperatively and creatively together. When Volunteers have good facilitation and training skills, they are better prepared to help these groups learn to work together.

We all know of a small group or groups that changed the course of history. A few examples come immediately to mind: the Pilgrims establishing a settlement in New England; the Manhattan Project, where international scientists built the atomic bomb; and the civil rights movement. But only after group members developed trust in each other and group skills could they work together effectively.

Synergy is the word we use to express the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. That is, the group can accomplish more than the sum of individual members' efforts (1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = > 4). The concept of synergy explains why organizations, including NGOs, can "move mountains" when their stakeholders work together to accomplish common goals. Synergy is a powerful concept. Peace Corps staff and Volunteers have long recognized the benefits of synergy.

> *"The word impossible is a very strong word.*
> *When you say, Impossible! you ought to say*
> *relative to my present state of ignorance,*
> *it's impossible."*
>
> — Mortimer Adler

As an introduction to working with groups, complete the following activity. You may be surprised at how the group's results compared with your individual results, and at the dynamics of the group.

ACTIVITY 4:1

THE VALUE OF GROUP THINKING

This activity illustrates the power of synergy. Read the story below and individually answer each question. Then, in small groups of four to six, discuss each question and reach consensus on the correct answer.

> *A businessman had just turned off the lights in the store when a man appeared and demanded money. The owner opened the cash register. The contents of the cash register were scooped up, and the man sped away. A member of the police force was notified.*

Please answer true, false, or inconclusive based on your reading of the above story.

A man appeared after the owner had turned off his store lights.	T	F	I
The robber was a man.	T	F	I
The man who appeared did not demand money.	T	F	I
The man who opened the cash register was the owner.	T	F	I
The owner scooped up the contents of the cash register.	T	F	I
Someone opened a cash register.	T	F	I
After the man who demanded the money scooped up the contents of the cash register, he ran away.	T	F	I
While the cash register contained money, the story does not state how much.	T	F	I
The robber demanded money of the owner.	T	F	I
A businessman had just turned off the lights when a man appeared in the store.	T	F	I
It was broad daylight when the man appeared.	T	F	I
The man who appeared opened the cash register.	T	F	I

Continued

Activity 4:1, continued

No one demanded money.	T	F	I
The story concerns a series of events in which only three persons are referred to: the owner of the store, a man who demanded money, and a member of the police force.	T	F	I
The following events occurred: someone demanded money; a cash register was opened; its contents were scooped up; and a man dashed out of the store.	T	F	I

— From Junior Achievement International Leadership Conference, 1999.

After individually answering the questions, form small groups of three or four and compare your answers with others in the group. Talk about the questions and reach group consensus on answers. Now check the possible answers at the end of this module.

In debriefing this activity, discuss the following:

- Were your individual answers the same as the group's answers?
- Did discussion with members of the group help clarify your thinking?
- Did individuals make assumptions that were not supported by a careful reading of the story?
- Did your group's answers match the "Possible Answers" at the end of the module? If not, why not?
- What do you think? Was the quality of the group's answers better than the quality of individuals' answers? Why or why not?
- Did someone in the group lead or facilitate the discussion? If so who?
- What have you learned about the value of group thinking?
- How did this activity demonstrate synergy?

In strengthening NGO capacity, much of your time will be spent working with groups, facilitating and training. Briefly, *facilitation* is the process of helping individuals and groups stay focused and reach their goals. *Training* increases knowledge and skills, and encourages positive attitudes. The two processes are integrated. As you train, you facilitate the learning process by keeping trainees focused on reaching their learning goals. And as you facilitate, you have the opportunity to model effective techniques to help people learn how to be motivators, work in groups, conduct meetings, encourage participation, arrive at consensus, and so on.

Adult training methods and the notion of facilitation have undergone a radical paradigm shift in the last several years. The old paradigm implied that the facilitator/trainer was the "knowledgeable one" who had something to teach, and the participant was the "learner." This top-down process ignored adults' accumulated knowledge and experiences and was not empowering. Today, the Peace Corps and many other development organizations promote interactive facilitation and training where participants' knowledge and experience are valued and shared with the group.

The better you are at participative facilitation and training, two group-processing skills, the more effective you will be as a Volunteer. Those of you with previous facilitation and/or training experience are probably going to encounter ideas and concepts you have seen elsewhere and hopefully find some new and helpful techniques. There are opportunities in this module to refresh your skills and share them with your fellow training participants.

Reading this module and doing the activities will not make you a master facilitator or trainer. To become a master you must practice and learn from your successes and mistakes. For additional information on the group-processing skills of facilitation and training, see the Resources section at the end of this module.

Facilitation

"I am a facilitator. Why?

I want to have a positive impact on organizations and people who work within them. Why?

I want people to have the opportunity to use their human talents in their work and their lives. Why?

Because life is short and work is a significant part of life and it is a potentially rich place for human expression. Why?

I believe that we are each here to give expression to our potential, to grow into our fuller selves. Why?

I have no more reasons; I just believe."

— Bellman, Geoffery,
The Consultant's Calling. Jossey-Bass Publishing,
San Francisco, 1990, p. 104

According to the dictionary, *facilitate* means to make easy or more convenient. To infer from this definition that a facilitator's job is just to "make things easy" is too simplistic.

A facilitator:

- Develops an atmosphere where people feel safe and empowered to participate in the process,
- Keeps the group "on task,"
- Monitors time,
- Orchestrates the process to assure the task is accomplished in a manner that leads to valid results, and
- Manages the process so that it is easier for people to work together.

Facilitation is the art of guiding the group process toward the group's—not the facilitator's—common goals. It is about process, how you do something rather than what you do. A facilitator remains neutral with regard to the content of the session and intervenes only to protect the group process and keep the group on task. Facilitation is about moving a group from one point to another, guiding the group toward a destination. Skilled facilitation increases the synergy of the group.

ACTIVITY 4:2

EXPLORING YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH FACILITATORS

In a small group, discuss a personal experience when a facilitator made a situation, experience, or process easier and/or more effective. What methods were used to help the group work together, keep the group on task, and keep the group space safe? How did you feel after the experience? What did you learn?

If you cannot think of a personal experience with facilitation, have you seen a moderator on TV facilitate a political debate or town meeting? What did you observe about how the moderator facilitated the event?

What are some common learnings about facilitation that emerged from your experiences or observation of a TV moderator? How can these learnings be applied in working with an NGO?

There is no formula for facilitation, and there is no single right way to facilitate a group. Much depends on the group, the subject, and your personal facilitation style. However, below are some tips, guidelines, and techniques you may find useful.

TIPS, GUIDELINES, AND TECHNIQUES FOR FACILITATORS

Ethics for facilitators

- Honor each group member.
- Assume that some wisdom lies behind every contribution.
- Demystify the facilitator's role so as not to be perceived as the authority.
- Seek agreement from everyone and use collective decision-making processes (consensus) unless there is agreement by everyone to do otherwise.
- Work with people from other cultures using their knowledge of the local customs, rituals, and sensitivities. Do not assume—ask.
- Use humor without belittling people.
- Do not use facilitating techniques to control the group's direction, but to help the group work together to reach its goals.
- Trust the group—have an attitude of confidence that the group's resources are sufficient to achieve its objectives.

Good facilitators

- Take an interest in what people have to offer.
- Are aware, listen, look, and sense—100 percent present.
- Are punctual, even if they have to wait for the group to assemble.
- Mix freely with all participants; do not position themselves with one group (gender, age, ethnic, etc.).
- Are assertive but not overbearing—know when to intervene decisively.
- Are comfortable with conflict and always encourage it to be expressed openly. Disagreement is the natural result of different personalities, views, and opinions.
- Understand the overall objectives of the group.
- Encourage the group to keep going during long or difficult processes by affirming progress and acknowledging completion of tasks.
- Are natural, allowing their own personalities to be expressed.

Facilitate to create a participatory environment

- Avoid classroom-style seating with people in rows and the facilitator at the front. Discussion is more likely to occur when participants can see each other's faces.
- It is important to keep the room or space safe from interruptions and distractions, and for everyone to feel welcome to participate in the group.
- Use "icebreakers" to help people feel comfortable; give people a chance to laugh or move around; in general "break the ice."
- To get people involved ask for their help with workshop tasks and activities. Get as many participants as possible up in front of the group.
- Divide large groups into small teams.
- Intervene and mediate when some people are dominating.
- Encourage feedback. One feedback technique is to go around the room and gather one positive comment and one constructive criticism from each participant.
- Prepare good questions—questions that cannot be answered by a yes or a no and that are not vague. Be prepared to rephrase questions in several different ways or provide an example.
- If a topic requires more than 30 minutes discussion, break it down into smaller discussions.
- If the discussion is straying from the topic
    - Restate the last question and/or
    - Acknowledge other issues as important and write them on a "parking lot" for consideration later.
- Capture discussion highlights in drawings, on flip charts, in written reports, or on videotape or audiotape to keep the discussion and its outcomes in the minds of the participants.
- Celebrate the group's work!

