CAPABLE PARTNERS PROGRAM

New Partners Initiative

GOING THE DISTANCE

Step-by-Step Strategies to **Foster NGO Sustainability**

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

fhi360 THE SCIENCE OF IMPROVING LIVES

ABOUT THE NEW PARTNERS INITIATIVE

The New Partners Initiative (NPI), launched in 2005 on World AIDS Day, was PEPFAR's signature effort to help new and diverse partners build their capacity to fight HIV and AIDS at the local level. Created under the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), NPI funded selected non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as partners capable of reaching people in need of HIV and AIDS services, but who lacked the experience in working with the U.S. Government (USG). These NGOs, including community- and faith-based organizations, implemented HIV and AIDS prevention and care programs in the fifteen PEPFAR focus countries. Through customized technical assistance (TA) and broad-based trainings, NPI enhanced partners' technical and organizational capacities as well as ensured the quality and sustainability of HIV and AIDS programs.

Through resources, trainings, one-to-one TA, and the Website, **www.npi-connect.net**, which serves as a resource and information exchange for grantees, the NPI technical assistance program worked to:

1. strengthen capacity of partners,
2. build community ownership, and
3. improve the quality of HIV and AIDS prevention and care services.

This emphasis on building effective organizations in addition to strong programs was a defining aspect of NPI.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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“THE WORLD NEEDS AN ENORMOUS
NUMBER OF NEW INNOVATORS,
CHANGE AGENTS AND TRANSFORMERS,
ALL DEDICATED TO TURNING DEVELOPMENT
IN THE DIRECTION OF SUSTAINABILITY.
PEOPLE LIKE YOU.”

– Alan Atkisson
Believing Cassandra: an optimist look at a pessimist’s world

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Preface

Worldwide, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community based organizations (CBOs) work tirelessly to improve the well-being of their communities and countries.

Yet, despite their commitment and the positive contributions they make, resources can be hard to come by to continue their activities. National and international donor priorities can shift, there may be more competition for limited resources or the needs of communities may change. Whatever the reasons, local organizations need practical strategies to help them plan and effectively navigate the ever-changing environments in which they work. ***Going the Distance: Step-by-step Strategies to Foster NGO Sustainability*** was designed to offer practical ways to help them do just that.

Whether your organization is newly founded or well-established, planning for the future is essential if you intend to be around for the long term. While you may be certain about your current funding stream and projects, these tend to have a short time horizon—generally, one to three years—after which things are likely to be less certain.

These modules are designed for local NGOs and CBOs looking for guidance on how to build a strong foundation for sustainability. These include the ability to:

1. seek out information, network and form partnerships,
2. communicate effectively, and
3. align the organization's strengths with both community needs and available funding opportunities.

Once these skills are in place, organizations with a strong committed staff, solid internal systems and technical expertise will be better able to thrive—to go the distance.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AO	Agreement Officer
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
CA	Cooperative Agreement
CAP	Capable Partners Program
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMP	Communications Management Plan
CO	Contract Officer
COR	Contract Officer's Representative
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DUNS number	Data Universal Numbering System
FBO	Faith-based Organization
HIV+	HIV Positive
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
LPCB	Local Partner Capacity Building
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MARPS	Most-at-Risk Populations
MOH	Ministry of Health
NACP	National AIDS Control Program
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPI	New Partners Initiative
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OGAC	Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PDF	Portable Document Format
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PLWHA	People Living with HIV and AIDS
PMI	President's Malaria Initiative
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV
RFA	Request for Application
RFP	Request for Proposal
TA	Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing

Getting Started

"SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: DEVELOPMENT THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF THE PRESENT WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE ABILITY OF FUTURE GENERATIONS TO MEET THEIR OWN NEEDS."

– "Our Common Future," World Commission on Environment and Development report (chaired by Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtlandambassador to the United Nations, 1987)

Introduction

Going the Distance is intended to provide a framework and tips for conducting workshops within a single organization or with a group of organizations. The activities may be implemented as a curriculum from start to finish or you may choose from among the modules and activities depending on the needs and priorities of your organization. For example, you may want to set aside one day a week for a module or focus on one each month or quarter, using the breaks between sessions to implement what was learned.

This resource was designed to support a mix of experience and skill levels among facilitators. The modules may be facilitated by a staff member within an organization (for example, the Executive Director or Program Manager), by an external TA provider or consultant, or self-guided.

The material within the modules is organized sequentially and will yield the best results when followed in the order presented. To help you deliver the content, specific language is provided; but you need not recite it word-for-word. Rather, it is intended to help you express key ideas, indicate the level of detail needed to get the point across and suggest appropriate examples. Feel free to tailor the activities, language and examples to suit your style, experience and cultural context.

SYMBOLS

Throughout the modules, these symbols or icons are used to help facilitators manage the sessions.

- Time
- Agenda
- Attention
- Handout
- Objectives
- Materials
- Say
- Facilitator's Notes
- Flipchart

Methodologies

The modules use adult learning principles and participatory approaches. Methodologies include lectures accompanied by mapping exercises, brainstorming, role-play, presentations as well as individual and group work.

Participants

Invite a range of staff, volunteers and stakeholders to participate. Discuss with your team who to involve in each session prior to conducting the workshop.

Venue

The venue will depend on the number of participants, the availability of space, and the cost. If you facilitate the modules in an organization's office, be sure there is a room large enough to accommodate all of the participants and that it has enough tables and chairs. A number of the activities require that the participants break into small groups. If all the groups work in the same room, it might be too crowded or too loud to work and learn. Be sure there is additional space—offices or rooms—or, if weather permits, outdoor space where the groups can work.

It might be more effective to borrow or rent space for a few hours or even work at the home of a staff member than to gather in the office. This can help minimize distractions such as calls or visits during the training.

THE FACILITATOR'S ROLE

The facilitator's primary responsibility is to support and enhance the learning of workshop participants.

Before the workshop

- Familiarize yourself with all exercises and activities
- Make copies of handouts
- Read the list of materials required and gather them
- Confirm the meeting space, date and time
- Invite and remind participants to attend (for example, via email)
- Learn as much as possible about the group (numbers, work done to date, issues and concerns)
- Think through the issues or problems that may arise in the workshop and know how you will respond to them
- Prepare snacks and beverages for the event, as appropriate

Equipment and Supplies Checklist

- Stop watch or watch with second hand
- Easel
- Large flipchart pad
- Box of colored markers (depending on number of participants)
- Masking tape
- Pens/writing pads (or request that the participants bring their own)
- Large sticky notes or index cards
- Session handouts

During the workshop

- Remain engaged and focused during each session, even when not presenting
- Ask open questions that help people talk about an issue
- Paraphrase what people say to ensure that everyone understands it correctly
- Explore people's answers
- Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate
- Record on flipchart paper or newsprint key words that capture the essence of what people are saying
- Keep time
- Help participants agree to disagree by reminding them to treat one another with respect despite their different viewpoints
- Summarize what group members have said and decided

After the workshop

- Solicit feedback from participants and learn from the experience.
- Use that learning to help you improve your next facilitation opportunity.

PREPARING FOR EACH SESSION

Welcome participants

Decide how you want to welcome and introduce the sessions. Even for a group of participants who know one another well, a warm welcome and introductions can set a positive tone for what follows. Unless the members of the group change or there is a large gap between workshops, introductions are not necessary each time you convene. In any case, it is a good idea to provide a "welcome" or "welcome back" to remind the group of the purpose of the sessions. At the start of each session, it is helpful to remind the group what they accomplished in previous sessions.

Establish an open atmosphere

Ice breakers are an enjoyable way for a group of participants who are not acquainted to "break the ice" and get to know one another. But they also can be used when participants know one another well. In either case, introductory activity can help participants become comfortable with one another and with discussing the subject matter. An ice breaker can also serve to set the session apart from the ordinary work day and routine, relax the participants and encourage new thinking and creativity. Three ideas for icebreakers follow or use your own.

SAMPLE ICEBREAKERS

Desert Island Companions

1. Ask participants this question: If you were stranded on a deserted island, which two people would you want with you? They can be real or fictional. Tell them they will have 60 seconds to write down two names.
2. Ask each participant to introduce him or herself (name, job title), then share with the group the names of the two desert-island companions he or she chose and why.
   Start with yourself as an example.
3. Follow up; ask if there were any surprises in the group and if anybody has a question for another participant.

Responses help participants identify common interests and hobbies and discover talents that people may have but dream of spending more time on (which can potentially be encouraged and used in completing a project). This can help especially if the group is relatively new and may feel its members have little in common. Some more lead-ins:

- If I win the lottery, the first thing I would do is...
- If I won an all-expenses-paid trip to anywhere, I would go to ______ and would take __________ (a person and/or thing).

New Skills

1. Each person finishes this statement: "If I could wake up tomorrow with a new skill or talent it would be…" *Start with yourself as an example.*
2. Follow up; ask if there were any surprises in the group and if anybody has a question for another participant.

Just the Facts

(Best when group members are already acquainted)

1. Distribute blank index cards or sheets of paper, one to each participant.
2. Ask participants to write one interesting fact about themselves (hobby, favorite food, etc.)
3. Collect the cards and read each fact out loud to the group, then ask the group to match the fact with the most likely person.
4. Give the fact to the person chosen. Once all of the facts have been matched with individuals, check to see how many were correct.

Sample Courtesy List

- Respect all views and all people.
- Give everyone a turn.
- One person speaks at a time.
- No "sidebars" (no side conversations).
- Stay on topic; keep comments brief.
- Speak for yourself, not for others.
- Turn off mobile phones during the sessions.
- Have fun!

Agree on courtesy rules

It is important to set rules for the sessions to minimize distractions and keep the group focused. As the facilitator, you can suggest some common rules and ask the participants if they agree with them. You can also ask the participants to brainstorm additional rules for the list. Be sure to write the rules on flipchart paper and post them where everyone can see them. Remind the group of the common rules at the start of each session.

For each session

Briefly orient participants to each module by reviewing its agenda and objectives. It is helpful if both the agenda and objectives are posted on a large flipchart page as a reference.

At the conclusion of each module, return to the objectives and summarize how they were met.

Have Fun!

Do your best to create an open, friendly and creative atmosphere where everyone can feel free to share.

LIST OF WORKSHOP HANDOUTS

Module	Title	Quantity
PART ONE		
1.1 Defining Sustainability	Four Pillars that Support an NGO's Sustainability	
1.2 A Sustainability Check-Up	a. Sustainability Rapid Assessment—*Worksheet*	
	b. Stop or Go/Yes or No—*Exercise*	
1.3 Identifying & Claiming your Niche	a. Author's Niche Map	
	b. *Helping Partners*—Sample Niche Map	
	c. Elements of a Successful Niche	
	d. Community Response—Evolution of a Niche	
	e. What is our Niche?—*Worksheet*	
PART TWO		
2.1 What is Resource Mobilization?	Resource Mobilization: Who Does it and How	
2.2 Introducing Resource Mapping and the Funding Landscape	The Funding Landscape	
2.3 Setting Resource Mobilization Targets	Inventory of Current and Future Resources	
2.4 Mapping	a. Mapping Individuals	
	b. Mapping Donors	
2.5 Donor Gap Analysis	Gap Analysis—*Worksheet*	
2.6 Filling Information Gaps	a. Researching Donors	
	b. Nine Ways to Connect with Prospective Donors	
	c. Informational Interview Tips	
	d. Role Play—Information Please	
PART THREE		
3.1 The Elevator Speech	a. Effective Elevator Speech Checklist	
	b. Sample Pitches and DOs & DON'T's	
	c. Preparing an Elevator Speech—*Worksheet*	

Module	Title	Quantity
	d. Anatomy of an Elevator Speech	
	e. Role-play—A Call to Action	
3.2 Writing for Sustainability	Three Actions to Take Before Writing a Capability (Cape) Statement	
3.3 Capability statements	a. Hope Ethiopia cape statement	
	b. Elements of a Capability Statement and Capability Statement	
	c. Capability Statement—*Worksheet with examples*	
	d. Capability Statement Assessment	
	e. Capability Statement Summary (blank)	
	f. Exercise: Encore, Encore	
	g. Capability Statement Template	
	h. Four Tips for Refining a Capability Statement for a Proposal	
3.4 System (Capacity) Statements	a. Elements of a Systems Statement	
	b. *Activists for Hope*–Governance Capacity Statement	
	c. Systems (Capacity) Statement Questionnaire	
	d. *Activists for Hope*–Systems (Capacity) Questionnaire	
	e. *Activists for Hope*—Sample Systems Statement	
3.5. Connecting with Donors	a. Exercise—What Matters Most?	
	b. Ladder of Inference	
	c. Exercise—Between the Lines	
	d. Article "Working on Common Cross-cultural Communication Challenges"	
	e. Seven Tips to Improve Communication with International Donors	
	f. Sample Donor Communication Management Plan Matrix	
	g. Donor Communication Management Plan Matrix (blank)	
	h. Key Questions to Answer Before Meeting a Donor	
	i. Ten Ways to Meet Donor Expectations	

Defining a Sustainable Organization: Identifying and Claiming your Niche

PART 1

"WE CAN CHART OUR FUTURE CLEARLY AND WISELY ONLY WHEN WE KNOW THE PATH WHICH HAS LED TO THE PRESENT."

– Adlai E. Stevenson
U.S. diplomat, politician and ambassador to the United Nations

PART 1

What is Sustainability?

TOTAL TIME

60 minutes

AGENDA

1.1a Defining sustainability (15 minutes)

1.1b Components of sustainability (45 minutes)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

If modules are presented as stand-alone workshops, see "Getting Started" at the beginning of the guide.

ATTENTION

The exercises in this module are designed to build on one another. It is best if they are completed in the order presented.

Handouts are provided at the end of the module.

Introduction

In the context of international development, sustainability refers to an organization's ability to endure and to serve its country and communities over the long term. Whether an NGO or CBO will prove sustainable largely depends on the quality of the organization's performance, the achievement of concrete results over time and on the ability to secure vital funding for its activities. Sustainability may also refer to an organization's specific program and whether it will continue after a grant period ends. Donor funding is essentially an investment, and both international and national donors increasingly want assurance that there will be a lasting impact, a "return" on their investment. This is true whether talking about a small infrastructure project that builds a water system in a rural village or a larger investment in an urban health center. A donor wants to be sure that the water system or the health center will continue to function after the end of the grant.

Although many organizations understand the importance of sustainability, they don't know how or where to start. The modules in Part One will help you to:

- define sustainability,
- understand what is needed to sustain an organization, program or project for the long term, and
- take the first steps toward improving your prospects for the future.

It is never too early to start planning for or thinking about sustainability. Most organizations start a few months before funding ends. That is way too late!

The exercises that follow will help you start on the path to sustainability. We will begin by defining key terms and inviting you to consider some of the concepts and processes that are essential for the long term health of the entire organization. Strong projects require a solid home. If there are gaps in your organization, you will find an assessment tool and some of selected online resources that can help you address those gaps.

MODULE 1.1a

Defining Sustainability

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

15 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- ✔ define sustainability, and
- ✔ identify different aspects of sustainability.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Ask participants to read their definition(s) out loud. Write their definitions on flipchart paper and post as point of reference for all modules on this topic.

Say: Sustainability touches almost every decision your organization makes, from the programs you design and the partnerships you build to your decisions about hiring and allocating resources.

Ask: What does sustainability mean?
- When donors talk about "sustainability," what do they mean?
- When you think about "sustainability" what do you mean?

Take a minute to write down your response(s) to these two questions.

Say: There are many different definitions of sustainability; here is one we will explore:

> **Sustainability is the capacity to endure and grow by adapting to a changing environment.**

Ask: What does this definition mean in the context of an NGO or a CBO?
(Prompt participants to explain what the words "endure" and "grow" mean to them.)

Explain: To "endure" refers to an organization's ability to survive, to continue to do its work and play a positive role in lives of its beneficiaries over time. This does not mean that it will necessarily provide the same services or programs forever, but that the organization will continue to exist and contribute.

To "grow" might mean to have larger staff, more projects or a bigger budget, but it could also mean to "grow" in experience, skills and expertise and move into new technical areas while staying the same size.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Review definitions of sustainability. Agree on one.

If there is much debate about them, say that during the training you can come back to the definition to continue to refine it.

Ask: What might change in the environment?

(Suggested answers to supplement ideas raised by participants)

- *Needs of the communities you serve*
- *Dimensions of the problem you are helping to address (For example, new prevention and/or treatments for HIV/AIDS become widely available)*
- *Amount of available funding (For example, international donors reduce their budgets)*
- *Competition for funding increases*
- *Political leadership*
- *Laws governing NGOs*

Wrap up

A very important part of this definition of sustainability is the word "adapt"—it means that as the environment changes, the organization can change too, in ways that do not sacrifice its mission.

When all is said and done, a sustainable organization is one that can continue to fulfill its mission into the future.

MODULE 1.1b

Components of Sustainability

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

45 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- ✔ identify the key components of organizational sustainability, and
- ✔ apply the key components of organizational sustainability to their organization.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipcharts, markers, tape, index cards or sticky notes
- ☐ Handout—***Four Pillars that Support an NGO's Sustainability***

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Depending on how many participants are gathered, you may want to break the group into twos or threes.

Provide participants with flipchart paper and markers, index cards or sticky notes. Ask participants to record their answers on the cards or notes. These cards will be used in the "Match Game" exercise.

BRAINSTORM

What does an organization need to be sustainable?

Say: We just discussed what sustainability means. What do you think a sustainable organization has? Think about a local organization that has been around for a long time. How did it manage to carry on and grow?

You will have 2 minutes to write your ideas on cards/notes. Write each idea/answer on separate cards/notes.

Say: Time. Let's hear and discuss each answer. Hold on to your cards/notes, because we will use them shortly.

(Suggested answers to supplement ideas raised by participants)
- *Strong financial, management, M&E, administrative and other systems such that the organization can continue to provide quality services, apply for and absorb funds, and remain active*
- *A knowledgeable professional staff that you can be positioned for future projects*
- *The capacity to be innovative and effective;*
- *A strong network of partnerships with international and local NGOs and community- and faith-based organizations (CBOs and FBOs)*
- *Meeting the needs/demands of the beneficiaries they serve*

Say: As we heard, sustainability touches on almost every part of an organization. To make it more manageable, let's break it down into component parts. Then, we can approach sustainability step by step.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

On flip chart paper draw four vertical columns with these headings at the top: **Institutional, Programmatic, Financial, Environmental.**

Post.

EXERCISE:
Match Game

Say: There are many ways to think about sustainability and break it down into its component parts. One way is to consider the following four pillars that support sustainability:

1. Institutional
2. Programmatic
3. Financial
4. Environmental

Ask: Look at the responses on your index cards/sticky notes. Where do you think each of your answers belongs? Stand up and post your responses under the appropriate heading. Then, we will compare our answers with those in the handout.

What if anything is missing from this list? Fill in any gaps on the handout.

Hand out: *Four Pillars that Support an NGO's Sustainability*

Four Pillars that Support an NGO's Sustainability

There are many ways to think about sustainability and break it down into component parts. One way is to consider these four pillars as supporting an organizations capacity to survive and thrive.

Institutional	Programmatic	Financial	Environmental
Mission, vision, values articulated and shared	Staff knowledge and expertise	Established methods, procedures and controls	Laws and regulations that

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Ask participants why they chose the ratings they did. Let the participants discuss. Ask participants to identify which components (Institutional, Programmatic, Financial, Environmental) are strongest and weakest.

Wrap up

How sustainable do you think your organization is on a scale of 1 to 10 for each of the boxes, with 1 being not sustainable and 10 being extremely sustainable? Write your rating in each box of the handout. Review your ratings to get a quick sense of what seems to be in good shape and what may need attention. In Module 1.2, we will use another tool to measure how prepared you think your organization and a specific program are to continue into the future.

Remember, strong projects need the support of a strong organization. The two are inseparable.

Four Pillars that Support an NGO's Sustainability

There are many ways to think about sustainability and break it down into component parts. One way is to consider these four pillars as supporting an organizations capacity to survive and thrive.

Institutional	Programmatic	Financial	Environmental
Mission, vision, values articulated and shared across the organization	Staff knowledge and expertise	Established methods, procedures and controls to gather, record, classify, analyze, interpret and present accurate and timely financial data	Laws and regulations that define, encourage and protect NGOs
Active engagement of Board of Directors who provide overall direction and help mobilize resources	Activities are consistent with mission, vision and values	Established systems for handling procurement, travel, inventory, facilities and personnel matters including payroll and benefits	Support from policy makers
Strong leadership and management to ensure day-to-day operations support mission, vision and values and connect with the beneficiaries and larger community	Opportunities for information transfer and exchange	Mix of funding sources. For example, donations from community supporters, national or international grant(s), and income-generating projects	Influential champions and supporters inside and outside your sector
A strategic plan that looks at least five years ahead, establishes indicators linked to sustainability and is updated regularly	Established methods, procedures and indicators to monitor and evaluate program performance	Managers who can develop and monitor budgets that include all relevant costs	Strong partnerships and networks that allow different groups to work together toward a shared goal by coordinating strategies and pooling resources. Networks that show policy makers that there is wide support for particular policies or programs
Established, transparent business and operations systems	Project planning based on data and research	Ability to generate new resources by engaging public and private sector resources and earn income on your own.	Access to technical assistance outside the organization
	Resources, materials and tools that respond to project needs	Ability to advocate for new national and local revenue sources	Support from clients, beneficiaries and other community members

MODULE 1.2

A Sustainability Check-Up

TOTAL TIME

2 hours

AGENDA

1.2a Assessing organizational and project sustainability (60 minutes)

1.2b Looking at the project lifecycle (30 minutes)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

This exercise assumes participants work on the same project. If the group is small, six or fewer, do this exercise as a group.