These tips, guidelines, and techniques were compiled from:

Kiser, A. Glen. *Masterful Facilitation—Becoming a Catalyst for Meaningful Change.* American Management Association, New York, 1998.

Slocum, Rachel, Lori Wichhart, Dianne Rocheleau, and Barbara Thomas-Slayter (editors). *Power, Process and Participation—Tools for Change.* Intermediate Technology Publications, London, 1995.

Hunter, Dale, Anne Bailey, and Bill Taylor. *The Art of Facilitation.* Fisher Books, Tucson, AZ, 1995.

Fees, Fran. *The Facilitator Excellence Handbook—Helping People Work Creatively and Productively Together.* Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer, San Francisco, 1998.

Hunter, Dale, Anne Bailey, and Bill Taylor. *The Zen of Groups—A Handbook for People Meeting with a Purpose.* Fisher Books, Tucson, AZ, 1995.

ACTIVITY 4:3

REFLECTING ON YOUR GROUP EXPERIENCES

> *"If we travel alone, we choose our own route and our own timetable. If we travel with others, we need to blend and hone and modify our routes and our timetables. When our whole group goes together, we may not end up exactly where each person wanted to go. And even if we end up where each of us wanted to be, how we got there will not be precisely as planned and will usually take longer than imagined. But think of the community benefits and the self-satisfaction!! We may not see the sight we set out for. Instead we may discover the eighth wonder of the world—and we do this together."*

—Winer, Michael, and Karen Ray,
The Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey.
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, St. Paul, MN, 1996

Think about, discuss, or write a reflection on the above quote. Have you had a group experience that reflects the excitement in this story? Have you experienced the wonder of working in a group that accomplished more than you thought you could? What were some of the signposts in your experience? What are your hopes and dreams for working with your NGO and/or their client group in your host country?

A VOLUNTEER'S STORY

I am a health Volunteer in the Philippines, and was given a citation for working with my NGO to alleviate malnutrition problems in 16 elementary schools. Through training of the constituent bakers of our NGO and facilitating an understanding of an improved bread formula, my NGO had a major impact on the health of the students, the economic life of the bakers, and the acceptance and visibility of the NGO in the community.

PROVEN TRAINING STRATEGIES

Training is the most recurring theme in the programs of the Peace Corps over its 40-year history. It is at the core of what Volunteers do, and it provides a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Through training, Volunteers are able to give of themselves, to educate, and to share knowledge and skills.

> *"Never regard study as a duty, but as the enviable opportunity to learn to know the liberating influence of beauty in the realm of the spirit for your own personal joy and the profit of the community to which your later work belongs."*
>
> — Albert Einstein

This section covers three learning methodologies: learner centered, experiential, and whole-brain learning. It is important to note that these are not teaching methodologies—the emphasis is on learning, not teaching. Also discussed is the importance of the learning environment and techniques you can use to improve your training skills.

The educational experience of most Volunteers was teacher-centered and based in a classroom . However, teacher directed classroom-style teaching is not the most effective way for adults to learn. As you begin applying the methods discussed in this section, "you may experience resistance to experiential participatory training. However, most people soon warm up to the new ways of learning, as they give adults more freedom to use their experience base and apply new knowledge. Unfortunately, these approaches are not used in many countries where PCVs serve.

CONTRAST BETWEEN TEACHER-CENTERED AND LEARNER-CENTERED METHODS

	Teacher-Centered (classroom)	Learner-Centered (adult, nonformal)
Learner's Role	Follow instructions Passive reception Receive information Little responsibility for learning process	Offer ideas based on experience Interdependent Active participation Responsible for learning process
Motivation for Learning	External forces of society (family, religion, tradition, etc.) Learner does not see immediate benefit	From within oneself Learner sees immediate application
Choice of Content	Teacher-controlled Learner has little or no choice	Centered on life or workplace problems expressed by the learner
Method Focus	Gain facts, information	Sharing and building on knowledge and experience

WHOLE-BRAIN LEARNING

Dr. Paul Maclean, chief of the Laboratory for Brain Evolution and Behavior at the National Institute for Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland, created the triune brain model, which delineates three functional brain regions:

- The **reptilian brain** consists largely of the brain stem, the middle brain, and the reticular activating system. Physical survival and overall body maintenance are all located here—breathing, circulation, digestion, reproduction, and the "fight or flight" response.
- The **limbic system** is the second oldest region of the brain to evolve, some 200 to 300 million years ago. While the limbic system is primarily a regulator of emotions, it is also involved in primal activities related to food, sex, smell, bonding, and activities related to expression and mediation of feelings. According to Maclean, "memory is impossible without emotion of some kind; emotion energizes memory." The limbic system acts as a switchboard, reading the sensations of the body and deciding which to send

to the neocortex. The limbic system represents the link between mind and body.

- The **neocortex** is where high-level thought processes occur. The neocortex makes up 80 percent of total human brain matter, and about 70 percent of the brain's approximately 100 billion neurons. It is divided into two hemispheres, the left and the right.

Learning should be a whole being experience. Creative thought processes incorporate the limbic brain and the left and right regions of the neocortex. By strengthening neural pathways between brain centers, communication ability strengthens. "Bridging" activities develop pathways to greater thinking potential and intelligence and reduce the time it takes for the brain to make future connections. Under stress, the brain tends to revert to reptilian (survival) or limbic (emotional) functions.

W. Edwards Deming teaches us, "Theory plus experience equals knowledge. Experience will answer a question, and a question comes from theory." Without emotion and personal meaning, true learning does not occur. To teach effectively in a safe and comfortable learning environment, the trainer should engage all the brain functions. Appeal to what the learners feel is intellectually valuable, as well as emotionally pleasant and in line with their needs and desires.

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A LEARNING MOMENT

End the section with a "bang." The first and the last information presented is usually remembered the best. Start your class or training session with a "ritual." Examples: taking roll, asking if there are questions from the previous lesson, picking up homework, or an "ice breaker." Rituals appeal to the reptilian and limbic brain and increase people's comfort level. This is one reason societies have developed rituals for funerals and other life events that tend to be stressful.

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Props and visual aids, such as pictures, maps, diagrams, graphs, videos, toys, and costumes, expand traditional verbal communication. Ask participants to draw what they observe or feel. Caricatures help emphasize a point. Use mind maps or create drawings to emphasize information.

Fantasy, guided visualization, and daydreaming take participants to places they cannot go, to see outcomes that have not yet been realized. There are no right or wrong answers in fantasies. By fantasizing or daydreaming participants "feel" or "experience" events in their minds.

Dramatization creates an indelible impression in the mind. Do not be afraid to be silly or to overact. Set the example that nothing "bad" happens when you are silly (or you make a mistake). This helps participants shed inhibitions and alleviates fears. Have participants act in skits and role play in pairs or small groups. Basic business skills (answering the phone, serving a customer, conducting a meeting, interviewing for a job, etc.) can be taught effectively through dramatization and role playing.

Metaphors and themes suggest connections. A metaphor makes a connection between two seemingly unrelated ideas or things, and a theme connects related ideas. An entire training program can be built around a metaphor or a theme: teaching accounting principles using a lemonade stand; crafting a business plan can be related to combining ingredients in a recipe, making a journey, or playing a board game.

Great creative license can be used when incorporating metaphors and themes: the room can be elaborately decorated, participants can take on character roles, and many props can be used. Metaphors and themes are a creative way to incorporate many elements of creative "whole-brain training."

Experiments and field trips, **direct experiences**, are ways to create experiences. Adults have many life experiences that can be used to enhance learning. The Peace Corps incorporates experiential learning in Pre-Service and In-Service Trainings. A discussion of experiential learning is found in the introduction to *An NGO Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers.* The formula, experience + reflection + generalization + application, is a very effective learning method.

Multisensory learning refers to any training model that purposefully engages more than one sense at the same time. Combining an auditory and visual experience with a tactile and kinesthetic (movement) experience "imprints" the lesson in the students' memory. Smell is a powerful trigger to memory and a key to rich associations of experience and emotion. The simple act of taking notes during class is an example of kinesthetic learning.

Music used in a training program can be very effective for a number of reasons. Music can instantly change the energy or mood of a room; music can soothe, excite, encourage recall, and evoke the imagination.

Emotional associations imbedded in the limbic system are felt when listening to familiar music. The rhythm and beats per minute of music affect the breathing and heart rate, regulated by the reptilian brain. Both the right- and left-brain hemispheres are used to process and create music.

Theme music can be used when the training model incorporates a metaphor. Classical and baroque music help sustain a state of relaxation during learning. High-energy music can create healthy competition or emphasize celebration or reward. Comedy and special effects can be heightened with the use of music.

Color separates and emphasizes ideas. It stimulates creativity, captures the attention, and aids memory. Color can stimulate emotions. Students can be encouraged to take notes with multicolored pens. Training aids can be created in color, adding emphasis and visual appeal.