If the group represents several projects, divide the group according to project.

Explain the instructions for the *Sustainability Rapid Assessment*. Give the group(s) 30 minutes to complete the assessment.

Say: Think of organizational sustainability like a car. There is the part we see—the sleek frame, wheels, tires, interior seats and controls. These are the organizational aspects which any outsider can see—the activities, services or products; the staff; facilities, signs. But there are also parts we do not see —the engine, transmission, battery and fuel tank. These correspond to the institutional aspects of the organization—systems and processes for managing finances, projects, operations and human resources, strategies for raising money, and techniques for monitoring and evaluating performance. These will be strong if the NGO is serious about its purpose, has clearly established systems and shared objectives that all staff put into practice. If the director and staff lose the vision, stray from the mission, ignore the systems, the vehicle that is your organization will sputter. If there is no gas, no matter how good the body looks, the car will not go.

The same is true for your organization and its programs. It is a good idea to look under the hood or bonnet, to assess whether the organization, program or project is prepared to go the distance. To help you do this, in the next exercises, you will use a *Sustainability Rapid Assessment* tool to assess your **programmatic** sustainability.

ATTENTION

When talking about sustainability, the words program and project are sometimes used interchangeably. Do not be confused!

Program is the umbrella term under which there are a group of related projects.

Throughout these modules, when we talk about programmatic strength, we mean **all** of your organization's projects taken together. For example, when talking about an organization's HIV and AIDS **program,** we are referring to all of your HIV and AIDS projects, including prevention, care, treatment, job training, and so on.

Handouts are provided at the end of the module.

MODULE 1.2a

Assessing Organizational Sustainability

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

60 minutes

(30 minutes to complete the assessment)

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ gauge sustainability in five dimensions: institutional, programmatic, financial, environmental and project, and
- ✔ identify priority areas to target to improve the sustainability of the organization, program or project.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handout—*Sustainability Rapid Assessment* tool

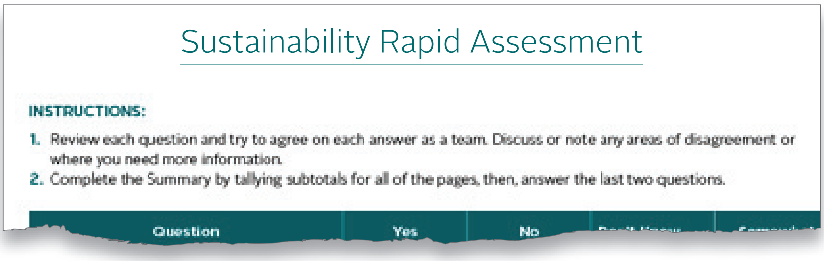
FACILITATOR'S NOTE

There are 75 questions. Move around the room and observe how the task is going. Encourage the participants and respond to their questions. Periodically, announce how much time is left. After 30 minutes, bring participants back to discuss.

EXERCISE

Rapid Assessment of Organizational Sustainability

Hand out: *Sustainability Rapid Assessment* tool


Sustainability Rapid Assessment

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Review each question and try to agree on each answer as a team. Discuss or note any areas of disagreement or where you need more information.
2. Complete the Summary by tallying subtotals for all of the pages, then, answer the last two questions.

Question	Yes	No	Don't Know	Somewhat

Say: Over the next 30 minutes you will complete a rapid assessment that gauges how prepared you think your organization and one of its programs are to go the distance. The questions aim to help assess whether your organization or a specific project can be continued on a long-term basis. Your frank answers will help you identify gaps and strengths.

Instructions:

1. Review each question and answer as a team. Discuss or note any areas of disagreement or where you need more information. There are two parts to this rapid assessment: part 1 asks about institutional factors that contribute to program sustainability; part 2 asks about programmatic and financial factors.

2. Complete the summary by tallying subtotals for each section—institutional, financial, programmatic, environmental, and project—then, answer the last two questions.

Be prepared to discuss your assessment with the whole group.

Say: Time. What you have are snapshots of factors reflecting how prepared you think your organization and a program are to continue to serve beneficiaries into the future.

Discuss: What are your scores?

> **Your total YES score is 50 or more**
> You think your organization is in good shape. Still, consider addressing any gaps.
>
> **Your total YES score is between 30 and 49**
> You think there are some good practices in place, but also some gaps that need to be addressed.
>
> **Your total YES score is less than 29**
> You think your overall organization is not in good health. Consider calling in assistance.

Debrief: *(Allow 20 minutes to discuss these or others aspects of the assessment.)*

- *What surprised you?*
- *What do you need to work on?*
- *What is a no that you feel is a priority to turn into a yes?*
- *How would you do that?*
- *What did the assessment tool miss?*
- *What could you add to the assessment?*

Wrap up

You might have noticed that some of the questions referred to a specific project while others referred to your organization. That is because it is difficult for one project team to be successful without the support of the organization. For example, even if a single project has great management and staff, if the organization as a whole does not have a current mission or vision statement, strong staff, and the financial and M&E systems needed to ensure accountability, then it will be more difficult for the organization or a project to operate long term and to market itself to prospective donors and partners.

Look at the gaps in each area to identify what needs work. Use this as one way to target improvements and further enhance your sustainability.

MODULE 1.2b

Looking at Project Viability

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
✔ identify elements that determine whether a project or service should be continued.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handout—*Stop or Go/ Yes or No?*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

There are 10 questions. Move around the room and observe how the task is going.

Encourage the participants and respond to their questions. After 10 minutes, bring all the participants back to discuss.

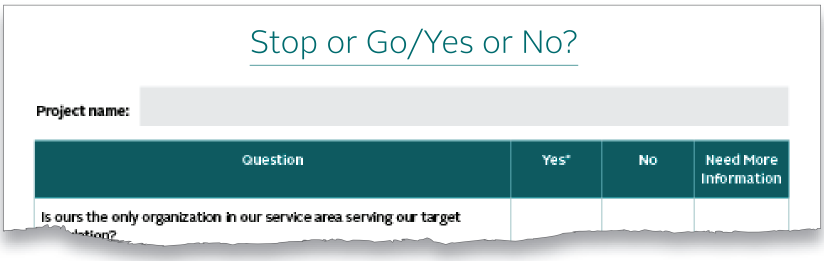
Say: When planning any project or activity, it is good to ask "How long do we think we can continue?"

The question is not how long would we **like** to continue, but how long **can** we realistically continue to do what is needed to make a difference, including supervising, motivating, training, monitoring, and of course, funding the service or product.

Some organizations just keep doing what they are doing simply because they know how. Others continue a project because donors like or want it. As a result, the organization does not reflect on whether its activities are the best use of the organization's skills, talents and resources or whether they are meeting the priority needs of their beneficiaries.

Before deciding whether it is worthwhile trying to sustain a service or a project, look at the results of the sustainability assessment you just completed and answer the following additional questions on the handout *Stop or Go/Yes or No?* You will have 10 minutes.

Hand out: *Stop or Go/Yes or No?*


Stop or Go/Yes or No?

Project name:

Question	Yes*	No	Need More Information
Is ours the only organization in our service area serving our target			

Debrief: How did you do? How does what you learned doing your rapid assessment factor in to the decision about whether or not to continue specific activities or a project? *(Allow 15 minutes to discuss these or others aspects of the assessment.)*

- *Is it successful?*
- *How do you know?*

- *Do the beneficiaries think so? What would they say about your project if asked?*
- *Do your donors think so? What would they say about your project if asked?*
- *What evidence would each share?*
- *Is it critical for our clients/beneficiaries?*
- *Would they confirm this if asked?*
- *Will the project be able to support itself?*
- *Would clients or beneficiaries be willing to pay for it?*
- *Is it something worth maintaining or has it fulfilled its purpose? How do you know?*
- *Is someone else doing it? If so, are they doing it better?*
- *If you lost current funding for your project, could the work continue?*

For questions you were unable to answer, how can you get the necessary information? (Record answers on flipchart.)

Wrap up

Let's take another look at the Go/No Go handout. For questions that you marked as "Yes," this is either a critical advantage that you possess or a critical need that you are meeting. Why is this important? *(Discuss)*

If you are the only organization that is implementing a type of project in your area, that is a **critical advantage.** If you have strong data on your impact, that is a critical advantage. If you have a unique and effective approach, that is a critical advantage. If you are meeting a critical need in the community with your project that would fail to be met or fail to be met as well without you, that is extremely important to know. These are advantages or assets that you can market to prospective donors and partners.

In the next module, you will use your creative advantage(s) to define and claim your niche—how you stand apart from the competition.

Sustainability Rapid Assessment

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Review each question and try to agree on each answer as a team. Discuss or note any areas of disagreement or where you need more information.
2. Complete the Summary by tallying subtotals for all of the pages, then, answer the last two questions.

Question	Yes	No	Don't Know	Somewhat
INSTITUTIONAL				
OVERALL ORGANIZATION				
1. Our organization has defined what sustainability means to us				
2. Our organization has agreed on desired outcome(s) for sustainability				
3. Our organization knows what is required to be sustainable				
4. Our organization has what is required to be sustainable				
5. Our organization has implemented a plan and/or process focused on sustainability				
6. Our Board of Directors is actively engaged in supporting our sustainability				
ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY				
1. Our organization has an updated vision statement				
2. Our organization has an updated mission statement				
3. Our organization has conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses/ opportunities/threats) analysis				
4. Our organization has a strategic plan				
5. Staff can explain our organization's work in 90 seconds or less (We have an "elevator speech")				

Question	Yes	No	Don't Know	Somewhat
6. Our organization's management, finance, and human resources policies, systems and processes are documented, shared with all staff and consistently applied				
7. We have an updated organizational capability statement				
ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT				
1. It is clear who manages our organization				
2. We know who makes decisions				
3. We understand how and why key decisions are made				
4. Women and men equally participate in dialogue and their contributions are considered equally necessary to hold meaningful discussions. They are involved equally in decision-making and have equal opportunities to take on responsibilities				
5. We know who serves as the primary point of contact with funders/ donors for the organization				
6. All staff are recruited freely and fairly and hired on the basis of merit only				
INSTITUTIONAL SUBTOTAL *Note: Tally the number of responses for each column.*				
FINANCIAL				
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT				
1. We have financial systems capable of tracking, aggregating and reporting costs and revenues to facilitate management and planning decisions				
2. We have qualified finance staff				
3. The roles and responsibilities of finance staff are clearly defined				
4. Financial reports are timely and accurate				

Question	Yes	No	Don't Know	Somewhat
5. Our Board and Senior Managers review financial reports at least every quarter				
6. We rely on a mix of funding sources (For example, community donations, international and national grants, income-generating projects.)				
7. We have a signed grant agreement in place for each grant				
8. We have strong financial controls				
9. Donor funds are used only for the activities they are meant for and never "borrowed" for other activities				
FINANCIAL SUBTOTAL *Note: Tally the number of responses for each column.*				
PROGRAMMATIC				
1. We have knowledgeable and experienced technical staff				
2. Our projects and activities are consistent with our mission, vision and values				
3. Our program design and work plans are based on data and research				
4. We include an exit strategy in the program plan from the beginning				
5. All projects have work plans that include activity descriptions, budget, indicators and targets				
6. Beneficiary groups are involved in program planning and implementation				
7. If we have subgrantees, we work with them to find new sources of funding				
8. We have a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plan				
9. We have systems and trained staff to collect and analyze information on programs, activities, and impact				

Question	Yes	No	Don't Know	Somewhat
10. Data on activities are up-to-date and are regularly used in decision-making				
PROGRAMMATIC SUBTOTAL *Note: Tally the number of responses for each column.*				
ENVIRONMENTAL				
PARTNERS/ALLIANCES				
1. We have discussed potential alliance building internally				
2. We know of other programs undertaking similar activities that might be interested in partnering				
3. We have had discussions or other forums with outside groups or programs to explore alliance building or partnerships				
4. We have moved forward in alliance building or partnership efforts				
5. We have experience in seeking out partnerships/alliances to ensure sustainability of parts or entire programs				
6. There are laws and regulations that define, encourage and protect NGOs				
7. We have ties with important champions and supporters in the community—in both the public and private sectors				
8. We have access to technical assistance outside our organization				
9. We know the policy makers who influence our sector's rules and regulations				
10. We are part of a network of NGOs who can advocate for policies that support our work				
ENVIRONMENTAL SUBTOTAL *Note: Tally the number of responses for each column.*				

PROJECT NAME:

Question	Yes	No	Don't Know	Somewhat
IMPLEMENTATION				
1. We have a project management plan (PMP)				
2. We have guidelines on the selection of beneficiaries				
3. We apply established protocols and standard operating procedures				
4. We have adequate space to deliver the product or service				
5. We have documented M&E procedures to ensure data quality collection.				
6. We have a reliable system to procure what we need to implement the project				
7. We have a system in place for gathering feedback from beneficiaries/clients and incorporating it into project implementation				
FINANCE				
1. We know the level at which our project is funded				
2. Our project budgets are based on costs of planned activities				
3. We know where the money is spent—i.e., salaries, supplies, etc., and general percentages for each cost category				
4. We prepare a project cash flow forecast (pipeline) every month				
FUNDING				
1. Our organization has discussed sustainability for this project				
2. We know the funder's priorities and how this project fits into those priorities				
3. We know/understand the goals (short/medium/long) of the current funder related to funding priorities				
4. We know of other funders that support the same or similar types of projects in our region or elsewhere				

Question	Yes	No	Don't Know	Somewhat
5. We know of other funders who might be willing to provide in-kind or other non-monetary project support				
6. We have initiated discussions to explore ongoing funding from our current funder				
7. We have initiated discussions or other means to explore funding from other sources—be it monetary or in-kind or income generating				
PROJECT SUBTOTAL *Note: Tally the number of responses for each column.*				

SUMMARY

How many responses were:	Yes	No	Don't Know	Somewhat
Institutional				
Financial				
Programmatic				
Environmental				
Project				
TOTAL *Note: Tally the number of responses for each column.*				

REFLECTION

- **Did anything surprise you?**
- **What do you think you need to work on?**

RESULTS

Your total YES score is 50 or more
Your think your organization is in good shape. Still, consider addressing any gaps.

Your total YES score is between 30 and 49
You think there are some good practices in place, but also some gaps that need to be addressed.

Your total YES score is less than 29
You think your overall organization is not in good health. Consider calling in assistance.

Stop or Go/Yes or No?

PROJECT NAME:

Question	Yes*	No	Need More Information
Is ours the only organization in our service area serving our target population?			
Is ours the only organization in our service area implementing this type of project/intervention? *(For example, process, objectives, etc.)*			
If the answer to questions 1 and 2 are NO, are we doing it better than others? *(How do we know?)*			
Is any component of our project/ intervention unique to our organization? *(For example, specialized tools, curriculum, branded materials)*			
Is our project addressing a specific need *(target population or intervention)* identified by either a national, state, or local strategic plan or priority?			
Does our project have readily available effectiveness or outcome data?			
Is it critical for our clients/beneficiaries? *(Would they confirm this if asked?)*			
Is our project empowering clients to be successful without further need from our program? *(For example, leadership, graduated behavior change, self-monitoring)*			
If we lost the current funding for our project, should the work continue? *(How would it be funded?)*			
Is our project something worth maintaining or has it fulfilled its purpose? *(For example, a one-off vaccination promotion campaign)*			

* *(Critical Advantage or Supports Critical Need)*

SUMMARY

How many responses were:	Yes	No	Don't Know
How sure are we of identified unique advantages or critical needs?			
Other than our staff, who else knows about or has this information?			
Does our organization regularly try to capitalize on identified advantages or critical needs?			

MODULE 1.3

Identifying and Claiming Your Niche

TOTAL TIME

2 hours 30 minutes

AGENDA

3.1a Defining a niche (30 minutes)

3.1b The elements of a successful niche (30 minutes)

3.1c The evolution of a niche (30 minutes)

3.1d Identifying your niche (60 minutes)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

For best results, do not present these modules as stand-alone sessions. They are designed to complement what was learned in the previous two modules.

In addition, work completed in this module will give participants a head start in completing the communication modules in Part 3.

Introduction

One of an organization's biggest challenges is **adapting to change.** Just when you think everything is set—great staff, solid systems, an excellent reputation—something changes. New research or technologies come along that alter the approach to a disease or health problem; new organizations start to work in your region and compete for the same funding; donor priorities that affect your programs, your region or target population(s) shift. Suddenly, future funding that you thought was secure is no longer available and you find yourself scrambling to keep projects going and staff employed.

DEFINITION

The word "niche" is derived from the French word *nicher,* meaning to nest. In nature, all organisms exist in a delicate and balanced relationship with one another and their environment. One critical aspect of this relationship is an organism's niche, the part of the environment into which a species fits, and to which it is adapted. A shorthand definition of niche in biology is how an organism makes a living in a place. A niche can be occupied by different species, all of which 'earn their living' in roughly the same way. For example, in the wild, an antelope and a giraffe both feed on tree leaves. The giraffe eats the tree's top leaves, while the antelope feeds on the bottom leaves. Each animal has its own niche.

Having a niche ensures an organism's survival. It further ensures an organism's importance in the bigger environment, and makes it possible for others in the environment to depend on it.

Change presents similar challenges whether you run a business or an NGO. This module is about helping you use a strategy that successful entities use to adapt and thrive in a changing environment. That strategy is niche marketing, identifying your niche—how you stand apart from the competition. For example, where there are many places to eat, a cafe owner decides to appeal to diners by serving a kind of food not available elsewhere in town. Serving a particular cuisine is the restaurant's niche.

The exercises that follow use the strengths and critical advantages you identified in the previous module to help you find your niche. After defining basic terms, the exercises map a process for identifying and claiming your niche.

ATTENTION

The exercises in this module are designed to build on one another. It is best if they are completed in the order presented.

Handouts are provided at the end of the module.

MODULE 1.3a

What is a Niche?

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ describe the concept of an organizational niche, and
- ✔ understand how to identify an organizational niche.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Prepared flipchart page with "examples of niches"
- ☐ Handouts—*Niche Map for an Author; Niche Map for "Helping Partners"*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Feel free to tailor the activities, language and examples to suit your style, experience and the cultural context.

Draw a line down the center of a flipchart page. At the top of one column write "Broad" and in the other write "Narrow." Then fill in the "Broad" market segment and ask participants for an example of how it could be more targeted or narrowed. Use the examples provided or others more relevant to your group and context.

Say: In the previous modules, you used a tool to reflect on your organization's readiness and capacity to sustain itself over the long term. You also began to pinpoint what is unique or different about your organization by identifying your critical advantages. Harnessing these advantages is part of defining your organizational niche. Next, we will explore the niche concept further.

(Post prepared flipchart with definition)

In marketing, a **niche** is the spot your organization carves out in a sector in order serve a specific audience (or clients or beneficiaries).

Say: Let's consider some examples of niches described on a flip chart.

(Flipchart with suggested examples of niches)

EXAMPLES OF NICHES

Broad	Narrow
Photography →	Wedding photography
Clothes →	Men's suits
Cleaning services →	Office cleaning

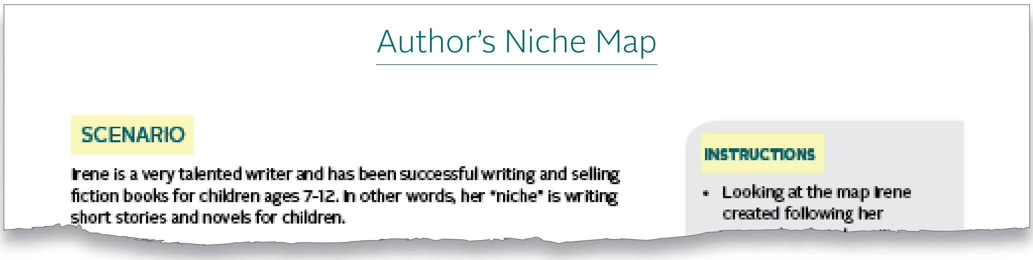
Ask: What do you think about these examples? *(Discuss briefly)* If you have a specific want or need, which of these businesses are you more likely to patronize and why?

Say: In the past, many NGO leaders believed that because their organizations exist to do good, they did not have to deal with marketplace realities. They believed that their value to the community was self-evident or that they were too essential to be concerned about competition, market analysis and promotion. Such thinking is a luxury in an economic climate where there are an increasing number of organizations chasing after the same funds. Face it: you are already in the competition game. And, one of the ways you can compete more effectively is by identifying and claiming your niche.

Let's take a closer look at the concept of a niche.

Market niches are created by **identifying needs or wants of a target audience** that are not being addressed by competitors, and by offering products or services to **satisfy those needs or wants.**

Hand out: *Author's Niche Map*



Author's Niche Map

SCENARIO

Irene is a very talented writer and has been successful writing and selling fiction books for children ages 7-12. In other words, her "niche" is writing short stories and novels for children.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Looking at the map Irene created following her

Scenario:

Here is an example. Irene is a very talented writer and has been successful writing and selling fiction books for children ages 7-11. In other words, her "niche" is writing short stories and novels for children.