Humor in training can help establish an emotional bond between trainer and trainees and promote a friendly learning environment. Learning should be fun! Teaching should be fun! Life should be fun! Humor can teach, relax, amuse, soothe, emphasize, trigger memory, cause joy, eliminate fear, connect the physical with the intellectual, and, of course, make us laugh. Trainers and students should remember not to take themselves too seriously.

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A LEARNING MOMENT

Stories are usually remembered better than facts. They can be used to present information, initiate a discussion, illustrate a point, and/or evoke emotion. Being a good storyteller is a great training asset.

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DESIGNING A WHOLE-BRAIN TRAINING EVENT

Design a high-impact learning event. It is important to remember that how you teach the topic is as important as what you teach. No matter how relevant or accurate your material, if your training method is not effective, your message will be lost.

Traditional training methods are geared toward the left brain: verbal, linear, sequential, logical, and analytical, viewing information as parts of a whole.

While left-brain training is valuable, it is not enough. Students who are less proficient at verbal or linear processing are required to learn in a manner that is difficult for them. Even the more left-brain dominant students are not being allowed to reach their full potential, as their right-brain thinking is not being developed.

What is required is a holistic training method. Whole-brain training engages all of the brain's functions:

- "Soothes" the fearful reptilian brain,
- Creates a pleasing emotional connection for the limbic system, and
- Incorporates an equal number of left-brain and right-brain training techniques.

Create a learning environment: Have you ever felt anxious in a learning environment because:

- You were concerned your language skills were not adequate?
- You were afraid everyone else knew more than you?
- You thought you might appear foolish or make a mistake?
- You thought you might say the wrong thing and people would laugh at you?
- You thought you might not understand the lesson (and everyone else surely would)?
- You did not "get" the first lesson, but everything else is building on it?

These stresses cause us to revert to our reptilian brain and limbic system functions, significantly blocking input from the neocortex.

Whole-brain training starts by building a safe and comfortable learning environment from the moment the training event begins. In addition to providing a physically safe and comfortable learning environment, the trainer must create an environment that is psychologically and emotionally conducive to learning.

Enlist the participants in the process. Ask "how many" questions:

How many of you have experience in ________ topic?

How many of you are members of ________?

How many of you are in your last year at the university?

Participants feel included (I am in the right place) and validated (My experience is important in this program). Raising hands or standing up to indicate you belong to the group creates physical involvement.

Introduce yourself briefly in a warm and friendly manner. State your qualifications. Mention facts about yourself that show you have a connection to the students/participants. Participants should have enough information to accept that the trainer is qualified to lead the event.

Ask participants to stand and introduce themselves. Encourage them to provide some piece of information about themselves that is relevant to the training in addition to their names. This validates their experience and knowledge, physically engages the participants, and informs the trainer.

If it is culturally appropriate, ask participants to share something personal about themselves. This establishes personal identity aside from professional identity. This can be used to "level the playing field" if professional hierarchy is present. This allows participants to connect with trainers and each other.

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A LEARNING MOMENT

An effective way to make introductions and stress the value of business cards is to pass out colored markers and full size sheets of white paper. Have each participant make a giant business card and hold it up when they introduce themselves. You can start by making a card with the Peace Corps logo that gives your name and position as a Volunteer, with your hometown address. This is an especially good lead in to a discussion of:

- Local business card etiquette,
- Uses of business cards,
- Networking possibilities,
- Advantages of two languages on the business card—one on the back and one on the front,
- Making short notes on a business card to remind you about that person, and
- How to organize business cards so you can find them when you need them.

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Create "big picture" vision: Explain the training agenda. Allow participants to visualize the result. This allows participants to anticipate events. It helps participants understand how the "pieces" will fit into the "big picture." It can create excitement and enthusiasm.

Briefly cover the logistics—do not slow momentum with too much detail before it is necessary. Ask participants if they have questions before you proceed. This validates participants' concerns and eases stress.

Introduce new material in a familiar way: Find a simple way to deliver new information building from the participants' common ground and using common language. Comprehension is improved if participants can "build" the information from the ground up. Participants remain open to learning new information when not intimidated, lost, or feeling inadequate.

Use questions to create an interactive experience:

- Asking and answering questions improves comprehension.
- Interaction increases confidence and builds connection.
- Validation occurs when participants volunteer relevant examples.

- Application (personal meaning) of information becomes clearer when sharing examples.
- Participants' answers let the trainer know if participants understand the information.

Review and debrief: Review information and its place in the "big picture" before moving on to new information. Participants are ready to move forward once they are comfortable with what they have learned. Participants feel validated that the trainer is concerned about their learning experience.

Ask participants to talk about what they just learned and how they learned it. Debriefing is a valuable part of the process. Debriefing:

- Gives participants an opportunity to express pleasure or discomfort about how the information was delivered.
- Provides trainer immediate feedback about participants and the training methods.
- Validates participants' feelings.
- Gives the trainer another opportunity to clarify or review the information if necessary.

Understand and maximize the learning process: Use creative training techniques that encourage interactive, whole-brain learning. Whole-brain learning substantially increases participant comprehension and retention. Whole-brain learning creates a pleasant and successful training event.

STEPS TO DESIGN A WHOLE-BRAIN TRAINING SESSION

1. Identify the training objective.
2. Outline information to be delivered to achieve the objective.
3. Identify the possible delivery models.
4. Visualize the training.
5. Plan the session on paper.
6. Talk through the session with peers or a friend.
7. Walk through the model with a small test group (if possible).
8. Analyze and evaluate the session.
9. Refine the session.
10. Prepare the materials you will need to deliver the session.

The role of a facilitator or trainer in the adult learning process is to manage the learning environment, rather than manage the "content" of the learning, as in the traditional teacher-centered approach. In this way, the content varies according to the experiences and interests of the learners and the needs of the organizations and institutions they represent. Although the facilitator or trainer does not need to be an expert in the subject matter being taught, it is helpful if he or she has some knowledge to guide or facilitate the process more effectively.

Peace Corps' training experience indicates the more actively involved the learner or participant is, the higher the retention rate and the greater chance for change. Wherever possible, trainers should create a learning situation where adults can discover answers and solutions for themselves. People remember best the things they have said themselves, so use your words and questions sparingly. Trainers should give participants a chance to find solutions before adding important points the group has not covered. Education should stress learning more than teaching.

"The role of the educator is
to present to the community
in a challenging way
the issues they are already discussing
in a confused way."

— Mao Tse-Tung

The trainer or facilitator creates a learning climate, poses questions, encourages participants to search for causes and solutions, helps the group discover as much as possible for themselves and plan their action.

ACTIVITY 4:4

DESIGN AND DELIVER YOUR OWN TRAINING

Work individually or in pairs. Select a topic related to NGOs that you and your fellow trainees are interested in learning about.

Design and deliver a whole-brain learning experience for your fellow training participants and trainers. Refer to “Steps to Deliver a Whole-Brain Training” in planning the session.

Solicit feedback from training participants in the debriefing.

- What elements of whole-brain training did they observe?
- Was the training delivered in a way that made them feel comfortable and energized?
- Did they think they learned the material presented?
- What changes, if any, would participants suggest?

You may want to refine the training plan based on feedback from participants and make copies available when you go to your NGO site.

We hope as you read and did the activities in this module you gathered new ideas and knowledge in the areas of facilitation and training and that you became enthusiastic about the possibilities of group synergy. Mastering facilitation and training skills better prepares you to work with the various groups associated with NGOs. The only way one perfects these group-processing skills is to practice, practice, practice, reflect, generalize, and apply the needed change.

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KEY TERMS

Key terms are defined as they are used in the module. A _space_ is provided to write the local language translation of the word or phrase. Work with your language teachers to find the right translations and build your technical vocabulary as you study this module.

Behavioral learning objectives describe observable measurable behaviors the learner is expected to exhibit by the end of training. Behavioral learning objectives enable trainers and trainees to better evaluate the learning experience.

Facilitation is about process, the process of making it easier or more convenient for a group to reach their goals. A **facilitator** guides the group toward its destination.

Synergy is a concept that states the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Training is to make proficient with special instruction and practice. Forty years of Peace Corps' training experience suggests training is most effective when it is experiential and participatory.

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RESOURCES

These resources are available through the Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange (ICE). The citations are presented as they appear in *The Whole ICE Catalog.*

Nonformal Education Manual. Helen Fox. (Peace Corps ICE.) 1989. 163 pp. (ICE No. M0042)

Demonstrates how the techniques of nonformal education (NFE) can be used by virtually all Peace Corps Volunteers. Emphasizes full-scale community participation at all stages of development. Uses Volunteers' experiences to illustrate the nature and principles of NFE. Includes information on adult learning, identifying people's needs, planning and evaluating NFE activities, working with groups, and developing appropriate materials for NFE activities.