Recently, her sales have decreased. To find out why, Irene explores what could be contributing to her sales slump. She goes into bookstores, looks online, talks to readers and librarians and learns that many new writers have entered the children's fiction market. Whereas, in the past, there was very little competition, now the children's fiction market is 'saturated'. However, she finds that there are fewer fiction books for teenagers (ages 13-17) and also that the non-fiction niche for teenagers is not so crowded, especially for self-help books.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Decide whether to post the *Niche Map for an Author* on a flip chart, distribute it as a handout or both.

EXERCISE

New Directions

Instructions:

Looking at the niche map Irene created following her research, what does it describe? You will have five minutes to consider what to advise Irene to do.

Suggested prompts:
What might she consider to continue earning a good living as an author? What does the initial market research suggest? Might there be possibilities for growth in an existing niche, or might there be an option to target an entirely new market niche? What should Irene explore further? What could be her new niche and why?

Say: Time. What would you advise Irene to do and why? *(Discuss)*

Possible prompts:
Irene could research other possible "target markets". For example:

- *teenagers who read fiction; she could focus on writing for this older age group.*
- *she could further explore whether boys and girls read different types of fiction and then, narrow her target to teenage girls or boys. If there is much fiction for teenage girls but very few authors are writing for teenage boys, then, teenage boys might represent a new niche for a fiction writer like Irene (because there is an unmet need—teenage boys want fiction books but there are not enough authors writing for theme.)*
- *switch to writing non-fiction, self-help books? If so, why and for whom?*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

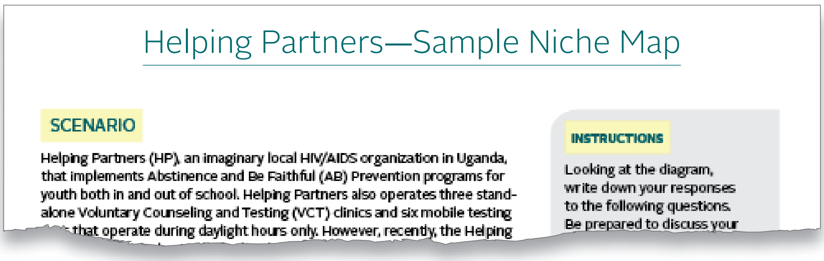
Depending on how many people are gathered, divide the participants into pairs or trios. Keep strict time. Move around the room and observe how the exercise is going. Provide input when asked.

Feel free to adapt the examples as appropriate to suit participants who work in sectors other than HIV/AIDS.

EXERCISE
Exploring Opportunities

Say: Look at the niche map for *Helping Partners (HP),* an imaginary NGO working on HIV/AIDS prevention in Uganda. Read the scenario on the handout and answer the question about target markets. You will have 15 minutes for the exercise.

Hand out: *Helping Partners—sample niche map*


Helping Partners—Sample Niche Map

SCENARIO

Helping Partners (HP), an imaginary local HIV/AIDS organization in Uganda, that implements Abstinence and Be Faithful (AB) Prevention programs for youth both in and out of school. Helping Partners also operates three stand-alone Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) clinics and six mobile testing that operate during daylight hours only. However, recently, the Helping

INSTRUCTIONS

Looking at the diagram, write down your responses to the following questions. Be prepared to discuss your

Read the following scenario aloud:

> *Helping Partners (HP)* is an imaginary local HIV/AIDS organization in Uganda that implements Abstinence and Be Faithful (AB) Prevention programs for youth who are in and out of school. *Helping Partners* also operates three stand-alone voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) clinics and six mobile testing vans that operate during daylight hours only. However, recently, the NGO has been having difficulty obtaining funding for its services because of shifts in donor priorities and increased competition for funding.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

After recording responses from participants, add any items they might have missed.

Instructions:

Looking at the diagram, write down your responses to the following questions. Be prepared to discuss your reasoning with the whole group.

- What needs or gaps might *HP* fill by building on what it already does? That is, what are potential target markets that *HP* could investigate?
- What needs or gaps might *HP* fill building on what it already does?
- Who else has potential needs for *HP*'s services?

Possible target markets:

- *Working people who cannot access VCT services during the day (after work or moonlight VCT)*
- *Women who attend Family Planning and Reproductive Health Clinics (integrate VCT into existing family planning and reproductive health services)*
- *AB programs for youth with disabilities whether in or out of school*
- *Add C (condoms) to AB programs (Abstinence. Be faithful. use Condoms.) for all youth target markets*

Say: These are target markets that *Helping Partners* might investigate. In other words, they are groups who might have similar needs for *HP*'s services as its current beneficiaries.

Wrap up

To identify a potential organizational niche you determine

1. what you do well,
2. what others are not doing or not doing well, and
3. where there is an unmet need in your community.

You can then identify your niche or a new niche to move into. This is a classic business strategy.

For an NGO, moving into a new niche must also be tied to its mission and passion. When the two are combined, it is both good business and good for the community.

MODULE 1.3b

The Elements of a Successful Niche

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ list the elements of a successful niche, and
- ✔ identify types of organizational niches.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handout—***Elements of a Successful Niche***

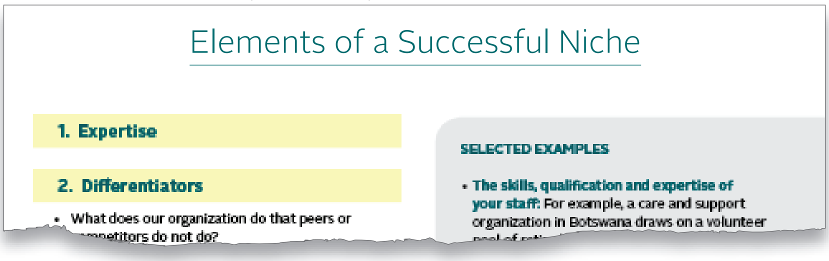
FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Write the six elements of a successful niche on a flipchart and post. Review each element in the handout. Ask participants to look at the *Helping Partners (HP)* niche map and discuss if and how the NGO could identify and claim a successful niche.

Elements of a Successful Niche

1. Expertise
2. Differentiators
3. Proof of what we do well (Impact)
4. Linked to government priorities
5. Linked to community priorities
6. Cost efficient

Hand out: *Elements of a Successful Niche*


Elements of a Successful Niche

1. Expertise

2. Differentiators

- What does our organization do that peers or ...mpetitors do not do?

SELECTED EXAMPLES

- The skills, qualification and expertise of your staff: For example, a care and support organization in Botswana draws on a volunteer ...

Say: Let's consider the elements of a successful niche. *(Refer to flipchart and review the handout and examples.)*

1. Expertise
2. Differentiators
   - *What does the organization do that peers or competitors do not do?*
   - *What skills or expertise does the organization possess that peers or competitors do not possess?*
   - *How is the organization, staff and/or approach different from others who do what they do?*
   - *What do they offer beneficiaries/clients that peers or competitors do not offer?*
3. Proof of what the organization does well *(Impact)*
4. Links to government priorities *(Addresses a prioritized need.)*
5. Links to beneficiary/community priorities *(Addresses a need in the target market.)*
6. Cost efficiency *(Unit costs are less than or relatively comparable to others for the same quality of services.)*

EXERCISE:
Defining a Niche

Say: As a group, let's apply the criteria to determine whether *Helping Partners* occupies a successful niche. Looking at the *Helping Partners* niche map, how might the organization know if it occupies a successful niche? For purposes of this discussion, feel free to make assumptions about the organization, but be prepared to explain those assumptions to the group.

(Discuss each element using the prompts that follow.)

- Expertise—*What do they do well*

- Differentiators *(Answer the following questions)*
  — *What does the organization do that peers or competitors do not do?*
  — *What skills or expertise does the organization possess that peers or competitors do not possess?*
  — *How is the organization, staff and/or approach different from others who do what they do ?*
  — *What does* Helping Partners *offer beneficiaries/clients that peers or competitors do not offer?*

- Proof of what the organization does well *(Impact).*
  Can they provide quantitative data (numbers of clients served for voluntary counseling and testing—VCT), or qualitative data (beneficiary feedback, client or donor feedback) to show impact?

- Links to government priorities.
  Can the NGO cite a prioritized need it is meeting? For example, from a National Strategic Plan or Global Fund priorities? Has the NGO spoken with government and international donors to learn their priorities?

- Linked to community priorities.
  Can the NGO demonstrate it addresses a need in the target market? For example, has the NGO conducted research that showed that working people have trouble accessing VCT; that youth with disabilities have increasing HIV-infection rates and that there are no prevention programs for blind and deaf youth?

- Cost efficiency.
  Can the NGO show that unit costs are less than or relatively comparable to others who provide the same quality of services? For example, has the NGO assessed the costs of its services per person? In other words, they know how much it costs to provide VCT to one person or prevention to one youth.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Ask participants to describe an aspect of their organization that meets one of the criteria. List on the flipchart. Prompt by turning the six elements into questions.

Say: Now, let's begin to carve out your organization's niche. Looking at the six criteria, think about how you could differentiate your organization from others. That may include identifying **what is unique** or different about what you do, **how** you do it, or **for whom** you do it.

1. Expertise? *(What does your organization do well, perhaps even better than other organizations)*
2. Differentiators ?
   - *What does your organization do that peers or competitors do not do?*
   - *What skills or expertise does your organization possess that peers or competitors do not possess?*
   - *How is your organization, staff and/or approach different from others who do?*
   - *What do you offer beneficiaries/clients that peers or competitors do not offer?*
3. Proof of what you do well? *(Impact, evidence, results)*
4. Links to government priorities? *(Addresses a prioritized need.)*
5. Links to beneficiary/community priorities? *(Addresses a need in the target market.)*
6. Cost efficiency? *(Unit costs are less than or relatively comparable to others for the same quality of services.)*

Debrief: *Ask the group a few questions about the process they just completed.*

- *How did you find the exercise—easy or difficult? Why?*
- *Were you successful? What does that mean?*
- *What, if any, information is missing to help you define your niche?*

Wrap up

Identifying your niche takes time and reflection. We will explore this process in more depth shortly.

In the meantime, if you have conducted an organizational capacity assessment (OCA) and/or done strategic planning, revisit your findings. The results will help you discover and claim your niche. (If you have not done an OCA, go to *www.npi-connect.net/resources/npicguide* to learn why and how to conduct one.)

Say: After a short break, we will look at how a niche can respond to changes and evolve over time.

BREAK: 10 minutes

MODULE 1.3c

The Evolution of a Niche

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ understand how a niche changes over time and
- ✔ identify changes in the environment that cause a niche to evolve.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handout—*Evolution of a Niche*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Ask a volunteer to explain the example, but if the group is having difficulty, read aloud the answers provided.

Say: Niches are not static; they change over time. What do you think might change? *(Record responses on flipchart)*

Suggested responses to supplement ideas raised by participants:

- *Target populations (needs, behaviors/risks, age, gender)*
- *Geographic sites (expansion or transition into new or larger geographic areas; and/or closing out areas)*
- *Amount of services (need to scale up or reduce services)*
- *Type of programs*
- *Partnership needs*

Hand out: *Evolution of a Niche*

Evolution of a Niche

Target Population	Risk Behavior of Target Population	Other Key Information (race, ethnicity, age, geographic)	Identification of Need
2008			
...ng women	MCP (Multiple Concurrent	14-24, unmarried	National Strategic...

Ask: Take a minute to look at the example for an imaginary NGO called *Community Response*. How has its niche changed from 2008 to 2012? *(Discuss)*

Suggested responses follow.

In 2008, Community Response (CR) *identified its niche as prevention programs for unmarried young women ages 14-24. The NGO had years of experience working in prevention and had solid skills and staff. Based on its research, a population survey and priorities in the country's National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS, the organization decided to focus its efforts on young unmarried women who had the largest increase in infection rates. The drivers of the increase in HIV infection among that group had been identified as multiple concurrent partners and early sexual debut.*

In 2012, Community Response *expanded its niche to include male partners of young unmarried women ages 18-24, based on updated survey research and on the revised National Strategy. In addition, given the new findings that male circumcision helps to prevent HIV transmission and the consequent increase in donor funding for these programs, as well as for increased support for condom use, starting in early 2012,* Community Response *redefined its niche by adding these populations and products to its services.*

Wrap up

Be careful about adding new programs and services that may or may not make you more competitive. Do not imitate the latest trends in your sector to try to get more from donors. This can be self defeating and result in compromising your mission and what you already do well. Instead, work on distinguishing yourself from your competition by doing what you do better than anyone else. You can make a bigger impact by being the best at what you do, by "owning" your niche, rather than by hopping from one niche to another. If your organization is known for making a positive difference by providing a well defined service or product to a specific population, your NGO is more likely to be the kind donors and even volunteers notice and want to support.

MODULE 1.3d

Identifying your Organizational Niche

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

60 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

✔ identify a potential niche for their organization.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handout—*What is Our Niche?* worksheet

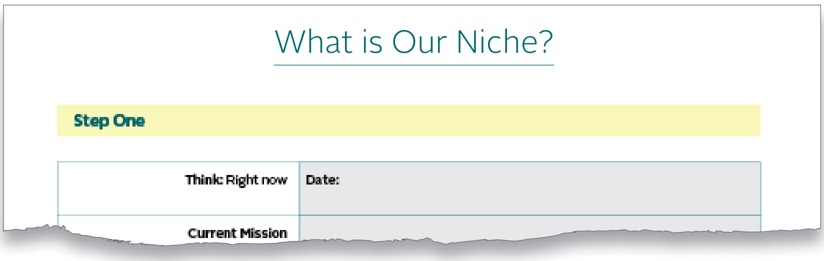
FACILITATOR'S NOTE

There are two parts to the exercise. Part 1 explores the current niche. Depending on the nature of the organization, you may choose to do Part 1 only. Part 2 asks participants to adapt the organization's niche to respond to a changing environment. If the organization does not work in health, develop another scenario for Part 2 of the exercise.

Ask each pair to choose a secretary to record the responses and a presenter to report out.

Say: It is important to look at the big picture and be strategic about your niche. This is because change is the one constant—community needs change, populations change, funding levels change and sources of funding change. The organizations that survive are those that actively strategize and ADAPT to their changing environment. If your organization has strong systems, talented staff and good ideas, you can continue to make positive contributions to your community.

Hand out: *What is Our Niche?*


What is Our Niche?

Step One

Think: Right now	Date:
Current Mission	

Say: Now, we are going to practice identifying an organizational niche and adapting it to respond to a changing environment.

Instructions:

There are two parts to this exercise. First, we will take 10 minutes to identify your current niche. I will prompt you with some questions as you fill in the blanks on the worksheet.

If you choose to do part 2, say:

Then, we will take another 10 minutes to adapt your niche under a new scenario. Again, I will prompt you with some questions as you fill in the blanks. When completed, you will share with the group what, if anything, needs to change to adapt to a new opportunity.

Remember you are not developing a final product but taking an opportunity to use a tool to help you think about where your organization fits in its environment.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Move around the room to observe, encourage participants and provide input if asked.

Prompt participants by posing suggested questions in italics in the table. Allot 10 minutes to work on part 1 and 15 minutes for participants to present and debrief.

EXERCISE

Our Niche: Today and Tomorrow

Part One: Today

Scenario:
Think about what you do now and how you would define you niche for a current donor.

What is our Mission? Who are your beneficiaries?	*Age/geography/gender/risk behavior?*
What are we good at?	*Think about this quickly. How do you usually talk about your organization's strengths? For example, are you good at prevention? At care and support? Are you good at training or curriculum development?*
Break it down…. ***Target population?*** ***Geographic setting?*** ***Behavioral Objective?*** ***Type of service?***	*Now, take what you said you are good at and break that down into component parts.* *(Think about a football player. What is he really known for? A fan would rarely stop at saying he is good. Instead, he would break it down, mention specific strengths: defense, offense, kicking, control of the ball, speed and so on.)* *Be specific about your strengths:* • *If you are good at prevention, what is it about your approach that works?* • *If you are changing behavior, what is it about your intervention(s) that get results?* • *If you work in care and support, is your ability to form close and trusting relationships with communities and families unique?* • *Are you skilled at partnering with government agencies and providing capacity building in service delivery?*

How do we know we're good at it?	*Do you have qualitative data—for example, from focus groups, email or letters from beneficiaries or donors or other NGOs or agencies? Do measure your success by the fact that you win funding? Do you have quantitative data*?
Is it linked to community or national priorities? **How do you know?**	*Do you think your work is linked to community or other priorities, or do you know it is?* • *Have you read the national strategic plan?* • *How does what you are good at fit in?* • *How do you know it is a priority need of the community?* • *Have you conducted research?* • *Have donors told you?*
This is our niche….	*What are YOU good at and how does it match what is NEEDED? Remember, if 10 other organizations are doing what you are doing, meeting the same need and doing it just as well, then, you have not identified your niche.*

Say: This is a "thought process activity" to help you think strategically. Discovering your niche can expand how you think about what you do now and how it might be adapted. Whatever you decide, you must also be sure that it is consistent with your mission and with your passion.

Ask *each pair to present its ideas. Discuss.*

OPTIONAL

Part Two: Tomorrow

Scenario:

A new donor has challenged your organization to provide new services in X. *(See below)* How can you adapt to move into or add this new program? Funding would amount to US$200,000 a year for 3 years to do X.

1. Choose X to stand for one of the following
    - Breast and Cervical Cancer Detection and Linkage to Treatment;

    or
    - Diabetes Screening, Linkage to Treatment and Nutrition Education and Provision;

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Prompt participants by posing questions related to what needs to change.

Allot 10 minutes to work on part 2 and 15 minutes to present and debrief.

or

- Maternal and Child Survival* and Family Planning (*Child survival may include diarrheal disease/immunization/malaria/acute respiratory infection/nutrition for children under age 5)

2. Fill in each of the boxes.

Current target population	***What needs to change? What stays the same?***
	Does the gender change? Age? Risk group?
Current services	***What needs to change? What stays the same?***
	For example, if you provide HIV and AIDS prevention services or nutrition counseling and referral to treatment for people living with HIV and AIDS, how would those services change or will be similar.
Current core staff skills	***What new skills are needed? What skills can carry over?***
	If your staff are trained health care providers, perhaps they will need only updated training in the new health program area. Do staff have excellent counseling skills that can be carried over or do they need training in counseling?
Current tools, equipment, assets	***What new tools, equipment, assets are needed? What can carry over?***
	New training materials? Medical equipment? Building?
If this really happened, what assistance *(think technical assistance)* would you need to respond?	

Debrief

30 minutes

Ask the following questions after the exercise is completed.

- *What did you like best about this activity?*
- *What did you like least about this activity?*
- *What, if anything, will you do differently now because of this experience?*

Wrap up

Defining your niche is a process of self discovery. It takes time and may involve using a number of tools in addition to those introduced in this guide. For example, a SWOT analysis—looking at internal Strengths and Weaknesses, and external Opportunities and Threats—can help you see how you fit in your sector. If you have a strategic plan or have conducted an organizational capacity assessment (OCA), you may want to revisit your findings to identify management or other strengths of particular interest to donors.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

The communications modules in Part 3 provide activities that build on the niche modules you just completed.

Sustainability takes time and perseverance. Don't rely on fantasies of a future "BIG" project or a donor "picking you up". Be strategic, focus on owning your niche. When you do, your organization will become more sustainable—more effective at serving your beneficiaries and attracting support for your higher-quality programs and services.

Author's Niche Map

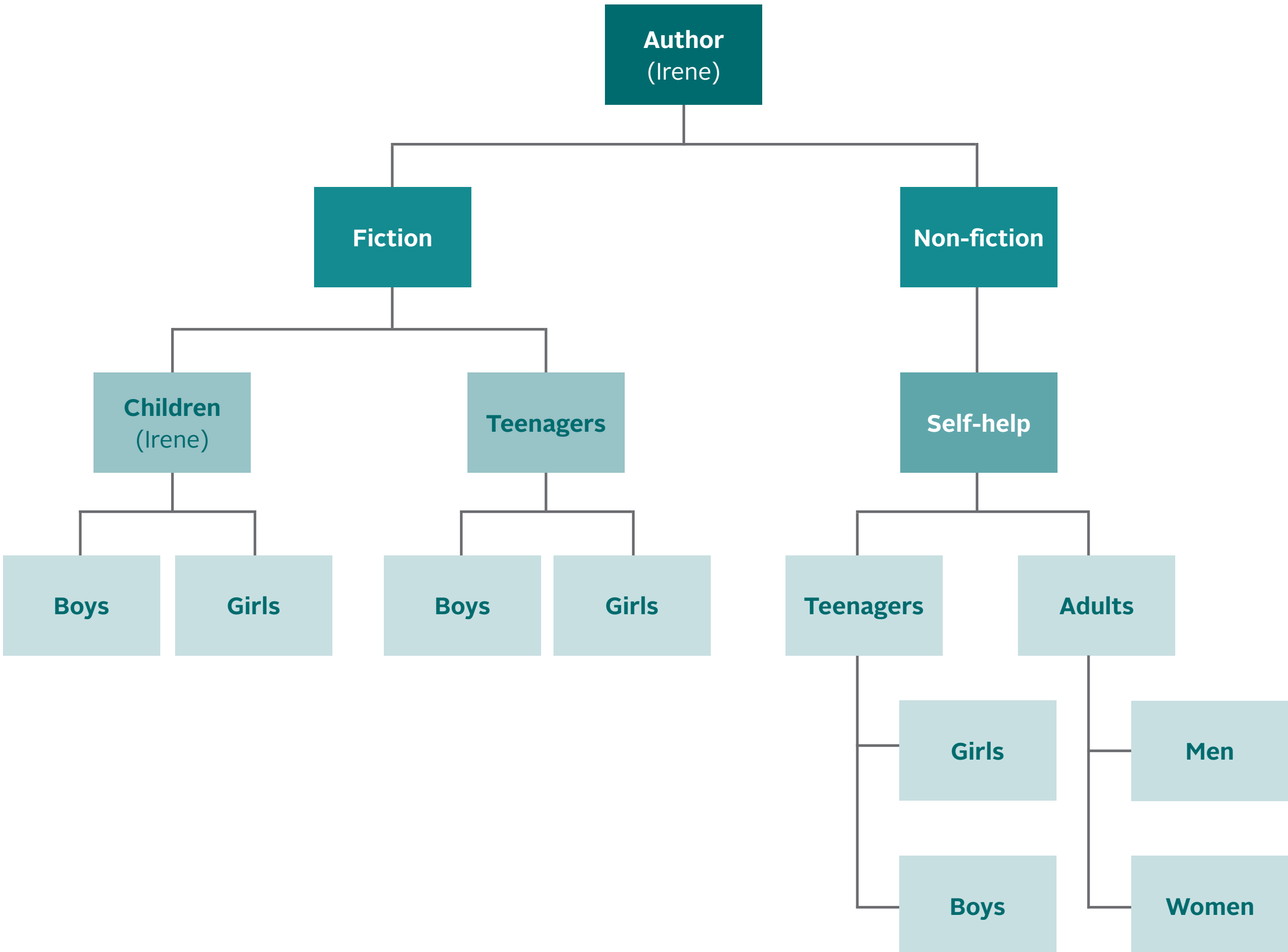
SCENARIO

Irene is a very talented writer and has been successful writing and selling fiction books for children ages 7-12. In other words, her "niche" is writing short stories and novels for children.

Recently, her sales decreased. To find out why, Irene explores what could be contributing to her sales slump. She goes into bookstores, looks online, talks to readers and librarians, and learns that many new writers have entered the children's fiction market. Whereas, in the past, there was very little competition, now the children's fiction market is 'saturated'. However, she finds that there are fewer fiction books for teenagers (ages 13-17), and that the non-fiction niche for teenagers is not so crowded, especially for self-help books, even though there are lots of self-help books for adults.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Looking at the map Irene created following her research, what does it describe?
- What might she consider doing to continue earning a good living as an author? Might there be possibilities for growth in an existing niche, or might there be an option to target an entirely new market niche? What should Irene explore further?
- What would you advise Irene to do and why?



Helping Partners—Sample Niche Map

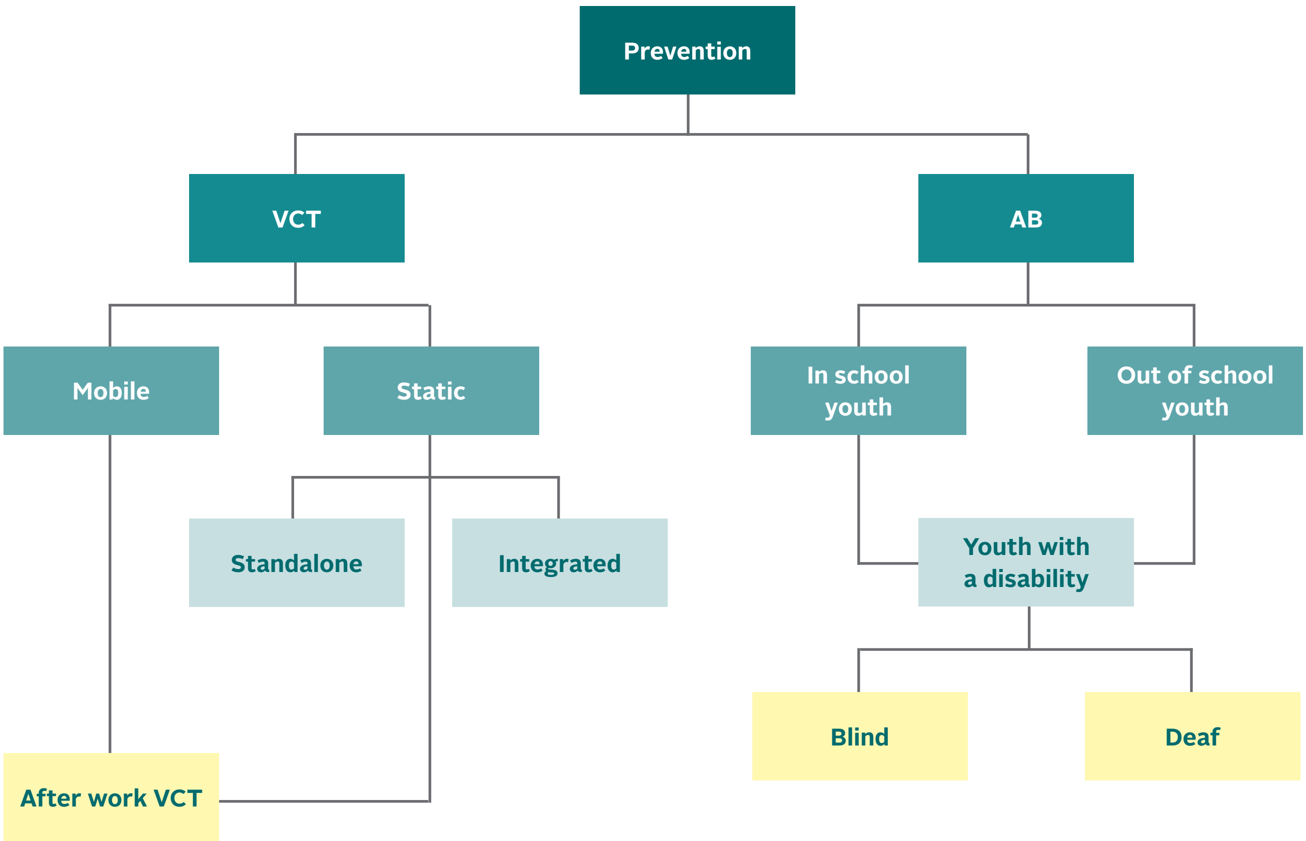
SCENARIO

Helping Partners (HP), is an imaginary local HIV/AIDS organization in Uganda that implements Abstinence and Be Faithful (AB) Prevention programs for youth both in and out of school. *Helping Partners* also operates three stand-alone Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) clinics and six mobile testing vans that operate during daylight hours only. However, recently, *Helping Partners* has been having difficulty obtaining funding for these services because of shifts in donor priorities and increased competition for funding.

INSTRUCTIONS

Looking at the diagram, write down your responses to the following questions. Be prepared to discuss your thinking with the group.

1. What needs or gaps might *HP* fill by building on what it already does? That is, what are potential target markets that *HP* could investigate?
2. Who else might need *HP*'s services?



Elements of a Successful Niche

1. Expertise

2. Differentiators

- What does our organization do that peers or competitors do not do?
- What skills or expertise does our organization possess that peers or competitors do not possess?
- How is our organization, staff and/or approach different from others who do what we do?
- What do we offer beneficiaries/clients that peers or competitors do not offer?

3. Proof of what we do well (Impact)

4. Links to government priorities

- We address a prioritized need; for example, National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan

5. Links to beneficiary/community priorities

- We address a need in the target market

6. Cost efficient

- Our unit costs are less than or relatively comparable to others for the same quality of services.

SELECTED EXAMPLES

- **The skills, qualification and expertise of your staff.** For example, a care and support organization in Botswana draws on a volunteer pool of retired nurses. They now market their "niche" not as care and support, but as an organization of highly trained retired nurses who are capable of working in a variety of public health issues.

- **The approach.** A youth prevention organization in South Africa uses soccer as the way they engage youth in HIV and AIDS prevention. Thus, their niche is not just prevention but integrating sports into public health prevention programs.

- **Work with specific populations/beneficiaries.** A local organization in Haiti has the only programs in a few of the most remote communities of Haiti. As a result, these programs have recently become a focus for national programs and donor funding. The organization has marketed this niche (their relationships in and knowledge of these communities) to prime partners and become sub-grantees on their projects.

- **How beneficiaries are engaged/involved.** An NGO that specializes in HIV and AIDS prevention has been extremely successful in mobilizing male partners to participate and support PMTCT (prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV). The organization has now marketed its success with mobilizing men for other activities including malaria prevention and family planning.

- **Costs.** A faith-based organization in Namibia that supports orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) has kept costs per child low by drawing on the volunteers, resources (free use of space in the churches) and donations of a national network of congregations.

Evolution of a Niche

Target Population	Risk Behavior of Target Population	Other Key Information (race, ethnicity, age, geographic)	Identification of Need
2008			
Young women	MCP (Multiple Concurrent Partners) [Abstinence, Be faithful (AB) Prevention]	14-24, unmarried	National Strategy; Population Survey; agency study
2012			
Young women & male partners	MCP (Multiple Concurrent Partners) [AB Prevention, Condoms, and Male Circumcision]	18-24, unmarried 16-40, sexually active	National Strategy; Population Survey; agency study

What is Our Niche?

Part One: Today

Scenario: Think about what you do now and how you would define you niche for a current donor.

Current Mission?	Current Target Population(s)?

What are we good at?	
Break it down.... ***Target population?*** ***Geographic setting?*** ***Behavioral Objective?*** ***Type of service?***	
How do we know we are good at it?	
Is it linked to community or national priorities? ***How do we know?***	
This is our niche....	

Part Two: Tomorrow

Scenario: A new donor has challenged your organization to provide new services in X. *(See below.)* How can you adapt to move into or add this new program? Funding would amount to US$200,000 a year for 3 years to do X.

Instructions:

1. Choose X to stand for one of the following
   - Breast and Cervical Cancer Detection and Linkage to Treatment;
   or
   - Diabetes Screening, Linkage to Treatment and Nutrition Education and Provision;
   or
   - Maternal and Child Survival* and Family Planning (*Child survival may include diarrheal disease/immunization/malaria/acute respiratory infection/nutrition for children under age 5)

2. Fill in each of the boxes

Note: You cannot do it all with $200,000 a year, so pick one activity. How will you adapt what your organization does to be part of this new program? What is YOUR niche in this new program?

Current target population	**What needs to change? What stays the same?**
Current services	**What needs to change? What stays the same?**
Current core staff skills	**What new skills are needed? What skills can carry over?**
Current tools, equipment, assets	**What new tools, equipment, assets are needed? What can carry over?**

If this were to really happen, what assistance *(think technical assistance)* would we need to respond? What needs to change? What stays the same?

Mapping and Mobilizing Resources

P
A
R
T

2

"A VISION WITHOUT A PLAN IS JUST A DREAM.
A PLAN WITHOUT A VISION IS JUST DRUDGERY.
BUT A VISION WITH A PLAN CAN CHANGE THE WORLD."

– Proverb

PART TWO

Resource Mapping and Mobilization

TOTAL TIME

4 hours

AGENDA

2.1 Defining resource mobilization (30 minutes)

2.2 Introducing resource mapping and the funding landscape (30 minutes)

2.3 Setting resource mobilization targets (30 minutes)

2.4 Mapping:
- **a.** Individuals (30 minutes)
- **b.** Donors (30 minutes)

2.5 Conducting gap analysis (30 minutes)

2.6 Filling information gaps:
- **a.** Researching donors (20 minutes)
- **b.** Preparing for an informational interview (30 minutes)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

This workshop offers approaches and tools to help identify potential donors and funding partners. For guidance on how to start a dialogue with them, see Module 3–the elevator pitch or speech.

If sessions are presented as stand-alone workshops, see "Getting Started" at the beginning of the guide.

Introduction

There is a saying, "If you want to catch fish, fish where the fish are." Yet, as creatures of habit, we are likely to fish in the same pond day after day, even after we've come up empty. This is an example of a common resource mobilization strategy—looking for donors in the places that are most comfortable. How do you find new, good places to fish? You probably ask friends or family (referrals) and you look at a map. The same is true for resource mobilization.

Every country and community has its own landscape of potential funders, influential persons and institutions. To help you identify or map these prospective donors, during the following modules you will:
- Rethink resource mobilization roles and responsibilities
- Map current and prospective funding resources
- Determine gaps in organizational linkages and awareness
- Practice ways to gather additional information

Resource mapping and mobilization, like networking, are iterative processes, meaning that you will repeat various steps to gradually build your understanding of the donor community and the larger funding landscape.

The modules begin by defining a few terms then, take you through the process of mapping your current and prospective resources, determining where you need to focus further effort, and exploring ways to build your network.

ATTENTION

The exercises in this module are designed to build on one another. So, it is best if they are completed in the order presented.

Handouts are provided at the end of the module.

MODULE 2.1

What is Resource Mobilization?

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ describe the difference between fundraising and resource mobilization, and
- ✔ identify resource mobilization roles and responsibilities for all staff members.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, and tape
- ☐ Handouts—*Resource Mobilization: Roles and Responsibilities Exercise; Resource Mobilization: Who Does It and How*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Participants may be familiar with each of the key terms but they may not share a common understanding. Defining terms as a group from the start helps everyone approach the material with a shared set of expectations and realize that resource mobilization is not just about money.

Throughout the session, write definitions of key words on flipchart paper and post as a ready reference.

Say: How does your organization support its work? Raise your hand if you rely on only one donor? Two? Three? Four or more? If those donors change their focus, are you ready, willing and able to adapt and explore new sources of support?

That is what we will examine together—ways to identify and pursue a healthy mix of resources that will enable your organization to weather (or adapt to) changes in the funding landscape.

Ask: What exactly are resources? Let's list the types of resources your organization uses to fulfill its mission.

(Record participant definitions on flipchart paper. It is important that participants consider a wide range of resources, not that they list all those suggested below. Suggested answers to supplement ideas raised by participants:)

- *Human—skills, experience, ideas*
- *Physical—facilities, equipment*
- *Social or Political—partnerships, good will, reputation, favorable policies*
- *Financial—unrestricted funding, access to credit, willingness to pay*
- *Natural advantages—location, good rains, good soils*
- *And many others…*

Say: Resources are more than just money or even people. With this in mind, "resource mobilization" describes the process organizations use to acquire and put to use those things they need to implement activities and pursue their mission. For example, building a good reputation is a critical part of a resource mobilization strategy that is not explicity about looking for money.

Resource mobilization often focuses on generating funds. However, it must also include building valuable contacts and networks, and earning the interest, support, and in-kind contributions of people important to your organization. So, resource mobilization goes beyond fund raising; it is *friend* raising as well.

Resource mobilization is a process that includes identifying, building and managing relationships with people who share the same values and concerns as your organization.

> **FACILITATOR'S NOTE**
>
> This is a group exercise. Ask the group to choose a secretary to record responses and a representative to report out.
>
> Move around the room to observe, encourage participants and provide input if asked.
>
> Keep strict time. Allot 10 minutes for filling in the handout and up to 10 minutes for discussion and debrief.

EXERCISE

Resource Mobilization: Who Does It and How

Hand out: *Resource Mobilization—Roles and Responsibilities*

Resource Mobilization: Roles and Responsibilities

Even though your job description may not list "resource mobilization" as part of your duties,

INSTRUCTIONS

For each of the staff member roles in the left column below, enter the resource mobilization role(s) and responsibilities in the right column next to it. See the example under Board of Directors.

Players in Resource Mobilization	Roles and Responsibilities

Explain: In a sustainable organization, *everyone* is responsible for resource mobilization! Using the handout, *Resource Mobilization: Roles and Responsibilities,* consider each of the positions in your organization in the left column (for example, Board of Directors, program coordinator, and so on). In the right column, list their corresponding roles and responsibilities (for example, Board of Directors—networks with potential donors). You will have 10 minutes to write down your ideas.

Say: Time. Let's hear and discuss your answers.
(See handout for suggested answers to supplement ideas raised by participants.)

Hand out: *Resource Mobilization: Who Does It and How*

Resource Mobilization: Who Does It and How

A summary of possible roles and responsibilities of NGO Board, management and staff follows. Note that it is everyone's best interest to reach out and share your NGO's work and successes with the wider community and, in turn, bring back important news, connections, and leads that may help your organization thrive.

Players in Resource Mobilization	Roles and Responsibilities

Debrief: *Ask participants to compare their ideas with those on the summary. What did they observe about the differing roles and responsibilities? Does everyone truly have a role to play in resource mobilization? Are there some roles that all staff members have in common?*

Wrap up

Remember, resource mobilization must rest firmly on a solid organization and strong programs. You can not look outside without first looking inside at the systems and processes governing the roles and responsibilities of the Board and staff; management of human, physical and financial resources; strategic planning; implementation of programs, and effective and transparent stewardship of donor funds. A sterling reputation and strong organization are corner stones of a resource mobilization strategy.

Guidance on strengthening your systems and process may be found online at *www.npi-connect.net*.

Resource Mobilization: Roles and Responsibilities

Even though your job description may not list “resource mobilization” as part of your duties, in a sustainable organization, it is everyone’s responsibility!

Staff members at every level have a role to play in mobilizing resources. Some staff members are responsible for representing the organization to its donors and at official functions. Others are the lead writers on proposals that will be approved for funding. What about those staff members that interact with local government officials or coordinate implementation activities with community organizations? How about those who assess and manage the organization’s operational costs?

INSTRUCTIONS

For each of the staff member roles in the left column below, enter the resource mobilization role(s) and responsibilities in the right column next to it. See the example under Board of Directors.

Players in Resource Mobilization	Roles and Responsibilities
Board of Directors/ Board of Trustees/ General Assembly	*Represent the organization at high level official functions, conferences, and meetings.*
Chief Executive Officer/ Executive Director/ Managing Director	
Senior Managers	
Program Staff/ Field Staff	
Finance Staff	
Administration Staff/ Procurement Staff	

Resource Mobilization: Who Does It and How

A summary of possible roles and responsibilities of NGO Board, management and staff follows. Note that it is in everyone's best interest to reach out and share your NGO's work and successes with the wider community and, in turn, bring back important news, connections, and leads that may help your organization thrive.

Players in Resource Mobilization	Roles and Responsibilities
Board of Directors/ Board of Trustees/ General Assembly	• Network with potential donors and implementing partners • Provide leadership and input to strategic planning activities • Oversee the Managing Director (CEO or Executive Director) • Share the organization's work and successes with the wider community • Inform management of important news, connections, and leads • Represent the organization at high level official functions, conferences, and meetings
Managing Director/ Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/ Executive Director	• Manage all resource mobilization activities • Lead or supervise business development/proposal development • Manage relationships with government • Monitor relevant trends and new developments at international or national level • Represent the organization at high level official functions, conferences, and meetings • Network with potential donors and implementing partners at international or national level • Provide leadership and input to strategic planning activities • Share the organization's work and successes with the wider community • Inform staff of important news, connections, and leads
Senior Managers	• Contribute to proposal development • Monitor relevant trends and new developments at local levels • Represent the organization at local functions and meetings • Develop project budgets • Provide leadership and input to strategic planning activities • Inform management of important news, connections, and leads
Program Staff/ Field Staff	• Maintain awareness of donor and implementing partner actions at local level • Maintain relationship with government at local level • Share important information with senior leadership • Maintain relationships with local communities • Share the organization's work and successes with the wider community • Share important news, connections, and leads
Finance Staff	• Collect and analyze all financial information • Contribute to budget development and financial projections • Share the organization's work and successes with the wider community • Inform management of important news, connections, and leads
Administration Staff/ Procurement Staff	• Contribute to cost calculations • Collect pro forma invoices & perform other procurement functions • Share the organization's work and successes with the wider community • Inform management of important news, connections, and leads

MODULE 2.2

Introducing Resource Mapping and the Funding Landscape

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ describe resource mapping and the funding landscape, and
- ✔ identify which major donors and NGOs operate in their environment.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipcharts, markers, tape
- ☐ Handouts—*The Funding Landscape; The Funding Landscape: Where are the resources?*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

This session explains the resource mapping process. Before beginning the mapping exercises, participants will explore an overview of types of donors and an illustrative resource landscape. Next, they will get acquainted with a tool to help them find out how much they really need to raise and what resources must be mobilized in order to continue the work they do.

Say: In the previous section we defined "resources" and "resource mobilization". Now let's discuss "resource mapping"; what it is and how it relates to "resource mobilization". Resource mapping guides organizations through a process of actively exploring and connecting with the people in the community who have various degrees of affinity with your programs. It is primarily used to identify where the organization should focus its networking and resource mobilization efforts.

Resource mapping can be done in several different ways. In general, it includes at least three elements:

1. An understanding of the resources the organization needs over a period of time
2. An inventory of current and projected resources possessed or controlled by the organization
3. An assessment of potential resources available in the funding landscape

Ask: What do we mean by the funding landscape?

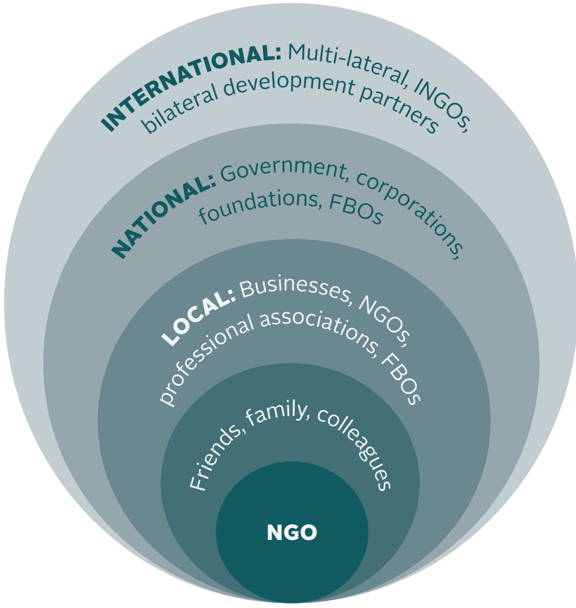
(Record participant definitions on flipchart paper. Depending on the nature of the responses, also explain the following.)