The Art of Facilitation. Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey, and Bill Taylor. (Fisher Books.) 1995. 241 pp. (ICE No. TR114)

[Distribution to Peace Corps In-Country Resource Centers Only]

Provides an in-depth examination of the art of intervention and cooperative beliefs and values facilitation for creating group synergy. The toolkit includes facilitative designs for workshops, meetings, projects, and evaluations. In addition, experienced facilitators give a personal perspective on facilitation.

Technical Presentation Skills. Steve Mandel. (Crisp Publications.) 1988. 94 pp. (ICE No. TR094)

[Distribution to Peace Corps In-Country Resource Centers Only]

Helps the reader to organize, plan, and deliver effective presentations. Contains several exercises, activities, assessments, and cases for the reader to participate in.

101 Ways to Make Training Active. Mel Silberman. (Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer.) 1995. 303 pp. (ICE No. TR116)

[Distribution to Peace Corps In-Country Resource Centers Only]

Presents both fun and serious individual and group exercises to enlighten and deepen learning and retention in training sessions. Contains strategies and techniques to get active participation from the start and to teach information, skills, and attitudes activities.

The Art of Teaching Adults: How to Become an Exceptional Instructor and Facilitator. Peter Renner. (Training Associates, Ltd.) 1993. 138 pp. (ICE No. ED181)

[Distribution to Peace Corps In-Country Resource Centers Only]

A revised, expanded version of the *Teacher's Survival Kit*. Addresses the full range of techniques and concepts involved in teaching adults, including the physical setting, learning styles, group process, lectures, case studies, field projects, visual aids, tests, and evaluations.

Internet:

www.geminitiative.org — Organization working with NGOs and their effectiveness

www.aed.org — Academy for Educational Development-International Development Group

www.worldlearning.org — International development and training organization

www.astd.org — American Society for Training and Development

www.sidint.org — Society for International Development

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ACTIVITY 4:1 Reference

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

A man appeared after the owner had turned off his store lights. T F **I**

We do not know that the businessman who turned off the lights was the owner of the business.

The robber was a man. T F **I**

We do not know that the demand for money was a robbery. It could have been an employee demanding payment for work or a creditor of the business demanding payment, etc. It may have even been the owner who was the man who appeared and demanded money.

The man who appeared did not demand money. T **F** I

The man who appeared did demand money.

The man who opened the cash register was the owner. T F **I**

The owner of the business might have been a woman.

The owner scooped up the contents of the cash register. T F **I**

We do not know who scooped up the contents of the cash register.

Someone opened a cash register. **T** F I

The owner is "someone," and the owner opened the cash register.

After the man who demanded the money scooped up the contents of the cash register, he ran away. T F **I**

We do not know that the man who sped away scooped up the contents of the cash register.

While the cash register contained money, the story does not state how much. T F **I**

The story does not say that the contents of the cash register contained money.

The robber demanded money of the owner. T F **I**

We do not know there was a robber or that it was the owner he demanded money from.

Continued

Suggested Answers, Activity 4:1, continued

A businessman had just turned off the lights when a man appeared in the store. T F **I**

We do not know the man was in the store. He could have been outside the store, in the doorway, or speaking through a window, for example.

It was broad daylight when the man appeared. T F **I**

We assumed it was night because, "A businessman had just turned off the lights." However, it might have been morning and the businessman turned off the night lights when he was opening the store.

The man who appeared opened the cash register T F **I**

The owner opened the cash register. If the owner was the man that appeared the statement is true, but we do not know that the owner was the man who appeared.

No one demanded money. T **F** I

Someone demanded money.

The story concerns a series of events in which only three persons are referred to: the owner of the store, a man who demanded money, and a member of the police force. T F **I**

There may have been four people: the man who appeared, a businessman, the owner, and a member of the police force, or, if the owner is the man that appeared, then there are three: the businessman, the owner, and a member of the police force.

The following events occurred: someone demanded money; a cash register was opened; its contents were scooped up; and a man dashed out of the store. T F **I**

The man sped away—we do not know he dashed out of the store.

* * * * * * * * * *

Participants who do this activity generally agree on the following:

- Individuals tend to have more wrong answers than the group.
- Discussing the story helps individuals realize they made assumptions not supported by the written facts in the story.

Continued

Suggested Answers, Activity 4:1, continued

- Arriving at group answers takes longer than answering individually. Time is a price you pay for group decision making.
- Reasonable people can disagree even when presented with the same facts.
- There is value in different people looking at a situation from different points of view and their different experiences.
- Usually someone in the group will lead or facilitate the discussion. The leadership role may rotate or change during the discussion.
- The quality of group answers exceeds the answer of any one individual. This demonstrates the concept of synergy.
- In working with NGOs there is value in having a number of people involved in decision making.

TRAINER'S NOTES

MODULE 4
EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO WORK TOGETHER THROUGH FACILITATION AND TRAINING

Overview:

Trainees are provided information and participate in whole-brain learning activities, which equip them to be facilitators and trainers. The Peace Corps' emphasis on whole-brain learning often requires trainers to facilitate the learning process. Application of facilitation and training skills in working with NGOs is addressed throughout this module.

Time:

Reading	1 hour
Activities and debriefing activities	5 hours

Materials:

Make available at the training site at least one book on facilitation and one book on training for training participants to use as references. (See the Resources section at the end of this module.)

Preparation:

- Review the module and make any necessary changes to reflect the local situation.
- Work with the language instructors to determine if some of the module's vocabulary or content can be incorporated into the language or cross-cultural classes.
- Prepare a training plan, including copying and distribution of materials. Create situations where training participants can practice facilitation and training skills.
- Display the training schedule in a location accessible to both training participants and training staff.

Look for opportunities to model good facilitation and training practices. When sessions are presented, include feedback in the debriefings—keep feedback positive and participatory. Ask each participant to write on a slip of paper what he or she thought was the best part of the session. Give the written comments to the trainer or facilitator. People learn group-processing skills by practicing them.

Continued

Trainer's Notes, continued

Provide as many opportunities as is practical for training participants to practice.

If you are involved in community-based training (CBT), create situations where trainees facilitate and train community members. Look for creative ways to overcome language limitations.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 4:1
THE VALUE OF GROUP THINKING

Overview:

This activity is intended to show the value of discussion and collective thinking in exploring and clarifying even a simple situation.

Time: 45 minutes

Materials:

Flip chart paper, pens, and markers.

Procedure:

Each participant reads and answers questions based on the story. Then, in groups of three to five, answer the questions. Compare the group's answers with the possible answers.

Training hint: Use this activity as an opportunity for a training participant to practice facilitation. Ask for a volunteer or choose a participant to act as the facilitator for debriefing this activity. Provide the facilitator with the debriefing and processing information below.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

Encourage participants to process activity learnings by answering and discussing the questions at the end of Activity 4:1.

The following are typical responses.

- Individuals tend to have more wrong answers than the group.
- Discussing the story helps individuals realize they made assumptions not supported by the written facts in the story.
- Arriving at group answers takes longer than answering individually. Time is a price you pay for group decision making.
- Reasonable people can disagree even when presented with the same facts.
- There is value in different people looking at a situation from different points of view and their different experiences.
- Usually someone in the group will lead or facilitate the discussion.
- The leadership role may rotate or change during the discussion.

Continued

Trainer's Notes, Activity 4:1, continued

- The quality of group answers exceeds the answer of any one individual. This demonstrates the concept of synergy.
- In working with NGOs, there is value in having a number of people involved in decision making.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 4:2
EXPLORING YOUR EXPERIENCE
WITH FACILITATORS

Overview:

In this activity trainees reflect on experiences where facilitation made a situation, process, or experience easier and/or more effective.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

None.

Procedure:

In a small group, discuss trainees' experiences where the facilitator made a situation, experience, or process easier and/or more effective? What were some of the methods used?

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

Ask one of the trainees to facilitate the debriefing. The task is for the group to hear what each participant has experienced and learned about facilitation, and then reach some common understanding of what constitutes effective facilitation. It might be useful for the facilitator to summarize learnings about good and not-so-good facilitation techniques.

At the end of the debriefing, ask the facilitator to discuss the following with the group:

- How did you feel about this facilitation experience?
- What did you learn from facilitating this group?

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 4:3
REFLECTING ON YOUR GROUP EXPERIENCES

Overview:

In this activity trainees reflect on experiences they have had working in successful groups and build on their understanding of the indicators of synergy.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

None.

Procedure:

In a small group, discuss a satisfying group experience. It could be a team sport, a group work project, or a community activity. What were some of the outcomes? The examples of synergy you experienced? What made it a good or exciting experience?

— OR —

Get into small groups and designate indicators of synergy to each group. The number of indicators depends on the number of groups you have. Each group then brainstorms possible definitions and uses for indicators. Have the group present to the larger group, and at the end of the session read the definitions listed in the module if appropriate.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

- How did you feel about the experience?
- What did the group do that made it work effectively?
- How many indicators of synergy did you find?
- What did you learn?
- How can your learning be applied to your work with an NGO?