Explain: The "funding landscape" refers to the collection of potential donors available to provide resources in your organization's geographic and programmatic area. It includes any entity or institution that offers its own direct funding or acts as a secondary distributer of funds (sub-grants). The funding landscape will likely include donors with offices in your geographic region or country but may also extend to those only available through technology such as via the internet.

Ask: The landscape contains many different prospective sources of support. What are some types of donors?

*(Write responses on flipchart. Place them within the concentric circles as illustrated, then, refer to the handout—*The Funding Landscape *—to supplement the responses of the participants.)*

The Funding Landscape*



Hand out: *Charting the Funding Landscape: Where are the resources?*

Charting the Funding Landscape: Where are the resources?

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Review this list** of different types of donors that typically operate in developing countries.
2. **Looking at the table** that

National Governments

National government bodies are often a source of development funds either directly or as a channel for bilateral and multilateral donors. It is important to establish close relationships with the relevant line

Foundations and other private sources of funding are becoming increasingly important globally. Each foundation has its specific focus and rules. A module of this kind cannot guide you through these, but a careful reading of their published

Say: Take a look at the handout to supplement our list of types of donors.

- **National Governments**—often a source of development funds either directly or as a channel for bilateral and multilateral donors. It is important to establish close relationships with the relevant line ministries (Health, Education, etc.) in order to understand their priorities and procurement procedures.

* *Resource Mobilization: A Practical Guide for Research and Community-Based Organizations.* 2nd edition. Venture for Fund Raising. 2009. www.idrc.ca/EN/Programs/Donor_Partnerships/Documents/Donor-partnership-guide-hyperlinked.pdf

- **Bilateral Development Partners**—typically provide funds directly to national governments or to NGOs through competitive funding programs making them one of the most important actors in the funding landscape. Bilateral donors often maintain an office in the host country making them an excellent target for face-to-face networking.

- **Multilateral Development Partners**—often work through host country systems such as government line ministries or provide credit and financial services directly to national governments. Some offer competitive project funding to NGOs and private sector firms making them good contacts for local NGOs. Multilateral donors are often also a critical source of primary research about a local country context.

- **Foundations**—and other private sources of funding are becoming increasingly important globally. Each foundation has its specific focus and rules. A module of this kind cannot guide you through these, but a careful reading of their published requirements, combined with the general principles you have learned here, can lay the groundwork for useful dialogue with the ones most interested in your needs.

- **International NGOs**—INGOs have a dual role in the funding landscape. They can serve as a potential donor by providing grants or subcontracts, or they may serve as a potential partner or collaborator. International NGOs are usually headquartered in another country but might maintain a local office.

- **Local NGOs**—some well established local NGOs may also make sub-grants with funds from national or international development partners. Local NGOs who receive sub-grants may seek partners to implement activities for which they do not have the capacity or experience.

- **National Corporations/Local Businesses**—partnerships with corporations can be more flexible than working directly with bilateral or multilateral donors. Support might be in cash or in-kind and come with fewer compliance requirements. Successful partnerships with corporations often have a connection between the mission of the organization and the core business of the corporation.

- **Faith-based Organizations/Networks**—FBOs or religious communities are frequent supporters of small, grass-roots organizations. Such partnerships typically have a spiritual as well as financial dimension and, as with private sector support, often come with fewer compliance requirements, making them easier to manage.

Hand out: *The Funding Landscape*

The Funding Landscape

INSTRUCTIONS

Looking at the table below, fill in the type and names of donors that are active in your country and sector.
If the example is not active, cross it out and add others who are.

Donor Type	Name of Donor(s)
National Government	Ministry of Health

Say: Look at the handout—*The Funding Landscape*. This is a tool you can use to describe your donor landscape. Which of the types of donors we just discussed are active in your country and in your sector?

It is inevitable that the donor landscape will change over time. There may be shifts in policy, practice, and even staff. To be ready, organizations must keep up with trends in policy and practice that are relevant to their work.

Ask: What are some ways in which your organization can stay current on shifts in funding trends? Who would you talk to? Where would you get this kind of information? Let's list some strategies, that is, actions to take.

(Write responses on flipchart. Then, refer to the list below to supplement participant responses.)
Examples of strategies:

- *Appoint a staff committee whose task is to assess the landscape*
- *Designate a staff person to read the local news for announcements and notices related to your core areas of interest*
- *Listen to what your core network of peers, friends and partners are talking about and decide if it is relevant and worthy of further exploration*
- *Tap into your relationships with international NGOs—Ask what they know about new initiatives and practices and technologies*
- *Invite speakers from international Non-governmental organizations (INGOs,) Foundations, Bi-lateral Funding Agencies to question and answer sessions at your organization*

Ask: What are some sources?
Examples of sources:

- *Local newspapers*
- *Online news outlets*
- *Collaborative Partners*
- *Professionals in your field*

Ask: Who will share an example of when they assessed the landscape? If you have ever tried to find out about funding opportunities, what did you do? What happened?

Wrap up

The funding landscape is not stagnant. Donors, as well as programmatic and funding priorities change over time, influenced by a variety of internal and external factors. As a result, it is important for your organization to stay up-to-date on these trends and to be able to respond in good time. In line with this, the activities that follow are designed to help you connect to the funding landscape and take advantage of existing and new linkages.

EXERCISE

Charting the Funding Landscape: Where are the resources?

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Review this list** of different types of donors that typically operate in developing countries.
2. **Looking at the table** that follows, fill in the types and names of donors that are active in your country and in your sector.

National Governments

National government bodies are often a source of development funds either directly or as a channel for bilateral and multilateral donors. It is important to establish close relationships with the relevant line ministries (Health, Education, etc.) in order to understand their priorities and procurement procedures.

Bilateral Development Partners

Bilateral donors typically provide funds directly to national governments or to NGOs through competitive funding programs making them one of the most important actors in the funding landscape. Bilateral donors often maintain an office in the host country, making them an excellent target for face-to-face networking.

Multilateral Development Partners

Multilateral donors often work through host country systems such as government line ministries or provide credit and financial services directly to national governments. Some offer competitive project funding to NGOs and private sector firms making them good contacts for local NGOs. Multilateral donors are often also a critical source of primary research about a local country context.

Foundations

Foundations and other private sources of funding are becoming increasingly important globally. Each foundation has its specific focus and rules. A module of this kind cannot guide you through these, but a careful reading of their published requirements, combined with the general principles you have learned here, can lay the groundwork for useful dialogue with the ones most interested in your needs.

International NGOs

International NGOs have a dual role in the funding landscape. They can serve as a potential donor by providing grants or subcontracts, or they may serve as a potential partner or collaborator. International NGOs are usually headquartered in another country but might maintain a local office.

National Corporations/Local Businesses

Partnerships with corporations can be more flexible than working directly with bilateral or multilateral donors. Support might be in cash or in-kind and come with fewer requirements. Successful partnerships with corporations often have a connection between the mission of the organization and the core business of the corporation.

Faith-based Organizations/ Networks

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) or religious communities are frequent supporters of small, grass-roots organizations. Such partnerships typically have a spiritual as well as financial dimension and, as with private sector support, often come with fewer compliance requirements, making them easier to manage.

Charting the Funding Landscape

EXERCISE

The Funding Landscape

INSTRUCTIONS

Looking at the table below, fill in the type and names of donors that are active in your country and sector. If the example is not active, cross it out and add others who are.

Donor Type	Name of Donor(s)
National Government	Ministry of Health
Regional/Provincial Government	
Local Government	
Bilateral Development Partners/Donors	US Agency for International Development (USAID)—United States Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)—Canada
Multilateral Development Partners/Donors	United Nations Agencies The World Bank African Development Bank (AfDB) Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Foundations	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (International) Mo Ibrahim Foundation (Regional) Coca-Cola Foundation (International) Stanbic Bank (Regional) The Asia Foundation (Regional)
International NGOs	FHI 360 Catholic Relief Services (CRS) CARE
National Corporations	
Local Businesses	
Faith-based Organizations/Networks	

MODULE 2.3

Setting Resource Mobilization Targets

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ set targets for how much money and what resources must be mobilized to sustain a program/project.

MATERIALS

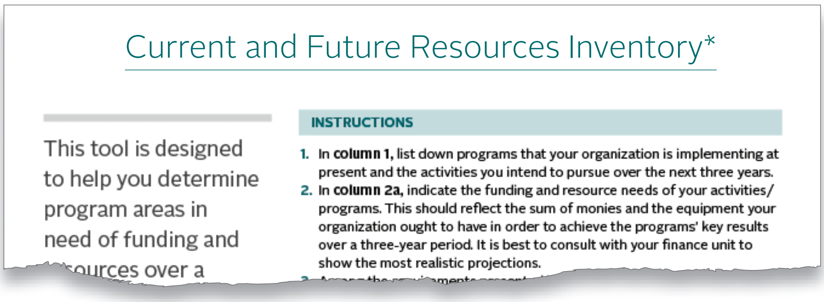
- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handout—*Current and Future Resources Inventory*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

This module might be difficult for non-finance staff. Rather than conducting this module with a full team, consider asking the finance manager to complete the exercises before the training. Then, invite him or her to help facilitate the module.

Say: We'll start by taking stock of what your organization has in hand and then look at what it needs over time to do its work. The results of this inventory will help you set targets for how much money you really need to raise and what resources you really need to mobilize to achieve sustainable results.

Hand out: *Current and Future Resources Inventory*


Current and Future Resources Inventory*

This tool is designed to help you determine program areas in need of funding and resources over a

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In **column 1**, list down programs that your organization is implementing at present and the activities you intend to pursue over the next three years.
2. In **column 2a**, indicate the funding and resource needs of your activities/programs. This should reflect the sum of monies and the equipment your organization ought to have in order to achieve the programs' key results over a three-year period. It is best to consult with your finance unit to show the most realistic projections.

EXERCISE

Inventory of Current and Future Resources*

Say: Take a look at the handout—it is a tool designed to help you see where you stand now and determine program areas in need of funding and resources over a three-year period. Let's review the instructions and sample. If you do not have accurate figures right now, it is OK to project them. However, after the training, work with your finance staff to obtain the real numbers.

Instructions:

1. In column 1, list down programs that your organization is implementing at present and the activities you intend to pursue over the next three years.
2. In column 2a, indicate the funding and resource needs of your activities/programs. This should reflect the sum of monies and the equipment your organization ought to have in order to achieve the

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programs' key results over a three-year period. It is best to consult with your finance unit to show the most realistic projections.

3. Among the requirements presented in column 2a, specify the amount of funds and in-kind resources that already exist with your organization. Again, confer with your finance unit to get the most updated figures.
4. Column 3 should be able to show the variance between column 2a and 2b in terms of funds needed, as well as present a listing of items and equipment. These are the resource gaps, which would be the resource mobilization targets and the basis of developing your resource mobilization program.
5. In column 4, indicate the sources of your available funds and resources. Include individual contributors, donor agencies and funding partners, other non-profit organizations, resource mobilization strategies, etc.
6. Draw an arrow in column 5 to show until when the money and resources will be available.
7. The last column must indicate if the available funds in column 2b are restricted, that is, to be used only as proposed or how you have committed it to be spent/utilized, or unrestricted, that is, to be utilized freely, when you want to or whenever it is necessary.

Now, let's put this tool to work. In the next five minutes, choose one aspect of one current activity and fill in the information in columns 1-6 to learn where it stands; whether there are any resource gaps, and what is needed to fill those gaps.

Debrief: *Following the exercise, ask:*

- *What did your inventory show?*
- *What kind of picture does it present?*
- *What resource mobilization targets does it suggest?*

Wrap up

This activity may have been difficult to complete without your actual financial information, but it is critical that your organization understands its true financial needs. Everyone on your project should have a good understanding of your financial situation. If not, be sure to sit down with your finance manager so that everyone can understand and work together toward resource mobilization.

Current and Future Resources Inventory*

This tool is designed to help you determine program areas in need of funding and resources over a three-year period. It is best to consult with your finance staff to determine the current status of a program or activity and to show the most realistic projections.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In **column 1,** list down programs that your organization is implementing at present and the activities you intend to pursue over the next three years.
2. In **column 2a,** indicate the funding and resource needs of your activities/programs. This should reflect the sum of monies and the equipment your organization ought to have in order to achieve the programs' key results over a three-year period. It is best to consult with your finance unit to show the most realistic projections.
3. Among the requirements presented in **column 2a,** specify the amount of funds and in-kind resources that already exist with your organization. Again, confer with your finance unit to get the most updated figures.
4. **Column 3** should be able to show the variance between column 2a and 2b in terms of funds needed, as well as present a listing of items and equipment. These are the resource gaps, which would be the resource mobilization targets and the basis of developing your resource mobilization program.
5. In **column 4,** indicate the sources of your available funds and resources. Include individual contributors, donor agencies and funding partners, other non-profit organizations, resource mobilization strategies, etc.
6. Draw an arrow in **column 5** to show until when the money and resources will be available.
7. The **last column** must indicate if the available funds in column 2b are restricted, that is, to be used only as proposed or how you have committed it to be spent/utilized, or unrestricted, that is, to be utilized freely, when you want to or whenever it is necessary.

SAMPLE: ***Activists for Hope* —Job Training for Positives**

1. Activity/ Program	2. Resources		3. Resource Gaps/Needs	4. Resource Providers	5. Timeline			6. Resource classification
	2a. Required	2b. Available			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Website	USD$10,000; Tech partner; Internet hosting service	USD$8,000 IT consultant; ABC Servers. Ltd.	Money ($2000 hosting fee for 2 years	United Bank				Unrestricted
Core team	$USD 100,000	$100,000/yr	Money ($10,000)	USAID				Restricted
Monitoring and Evaluation	2 notebook computers	$500 for 1 notebook computer	$500 for 2nd notebook; Staff technical support	USAID				Restricted
TOTAL TARGET			**USD$12,500**					

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PROGRAM NAME

1. Activity/ Program	2. Resources		3. Resource Gaps/Needs	4. Resource Providers	5. Timeline			6. Resource classification
	2a. Required	2b. Available			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
TOTAL TARGET								

MODULE 2.4

Mapping

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ compile a list of personal contacts, and
- ✔ note important facts about each contact that will assist with later sessions.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Handout— ***Mapping Individuals: Who Do I Know?***

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

If participants access social networking sites such as Facebook and Linked In or simple online forums like Google Groups, suggest they use these sites to identify contacts and connect with them.

2.6a Individuals

Say: We have explored the different kinds of donors that make up the funding landscape in this country. The next step in the mapping process is to identify all of the ways that each of you as individuals connect to that landscape through your past and current relationships. This includes colleagues, family, and friends.

EXERCISE

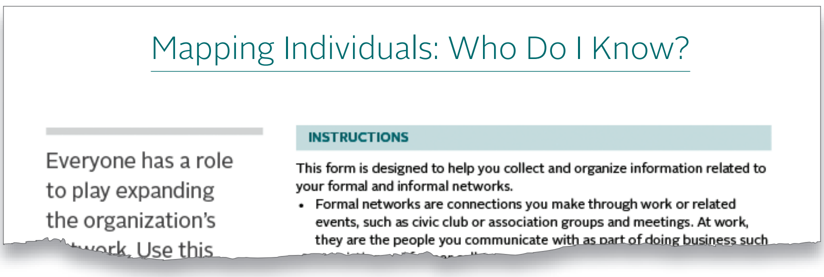
Who do you know?

Say: At first you might think "I do not know anyone" or "I know **too** many people to write down". Relax and open your mind. Think about people you know from:

- Current/past jobs
- Current/past programs
- University
- Place of worship
- Coalitions/task forces
- School or your childhood
- Family, friends, neighbors

You will not be asked to share this information with the group. Just because you have a connection to a donor, does not mean that it would be appropriate for you to ask that person for help. The point of this exercise is to help you think through ways that you could access donors if you chose to.

Hand out: *Mapping Individuals: Who Do I Know?*


Mapping Individuals: Who Do I Know?

Everyone has a role to play expanding the organization's network. Use this

INSTRUCTIONS

This form is designed to help you collect and organize information related to your formal and informal networks.

- Formal networks are connections you make through work or related events, such as civic club or association groups and meetings. At work, they are the people you communicate with as part of doing business such

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

You may want to refer to the funding landscape concentric circles you drew on a flipchart page to reinforce the mapping concept. Participants should complete this exercise individually. Debrief as a group when finished.

Wrap up

By doing this exercise, did you discover that some of your friends or acquaintances might also have something to contribute to your resource mobilization efforts? Did you discover any new connections between yourself and donors or NGOs that you had not realized?

BREAK: 10 minutes

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ compile a list of donors that support organizations in their geographic areas, and
- ✔ note important contacts and information related to each donor.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Handout—*Mapping Donors*

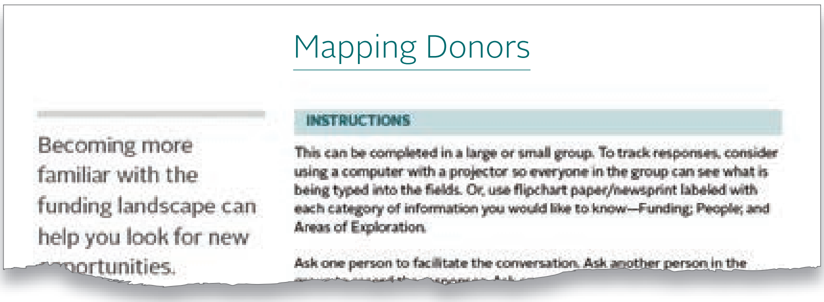
FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Ask participants to work in pairs. Each group will have 25 minutes to complete as many donor information sheets as possible. Debrief as a group when finished.

2.4b Donors

Say: Resource mapping is a complex task requiring the effort of all staff members. So far in this module we have articulated the various resource mobilization roles that staff have and explored the size and scope of the funding landscape. Donor mapping brings the two together drawing on the combined experience, awareness, and connections that staff have regarding different donors by consolidating information in one location.

Hand out: *Mapping Donors*


Mapping Donors

Becoming more familiar with the funding landscape can help you look for new opportunities.

INSTRUCTIONS

This can be completed in a large or small group. To track responses, consider using a computer with a projector so everyone in the group can see what is being typed into the fields. Or, use flipchart paper/newsprint labeled with each category of information you would like to know—Funding; People; and Areas of Exploration.

Ask one person to facilitate the conversation. Ask another person in the

EXERCISE

Donor Mapping

Say: This is an open exploration of the donor community and should not be limited to those funding your current area of focus or expertise. In other words, think about donors outside your current field. For example, if you work in health, which donors fund agriculture? There may be opportunities to overlap with an agricultural project. Other activities in this module will help you explore more information about the donors with which you are less familiar. Becoming more familiar with the big funding landscape is critical for locating new opportunities.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

This activity—Donor Mapping—builds on earlier exercises the *Funding Landscape and Mapping Individuals.* Drawing from both lists, participants will begin to assemble and organize what they know about the various actors into a donor map.

Debrief:

- *Do you record this kind of information about organizations or do you typically rely on individual contacts? If so, how often is it reviewed and updated?*
- *What new observations or insights did you gain after reviewing the information you gathered?*
- *During the process, did anyone find that their information was outdated?*
- *What, if any, additional questions could be added to the form? How could you use the information?*

Wrap up

Remember: Resource mapping is not about having the perfect map. It is about the process undertaken to learn new information and skills along the way.

The information you compiled in your individual and donor maps will change over time. At bilateral and multilateral donors and INGOs, priorities and funding strategies may shift. Familiar donors may end funding or new donors may enter the scene. Moving forward, it will be important to revisit these two exercises periodically to stay current.

Mapping Individuals: Who Do I Know?

Everyone has a role to play expanding the organization's network. Use this exercise as a starting point. Cast as wide a net as possible, knowing that this list or map will evolve over time.

INSTRUCTIONS

This form is designed to help you collect and organize information related to your formal and informal networks.

- Formal networks are connections you make through work or related events, such as civic club or association groups and meetings. At work, they are the people you communicate with as part of doing business such as existing and former colleagues, volunteers, vendors or other service providers.
- Informal networks are distinct from formal networks in that they are not officially recognized or mandated by organizations. Their connections may be work-related, personal, or social and involve family, friends, classmates or neighbors.

If, at any point during the mapping process, you find yourself saying "I don't know" or "I am stuck" or "I cannot think of anyone/any donors/any colleagues", ask yourself the following questions.

Formal or professional networks

Who do I know through existing

- Partners
- Donors
- Vendors
- Referral sources

Who do I know through former

- Partners
- Donors
- Vendors
- Referral sources

Who do I know through current or past programs?

Who are my former colleagues?

- Who do they work for now?
- Does their organization fund projects?
- Who are their funders?

Who do I know through past jobs?

- Where to they work?
- Who do they interact with regularly?

Who have I met at conferences?

Who do I know through coalitions or task forces I participate in?

Informal or personal networks

Who in my family works in a similar field of work?

Who in my family has a connection to someone working in a similar field of work?

- Does my family member know someone working for a donor, implementer, NGO, or vendor?

Who do my friends work for?

Do the parents of my child's friends/spouse's colleagues work in a similar field of work?

- Who do they work for?
- Who do they know?

Also think about:

- Neighbors
- Classmates (grade school through University)

Others?

Use the worksheet that follows—categorized by Donor, NGO, Vendor, Colleague—to list the name of the person, where he or she works, how you know this person, and how well you know him or her.

Use the rankings (1 – 5) as a guide to determine how well you know this person.

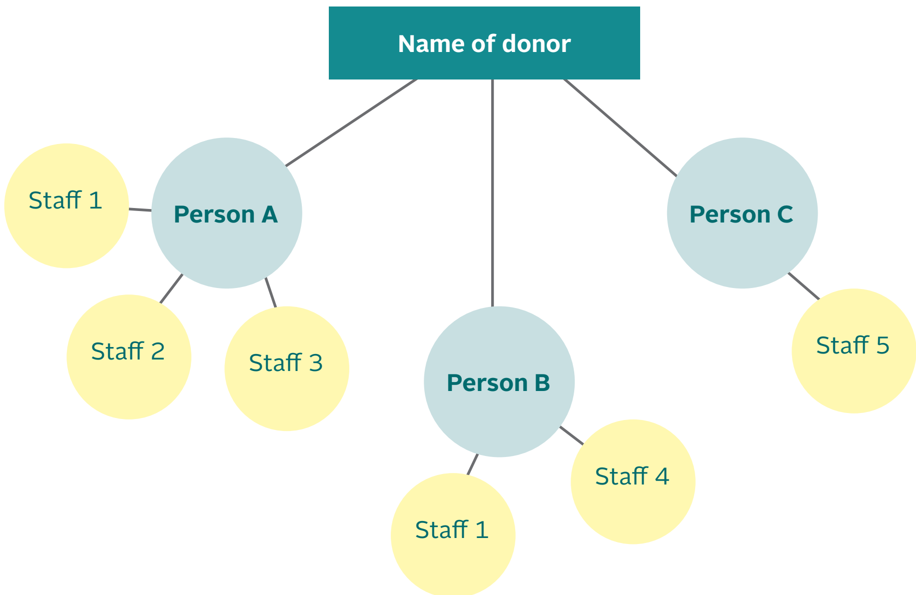
Ranking	Definition	Examples
1	Unknown...someone you do not know, but you know someone who knows this person	• Friend of a coworker • Mother of a neighbor • Spouse of friend • Teacher's sibling
2	Loosely affiliated...someone you met once or twice, but do not interact with them/ have not interacted in a long time	• Met at a conference • Former coworker • Parent of child's friend • Former implementing partner
3	Acquaintance...someone you speak with on occasion and you have a friendly rapport	• Task force member • Former colleague • Past • Volunteer
4	Good friend...someone who you speak with on a regular basis and with whom you have a friendly rapport	• College friend • Friend of spouse • Colleague • Fellow coalition member
5	Dear friend...someone who will do anything for you and vice versa	• Family • Childhood friend • Neighbor • Longtime colleague

Take your time. This information will help you and your co-workers build an overall map of existing linkages for the organization.

Copy the worksheet as needed to capture the contacts or type the information into a central database or spreadsheet. Use the template provided to define the fields.

Share only the information you are comfortable discussing publicly.

An example of how a map of one NGO's (many) connections to one donor might look



EXERCISE

Person's name	Category: Donor; Vendor; NGO; Colleague; Other	Where does the person work?	How do I know this person?	How well do I know this person? (Ranking)
Example: Mary Smith	Colleague	Women United for Health	Met at [name of] conferences	2

Mapping Donors

Becoming more familiar with the funding landscape can help you look for new opportunities.

INSTRUCTIONS

This can be completed in a large or small group. To track responses, consider using a computer with a projector so everyone in the group can see what is being typed into the fields. Or, use flipchart paper/newsprint labeled with each category of information you would like to know—Funding; People; and Areas of Exploration.

Ask one person to facilitate the conversation. Ask another person in the group to record the responses. Ask one person to type the responses on the activity worksheet after the exercise is completed. This information should be recorded in a centralized location so that all staff have access to it.
Now, cast as wide a net as possible.

1. **In a group, brainstorm all donors working and/or supporting work in your country that you are aware of.** List them on a flipchart page or type into a computer.

- List all donors whether you have a link to the donor agency or not. Include major international NGOs.
- List the donor regardless of the funding, technical, or programmatic area. In other words, do not limit your thinking to only those funding your current area of focus or expertise, for example, HIV/AIDS, or testing and counseling.

2. **Choose one donor to begin.** You will repeat these steps for each donor. Do not worry if you do not have all of the requested information, Module 2.6 of Going the Distance provides tips to help you collect additional information on prospective donors.

Take your time. This information will help you and your co-workers build an overall map of existing linkages for the organization. Fill in the worksheet that follows or type the information into a central database or spreadsheet. Use the template provided to define the fields.

3. **Complete one form for each donor.**

4. **Repeat steps 2 and 3 for each donor.**

DONOR NAME:

Funding	Responses	
What does the donor fund?		
	List any information you have no matter how basic.	
Does your organization have current programs with it?		
	• Is the program successful/well received by the donor?	
	• Do you have a good relationship with the donor?	
Does your organization have past programs with it?		
	• Was the program successful/well received by the donor?	
	• Did you have a good relationship with the donor?	
People	**Responses**	
Do you know of someone working for this donor?		
	• If so, list the name regardless if you have a link to them or not.	
	• Do you have a link to this person?	
Do you have link in your organization to someone who works for this donor?		
	If yes, list each contact person and the staff/board member with strongest connection.	

Areas of exploration	Responses	
If you do not have a link to someone working for this donor, but know a name, think about possible connections through your network to link to this person.		
	• Other donors • NGOs • Vendors • Government contacts	
Who would you like to know at this donor?		
	If you do not have a contact name, what type of person, i.e., what's the job title/ position of the type of person you would like to have a connection with at this agency? Executive director?	
What you would like to know about the donor?		
	• Funding trends? • Funding priorities? • Programmatic priorities? • Technical areas of interest? • Target populations/audiences? • Other?	

MODULE 2.5

Donor Gap Analysis

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ list 2-3 donor or organization targets and key missing information about each
- ✔ describe ways to collect the needed information.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handout—*Gap Analysis Worksheet*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Before beginning this session, prepare a flipchart sheet displaying the two Gap Analysis Equations from the box at right. Use them to illustrate what is meant by "gap analysis".

Say: As you began to map the donors and individuals in the funding landscape, you probably noticed that there are donors you know little about or with whom you have no connection. These are your "gaps." In this session, you will use a tool to help you identify the gaps and prioritize which gaps to fill.

Refer to the flipchart to reinforce the understanding of "gaps".

Gap Analysis Equations:

Your Desired Information − (minus) Your Known Information = **Your Gaps**

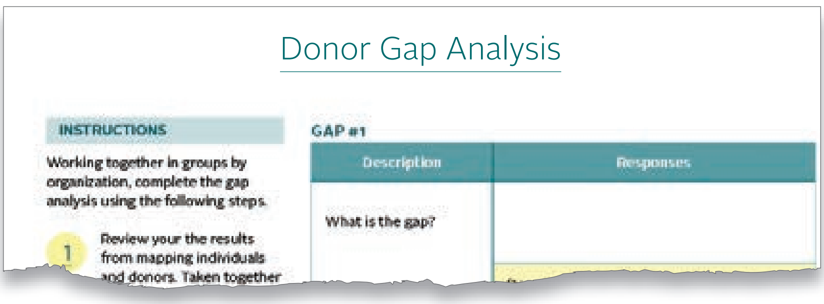
Your Desired Connections − (minus) Your Existing Connections = **Your Gaps**

Say: In previous exercises, you were encouraged to be open when identifying and mapping donors and your personal contacts. You were asked to list donors regardless of the funding, technical, or programmatic area. Next, you will choose a resource mobilization objective or target that you identified when you took an inventory of current and future resources. For example,

- To continue our website, we need. . .
- To learn whether [project] is feasible, we need. . .
- To evaluate our [project], we need. . .

Setting the objective is the most important factor in your gap analysis.

Hand out: *Donor Gap Analysis worksheet*


Donor Gap Analysis

INSTRUCTIONS

Working together in groups by organization, complete the gap analysis using the following steps.

1 Review your the results from mapping individuals and donors. Taken together

GAP #1

Description	Responses
What is the gap?	

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Depending on how many people are gathered, you may want to break the group into twos or threes. Ask each pair or trio to identify an objective or target. Suggest they refer to their inventory of current and future resources.

Ask each group to choose a secretary to record responses and a representative to report out.

Keep strict time. Move around the room to observe, encourage participants and provide input if asked. Ensure that each group is able to successfully identify at least three key gaps in knowledge or contacts and articulate how they might fill them.

EXERCISE

Donor Gap Analysis

Instructions:

Over the next 20 minutes you will work with the *Gap Analysis Worksheet.* Start by choosing your resource mobilization target—be specific about why you need money and/or other resources. Look back at what you identified when you took an inventory of current and future resources. As you complete the worksheet, identify at least three key gaps in knowledge or contacts and ways you might fill them in. For example, you are looking to support a feeding program for orphans, so you want to learn who has a contact at a foundation or corporation that already supports such programs. Or, you need to cover the cost of hosting your website, so you want to see if anyone has a contact at a local internet service provider.

Say: Time. Let's share the gaps you identified and list what you could do to fill them.

(Write responses on flipchart. Then, refer to the list below to supplement participant responses.)

- *Word-of-mouth*
- *Online NGO communities (NGO Pulse www.ngopulse.org)*
- *Being an active member of an organization or association that serves as the voice of your sector's NGOs*
- *Internet (websites)*
- *Asking to be added to a donor's mailing list*
- *Joining NGO communities (for example, Grow South Africa www.growsouthafrica.org)*
- *Being connected to virtual communities, for example:*
  — SANGOnet
  — IRIN: Humanitarian news and analysis, a project of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Next, we will use a strategy to help us fill those gaps.

Donor Gap Analysis

INSTRUCTIONS

Complete the gap analysis using the following steps.

1 **Review your results from mapping individuals and donors.** Taken together both documents should represent your group's collective contacts and understanding of the funding landscape.

Now, taking into account your group's Resource Mobilization Objective select between three and five key gaps. For example: "USAID/Kenya has shown interest in providing funds directly to local organizations for water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities, but we have never worked with USAID/ Kenya and have no contacts there." If you get stuck consider the following questions:

- Do we know which donors provide resources similar in type and scope to those we need to achieve our objective?
- Which donors are most likely to provide to us the resources to achieve our objective?
- Do we suspect that there are additional donors in the funding landscape that we have not yet identified?
- If a donor (agency, institution, business or NGO) looks promising, do we have any links or connections to it?

2 **Choose one gap to start** (you will repeat these steps for each gap).

3 **Complete one form for each gap.**

4 **Repeat steps 2-3 for each gap.**

GAP #1

Description	Responses
What is the gap?	Describe the gap. Is it primarily a gap in knowledge or contacts? Something else?
Does the gap relate to a specific donor or implementer? If so, then list it.	
Describe how the gap relates to our Resource Mobilization Objective.	
What can we do in the next two weeks to begin filling this gap?	If the gap is a contact, do you know the person's name or position? Are there any links (direct or indirect) between your organization and their's? If the gap is knowledge, can you conduct research online or use publications to find an answer?
Describe in detail the steps that our organization will take.	
What resources will we need in order to take the necessary steps?	
Who will be responsible for taking the necessary steps?	

MODULE 2.6

Filling Information Gaps

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

20 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ find information about prospective donors to pursue funding opportunities that match their NGO's growth strategy and/or program areas.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handouts—***Researching Donors: What to look for and How to Find it; 9 Ways to Connect with Prospective Donors***

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Refer to responses on flipchart from previous exercise.

2.6a Researching Donors

Say: As you developed your individual and donor maps and completed the gap analysis, you probably noticed that no matter how well-connected you are, you still have gaps. These are gaps in direct linkages between the people you already know and the people you would like to know. You can fill these gaps in various ways.

For example, imagine you would like to meet with an HIV/AIDS Program Manager working for USAID at the local Mission, but you do not have a direct link. Review your individual and donor maps to look for any possible links. Ask yourself:

- Can we conduct research online to identify a point person?
- Do we know someone through a partner NGO, service provider/supplier, an informal network, or some formal networks who might have a connection or a link to this person?
- Can someone we know link us to the point person directly or to someone else who knows this person?

Say: You do not want to waste time—yours or the donor's—pursuing funding opportunities that do not match your growth strategy and/or program areas. Therefore, it is important to answer a set of questions before you contact a potential donor. What questions should you ask?

(Write responses on flipchart. Then, refer to the list below to supplement participant responses.)

- *What is their mission?*
- *What are their specific topics of interest?*
- *What type of support do they provide?*
- *Who are their primary beneficiaries?*
- *What is their current funding strategy?*
- *How much money/commodities do they donate every year?*
- *What programs/organizations have they funded in the past?*
- *What is their application process?*

- *What connections do they have, if any, to your organization? (Are they a past or current donor? Do you or your staff have professional or personal contacts with Board members or staff? Refer to your individual map)*

The answers to these questions will help you determine whether or not the organization is likely to fund your work. If your program is consistent with a donor's mission, it may be interested in providing funding or in-kind contributions. The benefit of your organization is that you offer the donor a valuable service.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Refer to handout, and as you review the list of places to look for new donors and information about what they fund, ask participants to raise their hands if they have consulted Google/ search engines or donor websites.

To help make decisions about whether or not to pursue a potential donor, create a list of **what the donor wants**. Compare this to a list of **what the situation requires.** Compare both of those to a list of **what your organization can offer.** The points where these three lists overlap are the areas you should focus on in your request to the donor.

Hand out *Researching Donors: What to Look for and How to Find It*

Researching Donors: What to Look for and How to Find It

You do not want to waste time—yours or the donor's—pursuing

It is important to answer the following questions **before** you contact a potential donor:

- What is there mission?
- What are their specific topics of interest?
- What type of support do they provide?

ATTENTION

Remember, information available online may be outdated or incomplete. Always verify the information collected online with an existing or new contact, or through a call to the relevant organization.

Hand out: *Nine Ways to Connect with Prospective Donors*

Nine Ways to Connect with Prospective Donors

Mode of communication	How you can use this mode
1. Email/Skype	• As initial correspondence: Email is a good way to introduce yourself, your organization, and the purpose of the correspondence. However, never rely solely on email, especially if it is a new connection. Always follow up with a phone call and reference the email, and when you sent it.

Say: Making a connection with a prospect can be done in many ways and often there are multiple ways to reach the same person. The handout offers some examples. Let's review them. What is missing?

Mode of communication	How you can use this mode
1. Email/Skype	• As initial correspondence: Email is a good way to introduce yourself, your organization, and the purpose of the correspondence. However, never rely solely on email, especially if it is a new connection. Always follow up with a phone call and reference the email, and when you sent it. • As a follow-up correspondence: Email can also be good for following up on a phone call. Some people travel a lot or are not good about returning calls. Email is an easy way to touch base with them and provide a little more information. • To schedule a call. • To share documents or a survey/set of questions (for your resource inventory or to fill gaps). • Skype is a good way to conduct a video chat with remote donors
2. Individual phone calls or 3. Group conference calls	• To make a more personal connection with someone. • To provide more detailed and tailored information. • To ask specific questions for your resource inventory or to fill gaps. • To communicate with several people at once. • To schedule a meeting.
4. In person meetings	• To network. • To make a more personal connection with someone.
5. Conferences 6. Coalition or task force meetings	• To provide more detailed and tailored information. • To ask specific questions for your resource inventory or to fill gaps. • To identify potential partners. • To communicate with several people at once.
7. Social events	• To network. • To provide more detailed and tailored information. • To ask specific questions for your resource inventory or to fill gaps.
8. Existing connections 9. Potential connections	• To network. • To ask specific questions for your resource inventory or to fill gaps. • To identify potential partners.

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ understand what an informational interview is,
- ✔ recognize how it can feed into resource mapping, and
- ✔ prepare for and develop questions for informational interviewing.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Handouts—***Informational Interview Tips; Role Play—Information Please***

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

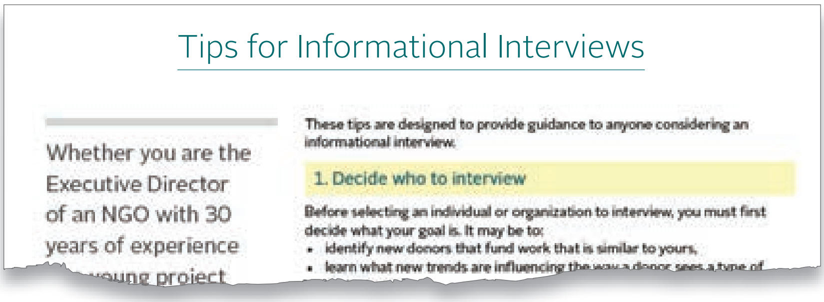
By this point in the process participants should have completed a resource map and analyzed it for gaps, set resource mobilization targets and identified prospects. These prospects are individuals or organizations that are positioned to provide essential resources or information to the organization.

2.6b Preparing for an Informational Interview

Say: Now that we have identified specific individuals or organizations that represent key gaps in our resource map, how should we engage them? One approach to consider is the informational interview. Informational interviews are a way to collect useful information about a potential donor or implementing partner, make important new contacts, and inform others about your organization. They are usually less formal than a business meeting, can be done in person or over the phone and are usually brief, lasting 20-30 minutes.

Unlike with a job interview or an elevator pitch, an informational interview's purpose is **not to persuade** a donor that your project or organization is the best, but rather **to learn more** about a donor's expectations, priorities, decision making process, current activities, and future plans.

Hand out: *Tips for Informational Interviews*


Tips for Informational Interviews

Whether you are the Executive Director of an NGO with 30 years of experience

These tips are designed to provide guidance to anyone considering an informational interview.

1. Decide who to interview

Before selecting an individual or organization to interview, you must first decide what your goal is. It may be to:
- identify new donors that fund work that is similar to yours,

Say: This handout, *Tips for Informational Interviews,* is designed to help you make contact, decide what questions to ask and how to follow up afterward. Let's take a moment to review the handout before we go through an exercise that will give you the chance to practice your interview techniques.

Even though it can sometimes feel artificial or uncomfortable, even the most experienced interviewers benefit from practicing. With each informational interview that you conduct you will see improvements in the questions you ask, the ease with which you deliver them, and your confidence. Now, let's use this opportunity to practice interviews and receive feedback from one another.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Decide whether to give the participants time to read the handout before the exercise. If you feel the group would benefit from doing so, read through the tips together and discuss each one as you go along. When the group is ready, proceed to the exercise.

Divide the group into pairs.

EXERCISE

Role Play—Information Please

20 minutes

Scenario:

After doing your research, you identified an international foundation with offices in your country whose mission, focus and donation record appear compatible with what you do. To learn whether you are right about this, what do you do?

Instructions:

1. Planning (2 minutes)

Each participant will have the chance to practice interviewing a potential donor. In each pair, designate each person as either A or B. Plan the order in which you will play each role.

	Person A	Person B
Round 1	NGO Representative	Prospective Donor
Round 2	Prospective Donor	NGO Representative

2. Set-up (2 minutes)

Agree on the profile of the Prospective Donor (for example, international donor—USAID; local business owner; local official) and what you want to learn from the interview. Decide whether it is a telephone or in-person interview.

3. Script (5 minutes)

Develop 10 questions that you will ask the prospective donor. Refer to *Tips for Informational Interviews.*

4. Begin the role play. Your roles are as follows:

NGO representative	Start a conversation that incorporates your 10 questions and allows you to achieve your objective (step 2).
Prospective Donor	Respond as you expect a donor to respond based on the profile developed in the set up

5. Debrief (5 minutes)

Review the exercise by discussing the following questions:

- *What words and phrases worked well?*
- *How did the body language match the words?*

- *Did the interviewer ask follow up questions based on the subject's answers, or did they just stick to the script?*
- *Was the interviewer able to introduce their reason for requesting the interview?*
- *Did the interviewer appear confident?*
- *Did the interviewer conclude by thanking the subject and asking who else he or she should meet with?*
- *Repeat steps 2, 3, and 4*

Switch roles and repeat the role play.

Debrief: *Some points to emphasize:*
- *What words and phrases worked well?*
- *How did the body language match the words?*
- *Did the interviewer ask follow up questions based on the subject's answers, or did they just stick to the script?*
- *Was the interviewer able to introduce their reason for requesting the interview?*
- *Did the interviewer appear confident?*
- *Did the interviewer conclude by thanking the subject and asking who else he or she should meet with?*

Explain: Knowing how to connect with prospective donors in a manner and language they understand, and finding common ground through shared values and interests can be learned. Part 3 of this guide offers guidance on connecting with donors in person and in writing.

As you conduct more and more interviews not only will they become easier, but a picture will begin to emerge about the funding landscape: who the donors are, what their priorities are, who their implementing partners are, etc. In later interviews, ask questions to confirm your understanding of the funding landscape. For example, "It seems as though your organization has a strong focus on____________. Is that correct?" OR "I understand that although in the past your direct funding was to large INGOs, you are beginning to give smaller direct grants to local NGOs. Is this accurate?"