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 4:4
DESIGN AND DELIVER YOUR OWN TRAINING

Overview:

In this activity trainees increase their training skills in a safe environment of their peers.

Time: 90 minutes

Materials:

None.

Procedure:

Have the group design their own trainings using topics that relate to NGOs.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

- How did trainees feel being "up front"?
- How did the planning for the session go?
- How effective was the trainer in facilitating the group?
- What do trainers plan to do differently the next time they conduct a training?
- Encourage participants to refine their trainings and start keeping a portfolio of training plans to use during their Peace Corps service.


NGO GUIDE
An NGO Training Guide for
Peace Corps Volunteers
Module 5:
Effective
NGO
Governance

MODULE 5

EFFECTIVE NGO GOVERNANCE

Good governance is key to the growth and sustainability of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Module 5, "Effective NGO Governance," presents methods and techniques for planning and implementing actions to improve an organization's governance. By the time you have finished the reading and activities you should have acquired the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to:

- List the two major responsibilities of an NGO's governing body and provide at least three examples of how this group carries out each of these responsibilities.
- Differentiate between the following word pairs. (Suggested responses are located at the end of the module.)

  governance — management

  monitoring — evaluation

  NGO's purpose — NGO's mission statement

  articles of incorporation — bylaws

  standing committee — ad hoc committee

  facilitator — authoritative leader

- Summarize, in 35 words or fewer, how the new work of boards improves governance. (A suggested response is found at the end of this module.)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the strategic planning process by correctly completing the following statements. (Suggested responses are located at the end of the module.)

  Strategic planning involves a time frame greater than _________. To ensure buy-in by the NGO's stakeholders the planning process should be__________. Before writing goals and objectives, planners need to survey the organization's _____________ and _____________ environment and clarify the organization's ___________ and __________. The NGO's __________ usually prepares the strategic plan; the plan must be approved by the NGO's __________ or ___________.

- Describe two or more activities a Volunteer might institute with his or her Counterpart(s) or coworkers to improve the governance of an NGO.

NGO GOVERNANCE

An NGO's sustainability—its ability to serve its clients over the long term—depends largely on the quality of the organization's governance. In this module we explore who governs an NGO, how they govern, what factors contribute to effective governance, and the roles a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) might play in improving an NGO's governance.

Your ability to work successfully with NGO stakeholders to improve the organization's governance depends on several personal competencies:

Your people, language, and cross-cultural skills;

Your energy, motivation, and attitude; and

Your understanding of the basics of NGO governance.

ACTIVITY 5:1

NGO GOVERNANCE QUIZ

Test your knowledge of NGO governance by taking the following quiz.

Instructions: Match each phrase/word in the left column with a phrase/word in the right column. There may be more than one correct match for each item.

_____	1. Ad hoc committee	a. Board of directors
_____	2. Advisory committee	b. Chairperson/President
_____	3. Articles of Incorporation	c. Clients
_____	4. Bylaws	d. Composed of experts
_____	5. Leader of NGO's governing body	e. Description of an NGO's work
_____	6. Mission statement	f. Executive committee
_____	7. NGO's governing body	g. Executive director
_____	8. NGO's chief operating officer	h. Finance committee
_____	9. NGO stakeholders	i. Legal document
		j. Nominating committee
		k. Rules for conducting an NGO's affairs
		l. Group is terminated when its tasks are completed

Check your answers with those suggested at the end of the module.

"Information by itself is not knowledge;
it requires the addition
of experience and consideration."

–Philip Crosby

NGOS WITH A HIGH LEVEL OF GOVERNANCE CAPACITY

To understand effective NGO governance, we look first at a typical governance structure of an NGO with a high level of capacity. A clear picture of effective governance makes it easier to plan actions that move an NGO in the direction of better governance. As you read through the next few pages, your reaction will probably be, "But the NGOs where I am do not function like this!" You are probably right. Most NGOs lack effective governance. Later, we will discuss the NGO realities that Volunteers frequently encounter.

NGOs are directed and controlled by a governing body, or a board of directors. You may also encounter names such as board of governors or board of trustees. In most countries, the board has a legal, moral, and fiduciary responsibility for the organization.

Board's Major Responsibilities

- Acquire and protect the organization's assets
- Make certain the organization is working to fulfill its mission

At their best, boards reflect the collective efforts of accomplished individuals who advance the institution's mission and long-term welfare. The board's contribution is meant to be strategic and the joint product of talented people. People on a board are brought together to apply their knowledge, experience, and expertise to the major challenges facing the institution.

Strategic thinking and oversight characterize the board's leadership role. An effective board organizes itself to carry out its duties and responsibilities. To manage the day-to-day operations of the NGO, the board of directors appoints an executive director, sometimes called the chief of operations (CEO). Tensions and inefficiencies result if responsibilities, authority, and working relationships of board and staff are not clearly defined.

* * * * * * * * *

A LEARNING MOMENT

The executive director, as you can imagine, has many duties. He/she administers and manages all day-to-day operations of the organization, including:

- hiring and supervising staff,
- monitoring programs and finances,
- providing ongoing leadership,
- advising and reporting to the board on the NGO's operations, and
- speaking on behalf of the organization as delegated by the chairperson/president of the board.

* * * * * * * * *

In our discussion of effective governance, the information is broken into three topics: board structure, governing documents, and board functions.

BOARD STRUCTURE

Boards tend to work effectively when they are structured to carry out each unique mission of the NGO and maximize the individual talents of board members. Dividing the board into committees is a common mechanism for:

- Organizing the board's work to accomplish the NGO's mission.
- Preparing board members for making informed decisions.
- Using board members' skills and expertise (i.e., a board member with financial experience serves on the finance committee and one with a deep understanding of the clients' needs serves on the program committee).
- Providing opportunities to become involved and serve the organization.

Below is an example of one board structure for a high-capacity NGO. Keep in mind that no one board structure is a good fit for all NGOs.

Chairperson of the Board

- Usually is elected by the board for a set term.
- Presides over general board meetings.
- Speaks on behalf of the organization to the public and media.
- Chairs the executive committee.

Vice Chairperson

- Usually succeeds the chairperson at the end of his or her term in office.
- Assists the chairperson and serves in his or her absence.
- Often chairs the nominating committee.

Standing Committees

- Normally are described in the bylaws.
- Usually include the:

  Executive Committee:

  Board chairperson/president, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. Executive committee has authority to make certain decisions between meetings.

  Finance Committee:

  The treasurer usually chairs this committee. It provides financial oversight for the organization, advises the board on the budget and financial affairs.

  Nominating Committee:

  Often chaired by the NGO's vice chairperson. Identifies new board members and nominates individuals to serve as NGO officers.

Ongoing Committees

- Normally not prescribed in the bylaws, but necessary to achieve the organization's mission.
- Might include a program committee, marketing committee, research committee, education committee, etc.
- Allow the board more flexibility to conduct its business and tailor committees to fit the mission of the organization.

Ad Hoc Committees or Task Forces

- Given assignments to be completed in a specified time (fundraising or a special event).
- Disband after their task has been completed.
- Often extremely productive because they have defined tasks to complete within a limited time frame.

Advisory Committees

- Individuals with specific expertise selected as committee members.

  They provide the board with information and advice to understand difficult or complex issues such as a construction project, client demographics, trends in government support, public policy debates, etc.

- Offer advantages to both the committee members and the board.

  Committee members have an opportunity to learn more about the NGO and its board—some may be recruited later as board members.

- Can provide a greater division of labor and fresh new perspectives.

GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Three documents form the basis for NGO governance: articles of incorporation, bylaws, and the mission statement. These documents, along with the minutes of board meetings, budgets, financial statements, and policy statements, communicate how the organization is governed, individual responsibilities, the organization's past, and the organization's future plans.

The articles of incorporation is a legal document that is filed with the appropriate government agency to register the organization as an NGO. Incorporating an NGO, according to the statutory authority of the country, may protect the NGO and its members from unhappy consequences, such as liability for the organization's debts. Tax advantages are available to registered NGOs in a few countries.

Law prescribes the form and content of articles of incorporation. Although requirements vary from country to country, typical items required in articles of incorporation for an NGO include:

- Name of the organization.
- Duration of the organization (usually perpetual).
- Purpose for which the organization is formed.
- Provision for conducting the internal affairs of the organization.
- Names and address of the incorporators.
- Address of the initial registered office and name of the initial registered agent of the organization.
- Provision for distribution of the assets of the organization on dissolution.

The stated purpose of the organization should be broad enough to enable the organization to evolve as necessary to serve its constituency. The Peace Corps is not an NGO, but its purpose—to promote world peace and understanding—

illustrates the broad scope that is desirable in an NGO's purpose. Articles of incorporation outline the organization's form. A set of bylaws, developed by the organization's constituents and approved by the board, supplements the articles by prescribing detailed rules for governing the organization.