Wrap up

The first stage of resource mobilization is to define what you want funding or other resources for. Just as your organization has a specific niche, so do most donors. Therefore, before you start mapping, clearly **define the problem,** the program (what you plan to do to solve the problem), **the outcomes** (what you expect to be different as a result) and **the budget** (how much you need and for what) required.

ATTENTION

We have discussed why informational interviews can be a critical tool for networking and mapping resources. Remember, they are a professional courtesy from one person to another. In the future, when someone approaches you for an informational interview, be sure to pass on the kindness that you have received.

As a follow up to this session, you will want to meet with your team to seriously research and identify the prospective donors that support the type of work you do or wish to do. Once identified, it will be time to try to establish contact with that donor and, if possible, try to meet with a representative. See Part 3 of this guide for strategies and tactics for connecting with donors in person and in writing.

Researching Donors: What to Look for and How to Find It

You do not want to waste time—yours or the donor's—pursuing funding opportunities that do not match your growth strategy and/or program areas.

It is important to answer the following questions **before** you contact potential donors:

- ☐ What is their mission?
- ☐ What are their specific topics of interest?
- ☐ What type of support do they provide?
- ☐ Who are their primary beneficiaries?
- ☐ What is their current funding strategy?
- ☐ How much money/commodities do they donate every year?
- ☐ What programs/organizations have they funded in the pasts?
- ☐ What is their application process?
- ☐ What connections do they have, if any, to your organization? (Are they a past or current donor? Do you or your staff have professional or personal contacts with Board members or staff?)
- ☐ Are they a past or current donor? (Do you or your staff have professional or personal contacts with donor Board members or staff? Refer to your individual map.)

The answers to these questions will help you determine whether or not the organization is likely to fund your work. If your program is consistent with a donor's mission, it may be interested in providing funding or in-kind contributions. The benefit of your organization is that you offer the donor a valuable service.

To help make decisions about whether or not to pursue a potential donor, create a list of **What the donor wants.** Compare this to a list of **What the situation requires.** Compare both of those to a list of **What your organization can offer.** The points where these three lists overlap are the areas you should focus on in your request to a donor.

Selected places to look for new donors and information about **what they fund**

- Local media (newspapers, magazines, TV, radio)
- Google/search engines
- Donor websites
- Guide Star at www.guidestar.org
- Foundation Center at www.foundationcenter.org
- Charities Aid Foundation at www.cafonline.org
- NGO Pulse at www.ngopulse.org
- Competitors' annual reports
- Philanthropic publications
- Corporation websites
- European Foundation Centre at www.efc.be
- Global Giving at www.globalgiving.com
  (A US hosted website where Southern NGOs can apply to register projects with the aim of attracting the interest of potential funders. The website is promoted to individuals interested in funding Southern NGOS directly.)
- www.euforic.org
  (a social network connecting projects, events, people and organizations engaged in international cooperation and development.)

Nine Ways to Connect with Prospective Donors

Mode of communication	How you can use this mode
1. Email/Skype	• As initial correspondence: Email is a good way to introduce yourself, your organization, and the purpose of the correspondence. However, never rely solely on email, especially if it is a new connection. Always follow up with a phone call and reference the email, and when you sent it. • As a follow-up correspondence: Email can also be good for following up on a phone call. Some people travel a lot or are not good about returning calls. Email is an easy way to touch base with them and provide a little more information. • To schedule a call. • To share documents or a survey/set of questions (for your resource inventory or to fill gaps). • Skype is also a good way to conduct a video chat with a distant donor
2. Individual phone calls or **3. Group conference calls**	• To make a more personal connection with someone. • To provide more detailed and tailored information. • To ask specific questions for your resource inventory or to fill gaps. • To communicate with several people at once. • To schedule a meeting.
4. In person meetings **5. Conferences** **6. Coalition or task force meetings**	• To network. • To make a more personal connection with someone. • To provide more detailed and tailored information. • To ask specific questions for your resource inventory or to fill gaps. • To identify potential partners. • To communicate with several people at once.
7. Social events	• To network. • To provide more detailed and tailored information. • To ask specific questions for your resource inventory or to fill gaps.
8. Existing connections **9. Potential connections**	• To network. • To ask specific questions for your resource inventory or to fill gaps. • To identify potential partners.

Tips for Informational Interviews

Whether you are the Executive Director of an NGO with 30 years of experience or a young project manager in your first assignment, informational interviewing is a powerful tool to expand and deepen the quality of your professional network and, by extension, that of your organization.

These tips are designed to provide guidance to anyone considering an informational interview.

1. Decide who to interview

Before selecting an individual or organization to interview, you must first decide what your goal is. It may be to:

- identify new donors that fund work that is similar to yours,
- learn what new trends are influencing the way a donor sees a type of project, or
- understand more about your competition and their reputation.

Consider using any of the following organizational processes to guide your targeting for an informational interview:

- **Donor mapping**—Use informational interviews to fill any gaps in your resource map.
- **Strategic planning**—Do you know all of the donors who fund work linked to your strategic objectives?
- **Stakeholder analysis**—Start with your current funding partners and ask them to help you make new contacts.

2. Set up the informational interview

Before attempting to schedule an informational interview, develop an outline or script of what you plan to say. This will decrease any anxiety you may have about making contact and ensure that you do not leave forget to share any essential information. Follow these basic guidelines:

- Say who you are and why you want to meet.
- Make it clear that you are not planning to make a plea for funding or to pitch a project idea.
- Mention a personal referral, if any, and/or a mutual interest.
- Ask for a brief meeting or phone call at a convenient time for the contact.

SAMPLE LETTER OR EMAIL

Dear Ms. Moore,

I represent a local organization called Hope for Change and we are researching donors, implementers, and other stakeholders that support orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS in Malawi. Our goal is to identify and share important innovations and trends in such programs as it is a core component of Hope for Change's work.

I heard you speak at last week's USAID/Malawi Implementing Partners Forum and would like to talk with you in more depth about USAID's work in this area, where you see it moving in the future, and any key technical resources that you draw from. Hope for Change is not seeking new project funding at this time, but is always looking for new contacts across a range of different stakeholders.

Are you available during the week of October 5th to meet with me for 20 or 30 minutes? If so, please suggest a convenient time and I would be happy to meet at your office in Lilongwe.

Sincerely,
Hestern Banda
Executive Director, Hope for Change

DOs & DON'Ts

- **Do enlist members** of your network to set up informational interviews, but
- **Don't be afraid to reach out** to a stranger.
- **Do make it clear** that you are not seeking a meeting to plead for funding.

SAMPLE TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Hestern Banda and I am the executive director of Hope for Change, a local organization based in Lilongwe. I received your contact information from Amy Damon, a great friend for many years. She suggested that you might be willing to share your insights and experience with programs designed to support orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS. We are not seeking project funds right now, but we do want to continue deepening our understanding of these issues given how central they are to our mission. Do you have time next week to sit and talk with me for 20-30 minutes? If it's more convenient, could I call your office to chat by phone instead?

3. Prepare for the interview

Preparing for an informational interview is not like preparing for a job interview. For a job interview, your focus may be on readiness to answer questions or to recall instances of past performance, but in an informational interview you should be asking the questions and leading the conversation. Follow these basic guidelines:

- Research the individual or organization. This will make your questions better and demonstrate professionalism and enthusiasm.
- Update your promotional materials and bring them to the meeting, if appropriate. Sharing capability statements, technical publications, evaluation results, and other resources can make a favorable impression.
- Develop your questions ahead of time. Informational interviews are usually relaxed, but also need to be focused.

SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Depending on your interview objective, considering using or adapting these sample questions.

Questions about the organization

- Which strategic areas or objectives is your organization active in? How were they chosen? How often are they reviewed? Did they change during the last review? If so, how and why?
- What process do you use for developing new programs? Selecting new implementing partners? Procuring services?
- How do you evaluate proposals for funding? Do you ever accept unsolicited concepts?
- What are the common characteristics of the best proposals you have read lately?
- How long has your organization been working in this context? What are the primary challenges you find operating here? Advantages?
- How is your organization similar to and different from others like it?

DOs & DON'Ts

- **Do practice** with a friend or colleague if you are not an experienced interviewer.
- **Do research** by reading web pages, annual reports, and other publications, then ask questions that reflect your research.
- **Don't waste the person's time** by asking what could be answered by reading a web page or other published materials.
- **Do come prepared** to give a 1-3 minute explanation of yourself, your organization, and your reasons for meeting. *(See Part 3—The Elevator Speech.)*

- How do you see this industry changing in the next five to ten years?
- After reading your web page, I wanted to ask for clarification on ___________________?

Technical questions
- What publications, research, or other sources of information do you consult to stay current in your field?
- What networks or forums does your organization participate in? What do you typically learn from them? Are they worthwhile?
- Which implementers working in ¬this context have you been especially impressed with? Why?
- In our work we have found ___________ to be true. Has that been your experience as well? Why or why not?
- What are some key lessons learned from operating in your technical area?
- Is there any niche missing/not covered in the region/country? (Could include a missing conference or coordinating mechanism, a particular skill set, analysis or information)

Questions about other organizations or contacts
- Which implementers have you encountered that do work similar to mine? What is your impression of them?
- In what settings do you typically meet new local organizations?
- Which donors typically support the same kind of work as my organization?
- Is there anyone else that you would recommend I speak with in your organization? From another organization? Would you be willing to introduce me?
- After speaking to other organizations I have found ___________ to be true. What is your experience?

4. During and after the interview

Informational interviews are less formal than job interviews, project pitches, or presentations, but it is still critical to make a strong favorable impression. The purpose of this meeting is NOT to make a plea for funding, but you might be making that plea in the future or your interview subject might review a proposal that you submit one day.

Follow these basic guidelines:
- Dress well for the interview. The meeting may not be very formal, but try to dress at least as formally as you expect your interview subject to be dressed.
- Respect your subject's time. Arrive between five and fifteen minutes before the scheduled time.
- Remember that you are the interviewer. Monitor the meeting length and end on time. Allow for casual conversation, but try to stay on track so that your most important questions are answered.
- Always end the meeting by asking who else you should meet and if you can mention the interview subject's name when you speak to that individual.
- After the interview, promptly follow up on any agreed actions. Send a thank you note or email soon after the interview

DOs & DON'Ts

- **Do** remember that granting you this meeting is a courtesy. Say thank you.
- **Don't think of the interview** as a way to get funding.
- **Do think of the interview** as a way to expand your network and build a relationship.
- **Do come prepared** to discuss a potential project should a donor ask you for ideas.
- **Don't lecture the person** you've come to see, even if you are more knowledgeable about a specific context.
- **Do express a desire** to keep the conversation going by offering to check in with the person again in the future.
- **Don't overstay your welcome.** It is better to signal the meeting is out of time and let the other person continue if they choose to.

Role Play—Information Please

SCENARIO

After doing your research, you identified an international foundation with offices in your country whose mission, focus and donation record appear compatible with what you do. To learn whether you are right about this, you set up an informational interview. What do you say?

1. Planning

2 minutes

Each participant will have the chance to practice interviewing a potential donor. Working in pairs, designate each person as either A or B. Plan the order in which you will play each role.

	Person A	Person B
ROUND 1	NGO Representative	Prospective Donor
ROUND 2	Prospective Donor	NGO Representative

2. Set-up

2 minutes

Agree on the profile of the Prospective Donor (for example, international donor—USAID; local business owner; local official, etc.) and what you want to learn from the interview. Decide whether it is a telephone or in-person interview.

3. Script

5 minutes

Develop 10 questions that you will ask the prospective donor. Refer to Informational Interviews Tips. Remember, this is a chat, not an inquest. Try to weave your key questions into your conversation.

4. Begin the role play.

8 minutes at most

Your roles are as follows:

NGO representative	Start a conversation that incorporates your key questions and allows you to achieve your objective (step 2).
Prospective Donor	Respond as you expect a donor to respond based on the profile developed in the set up

5. Debrief

5 minutes

Review the exercise by discussing the following questions:

- What words and phrases worked well?
- How did the body language match the words?
- Did the interviewer ask follow up questions based on the subject's answers, or did they just stick to the script?
- Was the interviewer able to introduce their reason for requesting the interview?
- Did the interviewer appear confident?
- Did the interviewer conclude by thanking the subject and asking who else he or she should meet with?

6. Repeat steps 2, 3, and 4

Switch roles and repeat the role play. Debrief after each round.

References and Resources

A Guide to Resource Mobilisation Planning for Partners of the Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign.
Vivien Chiam. Telecentre.org Foundation. Quezon City Philippines. July 2011.
http://women.telecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/Resource-Mobilisation-Guide.pdf

Resource Mobilization – A Practical Guide for Research and Community-Based Organizations.
Venture for Fund Raising, Philippines, 2009.
www.idrc.ca/EN/Programs/Donor_Partnerships/Documents/Donor-partnership-guide-hyperlinked.pdf

Connecting with Donors

"IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE, IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER"

– African Proverb

MODULE 3.1

The “Elevator” Speech

TOTAL TIME

3 hours

AGENDA

3.1 The “elevator” speech

- **a.** Defining the elevator speech (20 minutes)
- **b.** Looking at the elements of an elevator speech (30 minutes)
- **c.** Developing a basic elevator speech (40 minutes)
- **d.** Practicing your elevator speech (30 minutes)
- **e.** Refining your elevator speech (60 minutes)

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

This workshop focuses on a tool—the elevator speech or pitch—for helping you open a dialog with prospective funders. For detailed guidance on identifying potential donors, see modules on *Resource Mapping.*

If sessions are presented as stand-alone workshops, see “Getting Started” at the beginning of the guide.

Introduction

Say: This module is about helping you start a conversation with prospective funders or partners. At any time you may run into a potential donor, partner or someone who represents a group of people who could benefit from your services or products. The best way to prepare for such chance meetings is to be able to recite a short, clear introduction to what your program is about. It should spark the listener’s curiosity to want to learn more. With that in mind, this module is designed to help you:

- define essential elements of your organization or program of interest to prospective funders or partners,
- use those elements to design a pitch or brief speech that can start a dialogue with them, and
- practice, refine and deliver your pitch with confidence.

The exercises begin by defining a few terms and then take you through the process of writing, delivering and refining your pitch.

ATTENTION

The exercises in this module are designed to build on one another. It is best if they are completed in the order presented.

Handouts are provided at the end of the module.

MODULE 3.1a

What is an Elevator Speech?

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

20 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ define what an elevator speech is, and
- ✔ understand how it supports fundraising and other efforts to sustain an organization.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Handout—*Effective Elevator Speech Checklist*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Set the stage for the session by reading the scenario aloud.

Scenario

Say: Imagine yourself in the following situation:
You are at an International AIDS Conference. You have just left the conference after a long day. You step into an elevator and see Bill Gates, CEO of the Gates Foundation, standing there by himself. He smiles and asks how you are doing. You know you have about one minute until the elevator will stop on your floor…what do you do?

*(**Ask** one or two participants to respond. Keep time, thanking and politely stopping each individual at 90 seconds, whether finished or not.)*

Say: Raise your hand if you have ever felt at a loss for words in a similar situation. What if you always knew the right thing to say whenever and where ever you needed to?

That short, clear statement that highlights the value of your program is called an **elevator speech.**

Explain: Why is it called an elevator speech? Because it responds to a challenge: How would you interest a dream funder in your organization if fate placed you and the funder in an elevator and you only had the time it takes to get from the top of the building to the bottom?

(It could just as well be called a "going down the stairs" speech or a "waiting-for-a-taxi" speech.)

The concept originated in marketing and sales where it is often referred to as an elevator "pitch" rather than an elevator speech. In any case, the elevator speech has become an essential tool that transcends the boundaries of the business world and the nonprofit sector.

This workshop is designed to help you understand the elements of a great elevator speech and help you prepare and present one.

An elevator speech is a quick, interesting, and useful way to introduce yourself and your organization. It is no longer than 90 seconds and is used to start a conversation.

It is NOT a detailed lecture about your entire organization—its strengths, weaknesses, staffing, or future vision.

Ask: Why is having an elevator speech so important?
(Suggested responses follow.)

- *You want existing and potential stakeholders, funders, partners or beneficiaries to know the value of what you do and to spark their interest in learning more about you.*
- *You only have 30 to 90 seconds to make a powerful first impression.*

Hand out: *Effective Elevator Speech Checklist*

Effective Elevator Speech Checklist

Please tick each box that reflects your assessment of the Elevator Speech presented.

Critical elements required in elevator speech	Excellent	Good	Needs more support	Comments
you are				

Say: I am going to read an example of an elevator pitch. Imagine it is being made to a USAID program officer at an HIV/AIDS conference in Maputo, Mozambique. I will read it twice. Before I begin, look at the *Effective Elevator Speech Checklist.* The first time I read the speech, listen. The second time, use the checklist to rate the speech.

> Hello. My name is Prudence Jones and I am a program officer for Positive Women for Change. Our nongovernmental organization works in Maputo to empower women who are living with HIV and AIDS to start and grow successful businesses. Our services include testing, peer health counseling, job training, and one-on-one business coaching. Here is my business card. May I have yours so I may follow up with you next week?
>
> *[This pitch is 70 words.]*

Discuss *how and why participants rate the pitch as they did.*

Wrap up

The process of creating an elevator pitch shines a light on what your organization or program does and hopes to accomplish. Even if you are not looking for funding, developing an elevator pitch can help you figure out what is essential to communicate about your organization.

In the next module, we will read and hear more sample elevator speeches and explore what makes a pitch effective.

MODULE 3.1b

Looking at the Elements of an Elevator Speech

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ identify the key elements they believe best describes their organization.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart with four columns: **Who? What? "Unique What"? Where?**
- ☐ Handout—*Sample Elevator Pitches and DOs & DON'Ts*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

On flipchart paper draw columns with these four headings at the top:
Who? What? Unique What? Where?

Ask a participant to read aloud the first example of an elevator speech. Then, ask the group to identify each of the key elements in the example while you write them down on the flipchart in one of the four columns. Repeat for the second example.

Say: A successful elevator pitch is short and to the point. It emphasizes what is essential about your organization's products and/or services. It is designed to start a conversation.

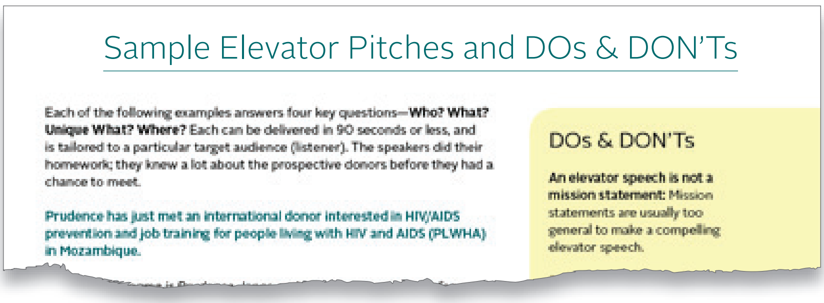
An elevator speech answers four key questions—not necessarily in this order:

1. **WHO** are you and who are the people/population(s) you serve?
2. **WHAT** do you do? (Your niche—see Module 1.3)
3. **WHAT IS UNIQUE** about your organization? What approaches or results can you mention that set your organization apart? Why should the listener fund/work/partner with you? (Message)
4. **WHERE** do you work? What is your geographical reach?

   and

   It ends with a request or call to action.

Hand out: *Sample Elevator Pitches and DOs & DON'Ts*



Sample Elevator Pitches and DOs & DON'Ts

Each of the following examples answers four key questions—**Who? What? Unique What? Where?** Each can be delivered in 90 seconds or less, and is tailored to a particular target audience (listener). The speakers did their homework; they knew a lot about the prospective donors before they had a chance to meet.

Prudence has just met an international donor interested in HIV/AIDS prevention and job training for people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) in Mozambique.

DOs & DON'Ts

An elevator speech is not a mission statement: Mission statements are usually too general to make a compelling elevator speech.

EXERCISE

Elevator speech ingredients

(Refer to the handout with sample elevator speeches.)

Say: I would like a volunteer to read the first sample elevator speech to the group two times. The first time, everyone will listen. The second time, use the *Effective Elevator Speech Checklist* while you listen to rate the pitch and identify what was done well and what needs to be improved. Then, we will repeat the process with the second sample speech.

(Please note, each of these is tailored to a particular listener or audience. In example 1, Mary is talking with an international donor who is interested in youth development and health.

Participant reads example 1 out loud.)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

After each sample pitch is read out loud, ask the group to identify each of the key elements—Who? What? Unique What? Where?—in the example while you write them on the flipchart.

Example 1

It's nice to meet you. My name is Mary Smith with the HIV Teen Alliance (WHO) in Nairobi (WHERE). We provide counseling, schooling and job training for teenagers who once were unemployable and often turned to begging. (UNIQUE WHAT). Our funding comes from USAID and the local department of health. For the last three years the HIV Teen Alliance has helped hundreds of HIV-positive teenagers learn skills and find employment (WHAT).

Say: In the next example, Victor focuses on a donor who cares about women's empowerment, food security and HIV prevention.

Example 2

Good afternoon, my name is Victor Banda. I am the Executive Director of Farmers for Hope (WHO). We're reviving traditional farming techniques and teaching new ones to caregivers—many of them elderly women—so they can grow, store and provide more and healthier food for their families (UNIQUE WHAT). With funding from USAID and the Ministry of Agriculture, we've helped hundreds of individuals and families affected by HIV and AIDS in some of the most remote areas of Zambia (WHAT, WHERE) over the past 10 years.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Be very positive. Reassure participants that they have the ability to develop an elevator speech.