Bylaws often begin with a restatement of the name and purpose of the organization as written in the articles of incorporation. Bylaws are internal documents, a set of rules that enables each organization to conduct its affairs. It is important they be written clearly and in language that is easily understood by all organization stakeholders. Typical items addressed in the bylaws are:

- The frequency, notice, and quorum requirements for organizational meetings.
- Voting qualifications, proxies, and procedures for approval of board items.
- The number and term for members of the board, scope of authority, method of nomination and election to the board, and provision for filling vacancies.
- List of board officers, method of nomination and election, terms of office, powers, duties, and succession.
- Membership and authority of standing committees.
- Title and scope of authority for the executive director/chief of staff.
- Record-keeping and financial reporting responsibilities.
- Amendment procedures for the bylaws and provisions for dissolution of the organization.

It is wise to stop short of having too much detail in the bylaws to allow flexibility and avoid the necessity of frequent amendments.

For example: A new environmental NGO wants to raise funds on behalf of the local wildlife and decides on an annual banquet as a fundraiser. Over time, this event declines in popularity and the organization decides to make posters and sell them instead of holding the annual banquet. If the bylaws specifically mandate the existence of the banquet committee, the organization would have to work through an amendment to make the operational change. It is better for the board to have the authority to abolish the old committee and establish a new one so that it may proceed with the new project.

Writing and gaining approval for a set of bylaws takes thought, time, and the involvement of the organization's constituents. Bylaws should be written with an emphasis on fair treatment and transparent governance. Review the bylaws of several NGOs before attempting to write a new set of bylaws.

The mission statement is a communications tool—it guides the board and staff and explains the nature of the NGO to those outside the organization. Therefore, it needs to be concise and memorable. The Peace Corps' mission is expressed as three goals. Almost every trainee, Volunteer, and Peace Corps staff member knows and can communicate these three goals to others. If there were 15 goals, would you remember them?

The mission statement is generally more specific than the NGO's purpose that appears in the articles of incorporation. Some mission statements are a single sentence, some a short paragraph, and some bulleted statements. The mission statement expresses the group's vision and values. Writing a mission statement forces NGO stakeholders to think through their priorities and carefully align behavior with beliefs.

A mission statement should clearly and concisely answer all three questions shown in the following formula.

Who does the NGO serve? + How are they served? + Where are they served? =
a complete mission statement

For example, Junior Achievement-Czech Republic's mission statement is to "Provide a quality economic education for youth in the Czech Republic." In approving the mission statement, the organization gained the buy-in from Junior Achievement-Czech Republic's stakeholders—the board, the staff, teachers, contributors, and even students. It took three months to formulate and gain acceptance for this statement. The mission statement is clear. The NGO serves youth. The service provided is "a quality economic education." The services are in the Czech Republic.

As situations arose, Junior Achievement-Czech Republic was able to rely on their mission statement for guidance. "Quality economic education" translated into spending money to develop and print up-to-date, interesting student textbooks. Teacher training became a priority. When requested to conduct adult business classes, the organization said no, explaining that their mission was to educate youth.

ACTIVITY 5:2

IMPLICATIONS OF REGISTERING AN NGO

Ask your Peace Corps trainers to arrange for a local authority on NGO registration to discuss the following with you:

- Regulations and processes for registering an NGO.
- Benefits of registering an organization as an NGO.

Formulate the questions you want answered. They might include the following:

- What types of organizations can register as NGOs?
- Are there legal restrictions on the number or types of board members, how the NGO obtains funding, etc.?
- Where do you go to register an NGO—which government agency?
- What is the registration process, including documents required and costs involved?
- What are the benefits of registering an organization as an NGO?
- How do government regulations of NGOs affect what NGOs can and cannot do?

BOARD FUNCTIONS

As a governing body, the board has two major responsibilities:

1. Acquires and protects the organization's assets.
2. Makes certain the organization is working to fulfill its mission.

The following functions enable the board to carry out its responsibilities.

Planning: The board develops strategies to ensure that the mission and purpose of the NGO are carried out. Board members approve short- and long-range plans for the organization. They monitor the effectiveness of the organization's programs to see if they have met the goals and objectives outlined in the plans.

Personnel: The board hires the organization's chief operating officer (often called the executive director), makes assignments to the executive director, and monitors his or her performance. It is appropriate for the board or its personnel committee to do a formal performance appraisal of the executive director at least annually. The board approves salary scales and job descriptions for the other staff members who are hired by the executive director. The board approves the personnel policies for the organization. Effective board members respect each other and support the staff.

Financial: The board approves budgets for the organization. No funds should be expended unless the funds are included in a budget approved by the board. The board approves spending reports that are submitted to them on a regular basis. The board is responsible for the legal and ethical actions of its members and those of the organization.

The board is responsible for procuring adequate resources to enable the NGO to fulfill its mission. This includes approval of fundraising plans. Board members are expected to participate in fundraising, and most board members are expected to contribute to the bottom line. An exception is when clients, who may be poor, serve on the board.

Public relations: Board members are aware of all of the organization's activities and encourage participation in appropriate activities in the community. The board seeks opportunities to enhance the public image of the organization.

Monitoring and evaluation of programs and services: Monitoring is the process of routinely gathering information on key aspects of a project, program, or organization to determine if things are proceeding as planned. Monitoring can identify problems when they are small and easily corrected. Monitoring answers the question, "Are we on the track?" Evaluation answers the question, "Are we on the right track?"

The board approves monitoring and evaluation systems and reviews their results. The executive director, staff, and other stakeholders implement the systems. The board uses monitoring and evaluation information in making decisions to allocate resources and strengthen programs and services.

Board development: NGO members may elect the board, but, more often, the board recruits and selects new board members and adopts procedures to encourage excellent board members to continue their service. The board is responsible for creating the diversity and ownership of the wide range of constituency in the NGO. The board monitors and evaluates its own members to ensure that the board is performing effectively.

Finding committed, talented, and willing people is a challenge that each board must face. A diverse board increases the board's effectiveness and expands the leadership base. As the board looks for talented people, the following attributes should be considered:

Expertise: It is desirable to have some board members with personnel management, fiscal, or legal expertise.

Commitment: An essential characteristic is the commitment a board member has to the organization and its mission.

Diversity: Inclusiveness is better achieved when a board has an equal number of men and women; people of different ages; representatives of the major races, ethnicities, and religions of stakeholders; and representatives of the client populations being served.

Board members have a better chance of being effective if they quickly become familiar with the organization, the board's responsibilities, and structure. The chair of the nominating committee or chairperson of the board often conducts board member orientation. The NGO's staff can prepare an orientation notebook containing copies of the NGO's bylaws, mission statement, strategic plans, board structure, minutes of the last board meetings, and other useful information to present to the new board members at their orientation.

To retain good board members, make the meetings interesting and productive. At least a week before the meeting, send out a meeting agenda and the topics that will be discussed.. (See the example below of a board meeting agenda.) Provide board members with opportunities to become involved with specific projects. Board members are more likely to stay active if they have meaningful work.

Thank board members for their work—they are volunteers. Have fun, hold social events, and try to create a sense of community and commitment.

A SAMPLE AGENDA FOR BOARD MEETINGS

Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

A formal vote is needed to approve the minutes. Minutes should be distributed to all members and not read aloud at meetings.

Chairperson's Report

The chairperson should state before each item which items are informational and which require board action. The chairperson should remind the members that only policy-making recommendations require board action.

Executive Director's Report

This report should be in writing. If it is lengthy, it should be distributed before the meeting. The executive director should then highlight important aspects of the written report and take questions.

Financial Report

This report should be included in the executive director's report, with a summary of where the organization is financially, highlighting income and expenses, project costs, and other pressing financial matters.

Committee Reports

Committee reports should be in writing unless they are very brief. After giving the report, the committee chair should make specific motions when board action is required. Only policy items require board action; no board action is required when the committee chair is simply providing information.

Unfinished Business

The only items belonging in this section are ones raised at previous board meetings. The chairperson should remind the members when the item was raised originally and why it was postponed.

New Business

Major items of business are discussed as part of the chairperson's report, executive director's report, or committee reports. At the beginning of the meeting, members are asked if they have additional agenda items, and the chairperson has the option of placing some of these items under New Business.

Discuss Critical Issues (Limit to one or two)

The chairperson outlines the critical issues from his or her perspective and opens the floor for other perspectives and in-depth discussion and analysis.

Next Steps

Identify the critical steps that must be taken before the next meeting and make assignments and due dates.

Adjournment

No formal action is needed. The chairperson announces the date, time, and place of the next meeting or committee meetings, and adjourns the board meeting.

WHAT MAKES BOARDS GREAT

There is a new movement afoot in nonprofit boardrooms. It is called "new work," another term for "work that matters." It is a way of moving boards from low-level activity and feelings of discouragement and underutilization to working on issues that get boards charged up with a feeling of success and contribution.

The "new work" movement has four basic characteristics.

1. It concerns itself with crucial, do-or-die issues central to the institution's success.
2. It is driven by results that are linked to defined timetables.
3. It has clear measures of success.
4. It requires engagement of the organization's internal and external constituencies.

"New work" generates high levels of interest and demands broad participation and widespread support. Using the following "new work" strategies, boards are finding that their work is more fulfilling and NGOs are seeing the positive impact.

Find out what matters. To do "new work," board members and management together must determine the important issues and the agenda of the organization. Board members need to understand what the executive director sees as the critical issues. They also need to know what other stakeholders and industry experts think. No one person knows enough to be a sole supplier of information and counsel.

Spend time on what matters. The concerns are not if it is a question of policy or implementation, the question is—is it important enough for the board's attention. In the old work, boards did not implement; they designed policy to govern the NGO. In the "new work," it is a question of what is important for the board to spend time on. For example: In a capital campaign, establishing priorities and goals is setting policy, while identifying prospects and making calls is implementation. In the search for an executive director, determining selection criteria is making policy; designing the procedure and conducting the interviews is implementation.

Organize around what matters. For the “new work” to happen, substance must dictate structure. The work of the committees, work groups, and task forces must follow the organization’s strategic priorities.

Focus meetings on what matters. Design each meeting, asking the questions:

What is the purpose of this meeting?

How can we organize it to fulfill that purpose?

Four common responses from board members and some suggested activities are:

We need more background to make a decision.

Convene a meeting to engage and educate the entire board about issues facing the organization. The goal is to air views, invite questions, and consider alternatives—not to win an argument. No specific decision will be made and no votes will be taken.

We don’t know what to do about a current problem.

Form small groups to generate more involvement and ideas. Boards must grapple with complicated issues that defy easy solutions; get multiple perspectives; and develop solutions that reflect the group’s best thinking.

We face a crisis.

In times of crisis, set aside usual board business to concentrate on the task at hand. A crisis could be the death of an executive director, the loss of a major funding source, or a split within the board itself. Review the mission statement in times of crisis to help the group stay on course.

We need to deal with sensitive governance issues.

Hold an executive session. Executive sessions are for board members only.

Adapted from Chait, Holland, and Taylor, “New Work of the Nonprofit Board,” *Harvard Business Review,* September–October 1996.

ACTIVITY 5:3

GETTING TO KNOW THE GOVERNANCE OF A LOCAL NGO

Ask the executive director of a local NGO if you can interview him or her. Develop a set of interview questions about the structure and governance of the organization. Review the NGO Capacity Profile in the appendix to Module 3. Work with your language instructor or a colleague to ensure you are asking questions in a culturally appropriate manner and using the best language possible.

Sample questions:

- What adjectives would you use to describe your board?
- How would you describe the members of the board and how do they help you?
- How many board members do you have; in what ways do they participate in the governing of the NGO?
- Does the board have committees; what functions do they perform?
- How do the NGO bylaws help you govern the NGO?

You may find it difficult to get specific information about the board for many reasons—culture, language, openness of the executive director, etc.

After you have gathered the data, use the NGO Capacity Profile to determine the NGO's governance capacity. What strategies might you suggest to improve the NGO's board if you were working with this organization? How would you proceed? What approach would you take with the executive director to get his or her commitment to your suggestions?

What have you learned during this activity that you plan to use in working with NGOs during your Peace Corps assignment?

THE REALITY OF NGO GOVERNANCE

In the last several sections, we have described effective NGO governance and how ideal boards operate, and you have participated in activities to increase your understanding of governance. The reality is that most NGOs do not have effective governance and those that do usually do not need Peace Corps Volunteers. It is time to explore the reality of NGO governance and think about how PCVs can apply what they have learned to help NGOs govern more effectively.

> *"Experience is not what happens to you;*
> *it is what you do with what happens to you."*
>
> — Aldous Huxley

NGOs are born out of a desire to solve a problem, meet a need, or create new opportunities to help others. They often start out as small organizations with two or three friends and colleagues as members of the governing body and volunteers functioning as staff. Sometimes the NGO is started and run by only one individual. As these founders gain experience, the organization evolves from a group of friends managing all aspects of the NGO to one that depends primarily on hired staff to handle the day-to-day activities. The core group of founders may resist for a long period of time increasing the diversity and inclusiveness of the governing body. Although it is not unusual, and perhaps normal, for difficulties to emerge as the NGO matures, it is still difficult and uncomfortable for those making the transition from a small group of dedicated individuals to an effectively governed, professionally managed organization. It can be great fun and very satisfying to be part of a developing organization, but the road is usually rocky.

Talk to your NGO Counterpart or co-workers to determine "their priorities" for improving the NGO's governance. Use the NGO Capacity Profile (see Module 3 appendix) to identify the organization's governance capacity. Note: Most Volunteers report their colleagues don't select the same priorities the Volunteer would choose. It is their choices that count.

Decide on one or two doable tasks. The task may be as small as keeping written minutes of the board meetings. Small successes build confidence that larger changes are possible. People tend to get tired and give up if the plan is too grand or takes too long to accomplish.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR NGOS

Are the organization's board and staff ready to plan for a week, a month, six months, or a year? Encourage them to start planning at a level that is challenging but has a high probability of success. Strategic planning is a good practice, but the NGO you are working with may not be ready to do a strategic plan. Organizations that have never done a one-year operational plan most likely do not have the experience to undertake long-range planning. The good news is that many strategic planning concepts apply to shorter-term planning.

> *"If you prepare yourself at every point*
> *as well as you can, with whatever means you have...*
> *you will be able to grasp opportunity for broader*
> *experience when it appears.*
> *Without preparation you cannot do it."*
>
> — Eleanor Roosevelt

A strategic plan does not guarantee you will reach or exceed your goals. But, at the very least, it provides you with a clear, well-lighted path to reach them. Governing an NGO in the absence of a thoughtful strategic plan is like going on a hike in the middle of the night without a flashlight, a map, or knowledge of the terrain. You may reach your destination, but not on time. Or, you may become lost or stop before you get where you want to go.

Sometimes strategic planning is flawed because the plan fails to integrate the spirit or higher purpose of the organization, the commitment of its members, its ideals, or the reason the NGO was founded. Other times, the plan focuses only on the higher purpose and ignores the realities that every organization faces. And, in a surprisingly large number of cases, NGOs don't bother to create strategic plans—they just do not place much faith in such plans or they don't believe they can implement them.

If an organization does not have a strategic plan, the board and NGO management probably deal informally with many strategic issues—a practice that may allow crucial facts, ideas, and assignments to fall through the cracks.

There are a number of good strategic planning systems. The outline below has been used successfully by Volunteerss to assist NGOs in thinking through their strategic plans.

A MAP OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Plan to Plan

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Who Will Participate?

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Assess External Environment (Opportunities and Threats) — Assess Internal Environment (Strengths and Weaknesses)

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Clarify Mission and Values

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Identify Critical Issues

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Determine Goals and Objectives

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Formulate Strategies

|

Staff writes strategic plan including a financial plan

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NGO board adopts strategic plan

|

Staff and board implement plan

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Monitor to determine that plan is being carried out as designed

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Evaluate to determine if the plan has achieved the intended goals and objectives

For additional information read *Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations* (see Resources section at the end of the module for information).

THE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER AND NGO GOVERNANCE

Did you learn to drive a car by sitting in the car and having someone else do the driving, or did you learn by driving the car yourself? The people who taught you to drive probably more than once fought the urge to "do it themselves" or to "take control." Aren't you glad they resisted, and let you make some mistakes and gain the skills to become a good driver?

It is easy to become passionate about the work of an NGO. You may be tempted to step out front and lead or try to do everything yourself. However, as a Volunteer, your assistance from the sidelines as a coach and sometimes cheerleader is a better approach to assisting the NGO's board and staff in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that result in a strong sustainable organization.

The message is not "sit back and advise." Struggling NGOs need an extra pair of hands, new and different ideas, and someone to help them network. So, roll up your sleeves and get to work. Help the board and staff:

- Write a mission statement.
- Register the NGO with the designated government agency.
- Recruit board members and volunteers.
- Prepare clear, concise reports to enable the board to make good strategic decisions.
- Conduct effective meetings.
- Document minutes of meetings and policy statements.
- Learn how to use computer software and the Internet to make their jobs easier.
- Use databases to handle information more efficiently.
- Prepare financial plans and research and develop grant proposals.
- Put in place systems to track and monitor program and budget activities.
- Design public awareness and program materials.
- Assess information on the external and internal environment of the NGO.
- Develop a strategic plan.

The list of ways you can assist an NGO is endless. Work with the board, staff, and other stakeholders; help them increase their capacity to run an effective sustainable organization. But do not be the decision maker.

There will be potholes in the road you travel in working with NGOs. Discuss with the Peace Corps staff the post's guidelines for working with NGOs.

These guidelines are based on past experience and contain cautionary road signs that are put up to warn Volunteers. Please listen to the warnings and have a safe journey.

"It is other people's experience
that makes the older man wiser
than the younger man."

— Yoruba proverb

We hope that the readings and activities in this manual have provided insight into how NGOs operate and the knowledge, skills, and techniques you will need to work with your organizational partners in strengthening these organizations. When you begin your work with NGOs, watch for the small signs of success, and do not forget to celebrate the little victories.

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KEY TERMS

Key terms are defined as they are used in the module. A space is provided to write the local language translation of the word or phrase. Work with your language teachers to find the right translations and build your technical vocabulary as you study this module.

Articles of incorporation is the legal document filed with the appropriate government agency to establish the NGO as a registered organization.

Board of directors is the most common English name for an NGO's governing board. The board constitutes the ultimate legal authority for the NGO. This oversight body takes many different forms, depending on the cultural or national context.

Bylaws are a set of rules adopted by an NGO for governing its meetings and affairs.

Fiduciary responsibility requires exercising a higher degree of care than one normally would for one's own personal affairs. A person who holds something in trust for others acts in a fiduciary capacity as a **trustee**. For example, the governing board of an NGO holds in trust funds donated or provided by others and has a fiduciary responsibility to both donors and program beneficiaries of protecting and using the funds for their designated purpose.

Governance refers to a system of oversight, exercise of authority, or control within an NGO.

A **mission statement** is a cogent, vivid description of an organization's identity, the people it serves, its geographic scope, and how the organization accomplishes its purpose.

Strategic planning involves a time horizon that extends beyond a single fiscal year (unlike an operating plan and budget). A **strategic plan** looks beyond the internal realities of an organization to consider the impact of external events and trends on the work and effectiveness of the organization.

Values are the organization's guiding principles, a set of common agreements about how the organization conducts itself and relates to its various stakeholders.

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RESOURCES

These resources are available through the Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange (ICE). The citations are presented as they appear in *The Whole ICE Catalog*.

Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards. Richard T. Ingram. (National Center for Nonprofit Boards.) 1988. 22 pp. (ICE No. SB178)

One of several booklets produced by the National Center for Nonprofit Boards (NCNB) as part of the NCNB Governance Series. Clarifies the responsibilities of the board as a collective entity as well as the responsibilities of individual board members. Describes 10 different functions, including determining an organization's mission and purposes, selecting and overseeing its executive, ensuring effective planning and adequate resources, monitoring its programs and services, and enhancing its public image.

Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations. Bryan W. Barry. (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.) 1997. 12 pp. (ICE No. SB177)

Explains the nature of strategic planning, its benefits, and the steps involved. Also describes the role of the executive director and the board in planning and implementing strategic planning.

Internet:

www.seflin.org/nsfre/ncnb.mnu.htm/ — links to information on boards and board development as well as to the National Center for Nonprofit Boards.

www.idn.org — a source for information on NGOs and development.

www.pactworld.org —information on NGO effectiveness and development issues.

http://alcazar.com/wwwvl_idc/ — information on international development and cooperation, with articles on NGO management.

Other Materials:

Holland, Thomas P. *How to Build More Effective Boards.* (The National Center for Nonprofit Boards.) Washington, D.C. 1996.

Smith, Bucklin & Associates. *The Complete Guide to Nonprofit Management*. (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.) 1994.

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MODULE 5 Reference

SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Differentiate between the two words in each of the following sets.

Governance involves leadership, strategic thinking, and vision, whereas **management** focuses on the day-to-day operations.

The **NGO's purpose** is a statement of the broad changes the NGO wants to make in the society, and the **NGO's mission statement** details who will be served by the NGO, where will they be served, and how they will be served.

Articles of incorporation is the legal document that contains the information needed to register an NGO with the designated governmental agency; **bylaws** contain the rules that govern the organization's meetings and affairs.

A **standing committee** is specified in the bylaws and usually consists of the executive committee, the finance committee, and the nominating committee. **Ad hoc committees** are formed for a specific task and are dissolved when their task is completed.

Facilitators help people work together but do not impose their will or opinions. An **authoritative leader** articulates a vision, points the way, and makes decisions.

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Summarize, in 35 words or fewer, how the "new work" of boards improved governance.

> The "new work" suggests that boards and management determine the important issues, spend time on what matters, organize around what matters and focus meetings on what matters.

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Demonstrate an understanding of the strategic planning process by correctly completing the following statement.

> Strategic planning involves a timeframe greater than **one year.** To ensure buy-in by the NGO's stakeholders the planning progress should be **participatory or inclusive.** Before writing goals and objectives, planners need to survey the organization's **external** and **internal** environment and clarify the organization's **mission statement** and **values**. The NGO's **staff** usually prepare the strategic plan; the plan must be approved by the NGO's **governing board** or **board of directors.**

ACTIVITY 5:1 Reference

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

l	1. Ad hoc committee	a. Board of directors
d	2. Advisory committee	b. Chairperson/President
i	3. Articles of incorporation	c. Clients
k	4. Bylaws	d. Composed of experts
b	5. Leader of NGOs governing body	e. Description of an NGO's work
e	6. Mission statement	f. Executive committee
a	7. NGO's governing body	g. Executive director
g	8. NGO's chief operating officer	h. Finance committee
a b c f g h j	9. NGO stakeholders	i. Legal document
		j. Nominating committee
		k. Rules for conducting an NGO's affairs
		l. Group is terminated when its tasks are completed

TRAINER'S NOTES

MODULE 5
EFFECTIVE NGO GOVERNANCE

Overview:

In this module the elements of effective NGO governance are presented. This module also presents methods and techniques for Volunteers to use when facilitating NGO stakeholders as they think through and implement actions to improve their organization's governance. Note: Consider postponing this module until an In-Service Training (IST) where Volunteers and their NGO partners can explore the subject of governance together.

Time:

Reading	1 hour
Activities and debriefing of activities	4 hours

Materials:

Flip chart, markers, and a summary of national laws related to the establishment of an NGO and the responsibilities of the governing board.

Preparation:

Review this module and make changes to better reflect the local NGO environment and to fit your training situation before copying this module for training participants. Talk with NGO executive directors and board members in your host country to get a sense of their successes and challenges. Learn about legislation pertaining to NGOs and prepare a summary or arrange for a knowledgeable individual to brief training participants on local NGO laws.

Debriefing the module and processing the learnings:

Take time to discuss with training participants the important role governance plays in achieving an active sustainable organization. Explore with them the implications for governance of culture, tradition, and local NGO laws. Discuss their involvement in an NGO's governance. Check to determine that training participants are comfortable with their mastery of topics covered in this module after a self-evaluation of the knowledge, skills, and attitude objectives. If trainees feel the need for additional exploration of certain topics, help them plan how their needs can be met.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 5:1
NGO GOVERNANCE QUIZ

Overview:

The NGO governance quiz in this activity encourages training participants to think about terms associated with NGO governance.

Time: 15 minutes

Materials:

Copies of the quiz are provided in this module, and suggested responses are located at the end of the module.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

This is a self-discovery activity for the reader. Suggested responses are found at the end of this module. Reviewing the answers to this quiz provides an opportunity to discuss how local culture, tradition, and NGO laws affect NGOs' governance. Remind trainees that the quiz terms may have different meanings depending on the local culture.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 5:2
IMPLICATIONS OF REGISTERING AN NGO

Overview:

In this activity training participants gain an understanding of the legalities and benefits of registering an NGO.

Time: 1 hour

Materials:

Collect samples of registration forms and local NGOs' articles of incorporation. If the documents and laws are in the local language and long, it would be useful to provide training participants with a translation and a summary.

Preparation:

Help training participants develop a list of NGO registration questions. Brief the presenter on what questions to expect so they can prepare the answers.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

Government regulation of NGOs affects each organization's operations and varies greatly from country to country. In some countries, such as Turkmenistan, an NGO may have to register as a business. NGO legislation is still being developed. Help training participants think through the impact of local regulations on NGOs.

TRAINER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 5:3
GETTING TO KNOW THE GOVERNANCE OF A LOCAL NGO

Overview:

This activity provides trainees with an opportunity to learn about and reflect on a local NGO's governance and the board's roles and responsibilities. This exercise may increase trainees' awareness of the complex roles of an NGO's board and management.

Time: 2 hours

Materials:

The NGO Capacity Profile, in the appendix to Module 3.

Procedure:

Identify local NGOs whose executive directors are willing to be interviewed by trainees. Assist trainees in developing a set of interview questions about the structure and governance of NGOs. Involve language instructors to ensure the trainees are asking the questions in a culturally appropriate manner and using the best possible language. Use the sample questions in the activity as guidelines.

Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:

- Describe how you felt when interviewing the executive director?
- What information surprised you?
- What were the important points made by the executive director?
- What piece(s) of information gathered struck you as significant?
- How do you plan to use what you have learned in assisting NGOs?