Wrap up

Now that we have explored the key elements of an elevator speech and heard a few examples, after we take a short break, you will develop your own elevator speeches.

BREAK: 10 minutes

MODULE 3.1c

Developing an Elevator Speech

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

60 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ use the key elements they identified to draft a persuasive elevator pitch.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Handout—*Preparing Your Elevator Speech*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

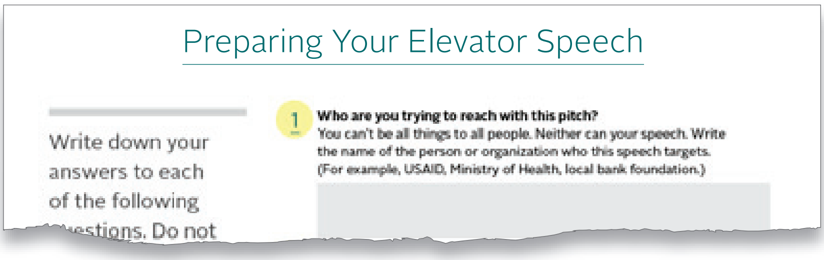
Depending on how many people are gathered, you may want to break the group into pairs. Keep strict time. Move around the room and observe how the drafting is going for each group. Provide relevant input if asked.

EXERCISE

Identifying the key elements of your elevator speech

30 minutes

Hand out: *Preparing Your Elevator Speech*



Preparing Your Elevator Speech

Write down your answers to each of the following questions. Do not

1 **Who are you trying to reach with this pitch?**
You can't be all things to all people. Neither can your speech. Write the name of the person or organization who this speech targets. (For example, USAID, Ministry of Health, local bank foundation.)

Say: Before you create an elevator speech for your organization, program, service or product, answer each question on the *Preparing Your Elevator Speech* worksheet. For example, question one: **Who are you trying to reach with this pitch?** Think about your target audience—are you talking to the head of a local faith-based organization? A local business owner? A national or international donor? Then, answer each question in turn with your target audience in mind. You may develop several different elevator pitches to appeal to different target audiences.

You will have 30 minutes to answer all of the questions on the *Preparing Your Elevator Speech* worksheet. You may want to refer to the work you did in Part 1 *(Defining a Sustainable Organization)* and Part 2 *(Mapping Resources)* to answer questions in the worksheet.

EXERCISE

Writing a basic elevator pitch

Say: You will have 30 minutes to draw on the elements you just identified to write a short speech of no more than 100 words. Look at the sample speeches for guidance.

Instructions:

Revisit the answers to questions 2–7 on your worksheet.

- WHO is your **target** audience?
- WHAT is the issue or problem your target audience is trying to solve?
- WHO are you and who does your organization/program serve?
- WHAT does your organization do?
- WHAT IS UNIQUE about your program?
- WHY is your program important?
- WHERE do you work—your geographic reach?

You will add the call to action—the answer to question 8—later.

Outline your speech. Keeping your target audience in mind, start with a list of phrases that capture what you really want to say. Do not worry about writing complete sentences.

Write your speech from your outline:

1. Write a sentence about each element in your outline.
2. Connect one sentence to another by using additional phrases to make the sentences flow naturally into a paragraph.
3. Review what you wrote and circle the clearest, most powerful words and/or phrases. Also change any long words or jargon into everyday language.
4. Read your speech out loud to yourself and edit again, cutting out any unnecessary words, but keeping the elements you circled. Read it again. Edit as appropriate.
5. Repeat step 4 again and again until you are satisfied that your pitch is memorable and contains no more than 100 words.

Wrap up

Review what you have written. Did you time your pitch? It should be no longer than 90 seconds. Go back to the *Elevator Speech Checklist* and rate your speech. How do you think you did?

Finally, ask yourself, does the speech:

- talk about those things of most interest to the target audience—prospective donor or partner?
- say what your organization can do for him or her?
- tell a story, not just list facts?

In the next module, you will practice delivering your speech.

MODULE 3.1d

Practicing your Elevator Speech

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ deliver an elevator speech in 90 seconds or less.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Handout—*Sample Elevator Pitches and DOs & DON'Ts*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

On flipchart paper draw columns with the four headings at the top: **Who/What/ Unique What/ Where.**

Ask each participant to read aloud his or her elevator speeches. Be sure to time each speech, cutting off any pitch that goes longer than 90 seconds.

After all of the speeches have been read and discussed, refer to *Elevator Speech DO's and DON'Ts* handout and review with participants.

EXERCISE

Talking the talk

Say: Now let's share our elevator speeches with each other. After each elevator speech is read out loud, the presenter will tell the group how many words were in the pitch. Remember, any pitch longer than 90 seconds will be stopped.

While you are listening, jot down what you heard as answers to four key questions—**Who/What/Unique What/Where.** You may want to refer to the *Elevator Speech Checklist* to rate the speech.

When I say "go," the presenter will deliver their elevator speech. After each presentation we will debrief. Who will go first?

Debrief: *Ask the following questions after each presentation:*

- *What words or phrases did you use or hear that worked?*
- *What did you say or hear that did not work?*
- *What was missing?*
- *What could make it better?*

Refer to Sample Elevator Pitches and DOs & DON'Ts. *Review with participants.*

Wrap up

If the elevator speech you just created is not smooth, easy, or natural yet, do not worry. As you use it, you will find that it gets better and better and it sounds more natural. It may vary a bit each time you give it. That is fine as long as the essential elements are always presented. We will continue to refine the speech in the next module.

MODULE 3.1e

Refining your Elevator Speech

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

60 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ refine their pitch so it ends with a specific call to action, and
- ✔ deliver their pitch with increased confidence

MATERIALS

- ☐ Handouts—***Anatomy of an Elevator Speech; Role Play—A Call to Action***

Say: As you create your speech, keep in mind your goal. That is why our next step is to modify your elevator speech so it closes by requesting that the listener do something. Review your elevator pitch with this in mind.

Ask: What are some of the possible purposes or goals of the pitch? Refer to your response to question eight on the *Preparing Your Elevator Speech* worksheet.

Write goals on flipchart. Possible responses include:

- *get a business card so we can stay in touch*
- *discuss a partnership on an upcoming request for proposal*
- *invite the person to tour a program site*
- *set up a meeting*
- *other ideas?*

Say: Remember you are not lecturing, but trying to engage the listener in a conversation. For example, when speaking with a potential donor, your goal might be to request a meeting where you can share more about your programming and how your organization will help the donor achieve their goals. With this in mind, you might end your pitch with:

> "I would appreciate meeting with you to discuss our (UNIQUE WHAT) further. What is the best way to contact you?"

Perhaps you expect to meet a representative of your country's USAID Mission at a conference or you want to enlist the support of a local bank representative. Think about how you will add a specific request to your existing elevator speech. Here are a few examples of specific requests:

- "I'd like to meet with you to discuss how (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) complements your work in HIV and AIDS in (NAME OF REGION) where you are planning a new project. May we arrange a meeting perhaps for next week?"

- "It was a pleasure meeting you. May we exchange business cards? I would like to send you information about how (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) is working to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Here is my card."

While shopping, you run into a local business leader you know. Your elevator speech reminds her of the work your NGO is doing and ends with a specific request.

- "I understand you own several buildings in town. (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) is currently looking for low-cost meeting space that is on the number 12 bus line. May I call you to talk about finding space? What is your phone number?"

Hand out: *Anatomy of an Elevator Speech*

Anatomy of an Elevator Speech

Sample pitch at a chance meeting with a business owner

SET UP:	Mary Smith, Executive Director of YOUR NGO, while shopping at the local farmers market, runs into the head of a small business.
TARGET:	Well-known business owner.
IMMEDIATE GOAL:	Start a conversation that will lead to a meeting.

Say: Take a look at the handout *Anatomy of an Elevator Speech*. It looks a bit like a script for a play, except that it includes the reasons behind what is said.

> **FACILITATOR'S NOTE**
>
> Move around the room and observe how the practice is going for each group. Provide relevant input after each role-play. Once each person has had a chance to practice their enhanced elevator speech, end the role-play activity and process the experience with the participants.

EXERCISE

What is your call to action?

10 minutes

Say: Now it's your turn to add an "ask" or **call to action** to your elevator speech. You will have 10 minutes to add a request or "ask" to your elevator speech. You will have time to practice delivering this enhanced elevator speech during the next module.

Call time at 10 minutes.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Divide the group into trios. Explain the instructions for the role play. They will be practicing their enhanced elevator speech. As you explain each step, have the participants complete that step. When explaining Step 3, emphasize the importance of the role of the Observer/Coach—they are to support the NGO representative.

Begin Round One of the role play and circulate around the room, ensuring that participants are doing the exercise correctly. Call time at 2 minutes for Round One. Allot five minutes to the trios to debrief Round One. Tell them to switch roles and begin Round Two, call time, debrief; and then repeat for Round Three.

When all three rounds of the role playing exercise are done, bring the group together to review the exercise, encouraging discussion.

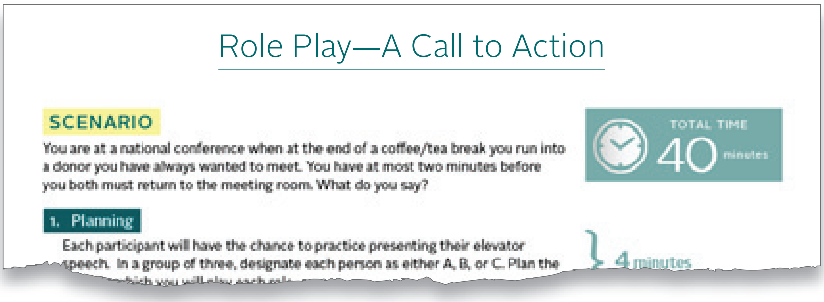
EXERCISE

Role Play—A Call to Action

40 minutes

Scenario: You are at a national conference when, at the end of a coffee/tea break, you run into a donor you have always wanted to meet. You have at most two minutes before you both must return to the meeting room. What do you say?

Hand out: *Role Play—A Call to Action*


Role Play—A Call to Action

SCENARIO

You are at a national conference when at the end of a coffee/tea break you run into a donor you have always wanted to meet. You have at most two minutes before you both must return to the meeting room. What do you say?

TOTAL TIME 40 minutes

1. Planning

Each participant will have the chance to practice presenting their elevator speech. In a group of three, designate each person as either A, B, or C. Plan the

4 minutes

Debrief: *Now that each person has had a chance to play all three roles, let's talk about the experience.*

Ask:

- *What words or phrases did you use or hear that worked?*
- *What did you say or hear that did not work?*
- *Were you successful? What does that mean?*
- *To what extent will the exercise make you more at ease giving your elevator speech in the same situation in real life? Would you handle it any differently?*

Wrap up

Remember, once you or other staff members are at meetings, conferences, and/or in communities reciting the speech, you will adapt the pitch to suit the situation. That is fine as long as you include all of the key elements and represent your organization well. It is also fine to have more than one elevator speech for different audiences.

Submit the speech to top management for review and approval. Develop a plan to introduce the speech to the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers.

All of your stakeholders (Board of Directors, management, staff, and volunteers) should be familiar with an elevator speech for your organization.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Encourage participants to continue practicing their elevator speeches with colleagues, friends and even family, to refine their pitch.

The more often you give your pitch, the better it will become and the more natural it will sound. As you feel more confident, you will add enthusiasm and energy to the telling. Try it out at a wide variety of gatherings and networking events.

There are many resources (and about 1000 YouTube videos) that clearly define an elevator speech. And even more that explain why you need one and its many potential uses for your organization.

Effective Elevator Speech Checklist

Please tick each box that reflects your assessment of the Elevator Speech presented.

Critical elements required in elevator speech	Excellent	Good	Needs more support	Comments
1. Who you are				
2. Who you serve				
3. What you do				
4. What is unique about you (niche)				
5. Where you work				
6. Jargon and acronyms are clearly avoided. The language is listener friendly.				
7. The speech is memorable and sincere.				
8. It ends with an action request.				
9. The speaker conveys warmth, friendliness, confidence, and enthusiasm.				
10. Passion about what you do is projected.				
11. The speech sounds effortless, conversational, and natural.				
12. Content and overall delivery of the speech				

Sample Elevator Pitches and DOs & DON'Ts

Each of the following examples answers four key questions—**Who? What? Unique What? Where?** Each can be delivered in 90 seconds or less, and is tailored to a particular target audience (listener). The speakers did their homework; they knew a lot about the prospective donors before they had a chance to meet.

Prudence has just met an international donor interested in HIV/AIDS prevention and job training for people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) in Mozambique.

> *Hello. My name is Prudence Jones and I am a program officer for Positive Women for Change (WHO). Our nongovernmental organization works in Maputo (WHERE) to empower women who are living with HIV and AIDS to start and grow successful businesses (WHAT). Our services include testing, peer health counseling, job training, and one-on-one business coaching (UNIQUE WHAT). Here is my business card. May I have yours so I may follow up with you next week?*

Mary is talking with an international donor who is interested in youth development and health.

> *It's nice to meet you. My name is Mary Smith with the HIV Teen Alliance (WHO). We provide counseling, schooling and job training for young people who once were unemployable and often turned to begging. (UNIQUE WHAT) Our funding comes from USAID and the local department of health. For the last three years we've changed the lives of hundreds of HIV-positive teenagers who live in Nairobi (WHAT, WHERE).*

Victor focuses on a donor who cares about women's empowerment, food security and as well as HIV. His listener is a foundation representative who will find it reassuring that other major donors have seen fit to invest in Farmers for Hope.

> *Good afternoon, my name is Victor Banda. I am the Executive Director of Farmers for Hope (WHO). We're reviving traditional farming techniques and teaching new ones to caregivers—many of them elderly women—so they can grow, store and provide more and healthier food for their families (UNIQUE WHAT). With funding from USAID and the Ministry of Agriculture, we've helped hundreds of individuals and families affected by HIV and AIDS in some of the most remote areas of Zambia (WHAT, WHERE) over the past 10 years.*

DOs & DON'Ts

Do not confuse an elevator speech with a mission statement. Mission statements are usually too general to make a compelling elevator speech.

Do have several examples ready. What is important to include will depend on the listener, so be prepared with several options.

Do show impact and tell a story. Do not use numbers. Tell about your work in a real way, letting the listener know your impact and the importance of what you do for and with the people you serve.

Do end with a specific call to action. Have a goal in mind. Request something; ask to exchange business cards, invite the listener to tour a program site or meet staff or beneficiaries.

Do not use jargon or acronyms. If your family members or neighbors do not understand elements in your elevator speech (for example, do not say OVC, say orphans and other vulnerable children), there is a chance that the person in the "elevator" will not. Use clear and simple language.

Preparing Your Elevator Speech

Write down your answers to each of the following questions. Do not worry about writing complete sentences.

NEXT STEPS

Refine. With the target audience and their issue in mind, combine your answers to questions 3 through 7 into one short paragraph. Then,

- Read it quietly aloud to yourself and a partner a few times. How does it sound? Refer to the checklist used earlier.
- Circle the clearest, most powerful words and/or phrases.
- Edit and/or rewrite your speech, keeping the elements you circled. Read it again. Edit as appropriate.
- Finalize your speech by making sure it is no more than 100 words long.

Practice. Role play with a colleague or preferably with someone not too familiar with your organization.

If possible, record your elevator speech then, review it to fine-tune the content as well as your delivery.

1 **Who are you trying to reach with this pitch?**
You cannot be all things to all people. Neither can your speech. Write the name of the person or organization who this speech targets. (For example, USAID, Ministry of Health, local bank foundation.)

2 **What is the issue your target audience is trying to solve?**
(For example, improve livelihoods for HIV+ women; enhance food security.)

3 **WHO are you and who does your organization/program serve?**

4 **WHAT does your organization do?**
Write it down in several ways. Brainstorm. Try to tell a story that illustrates what you do. Do not worry about length now because you will boil it down later into a short sentence that describes your organization's core service/product (niche).

5 **WHAT IS UNIQUE about your program/service/product?**
What approaches or results can you mention that set your program apart from others working in the same field?

6 **Why is your program important?**

7 **WHERE do you work? What is your geographic reach?**

8 **What do you want the listener to do as a result of hearing this pitch?**

Anatomy of an Elevator Speech

Sample pitch at a chance meeting with a business owner

SET UP: Mary Smith, Executive Director of YOUR NGO, while shopping at the local farmers market, runs into the head of a small business.

TARGET: Well-known business owner.

IMMEDIATE GOAL: Start a conversation that will lead to a meeting.

END GOAL: Partner and place trainees in business.

Sample talking points	Rationale
Hello, my name is Mary Smith with YOUR NGO. For the last three years we've changed the lives of hundreds of HIV-positive teenagers who live in OUR TOWN. *We provide counseling, schooling and job training for young people who once were unemployable and often turned to begging.* *Our funding comes from USAID and the local department of health.*	Tell your story and use a "hook." Introduce unique aspect of mission—works with teenagers. Know your audience when describing what your organization does—trains capable workers. Keep it simple. Do not use jargon (for example, OVC or sustainable solutions.) Breathe. Listen, look for nonverbal cues, adapt as necessary.
I have some interesting ideas for your business that I'd like to discuss at a more convenient time. What is the best way to schedule a meeting?	Aim for an immediate goal, but keep the end goal in mind. Since this is not the time or place for a long conversation, aim to start a dialogue that will lead to a meeting. **Do not ask to place a trainee.**
How may I contact you? By phone or email? *May I have a business/visit card?*	Be polite and respectful. Ask for contact information—a phone number or email address.
Thank you.	
We all meet so many people every day, to help you remember our organization, I wanted you to know that three of our trained seamstresses designed and made all the uniforms for the local ABC elementary school.	Before parting, mention something hard to forget that reinforces the organization's mission and accomplishments.
Here is my card. I will follow up in a few days. It was a pleasure meeting you.	Before handing over your card, write a short note on the reverse—for example, "trainees made ABC school uniforms"—as a reminder to the recipient.

Role Play—A Call to Action

SCENARIO

TOTAL TIME 40 minutes

You are at a national conference when, at the end of a coffee/tea break, you run into a donor you have always wanted to meet. You have at most two minutes before you both must return to the meeting room. What do you say?

1. Planning

4 minutes

Each participant will have the chance to practice presenting their elevator speech. In a group of three, designate each person as either A, B, or C. Plan the order in which you will play each role.

	Person A	Person B	Person C
ROUND 1	NGO Representative	Prospective Donor	Observer/Coach
ROUND 2	Prospective Donor	Observer/Coach	NGO Representative
ROUND3	Observer/Coach	NGO Representative	Prospective Donor

2. Set-up

2 minutes

Agree on the profile of the Prospective Donor (for example, international donor—USAID; local business owner; local official, etc.) and what the issue or problem is that most interests the donor.

3. Role Play

2 minutes

Begin the role play. Your roles are as follows:

NGO representative	Present your elevator speech ending with a specific request. Feel free to pause at any time to request assistance from your coach
Prospective Donor	Respond as you expect a donor to respond based on the profile developed in the set up
Observer/coach	Coach the NGO representative as appropriate to help him or her deliver an effective elevator speech with a specific request for action.

4. Debrief (5 minutes)

5 minutes

Review the exercise by discussing the following questions:

- What words and phrases worked well?
- How did the body language match the words?
- What could the NGO representative have said differently?
- What was the "ask" or requested action?
- How likely is it that the donor would want to learn more about the NGO's programs?

5. Repeat steps 2, 3, and 4

Switch roles and repeat the role play. Debrief after each round.

MODULE 3.2

Writing for Sustainability

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

10 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ describe three ways to communicate with donors.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers
- ☐ Handout—*Three Actions to Take Before Writing a Capability Statement*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

This module helps set the stage for the two that follow. Discuss the differences between the types of essential written statements, then, go on to Modules 3.3 and 3.4.

Say: Making a persuasive case in writing to funders and partners is essential to winning new and ongoing support. The two types of written information most often used by and requested of an NGO, no matter its size, are a capabilities statement and a systems statement.

> A **capability statement** is a brief written statement that describes **what you have done,** who you are, what you do, and how you are different from your competitors. It should instill confidence in a potential funder or partner that your organization has the technical, **programmatic experience,** expertise and track record to get results.
>
> A **capacity or systems statement** is a brief written statement that explains **how and how well your organization is managed.** It describes aspects of your management, finance, and monitoring and evaluation systems. It should instill confidence in a potential funder or partner that you have strong **organizational systems** in place to manage money, people and programs.

These two, plus an elevator speech, form a very strong base on which to build proposals, marketing and other materials to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences.

Before diving in to writing, refining and delivering your statements, it is important to define terms. If it is unclear what a funder or partner is requesting, ask for clarification.

Hand out: *Three Actions to Take Before Writing a Capability Statement*

ATTENTION

There are many names for a **capability statement.** Do not be confused! Capability statements are sometimes called:

- Capes or organizational capes
- Capacity statements
- Past performance statements

What we are calling a **systems statement** is often called a capacity statement. For clarity in these modules, we use systems statement.

Three Actions to Take Before Writing a Capability Statement

1 Research your audience

Become as familiar with donors as possible. They are the people reading your proposal and capability statements. Find out:

- What types of projects have they funded in the past and what are they most likely to fund in the future?
- What kind of organizations do they like to fund?
- What size organizations do they usually fund—large international NGOs (INGOs) or do they also directly fund small local NGOs and CBOs?
- How large are their typical projects?
- What types of approaches do they fund?

2 Research your competition

It is important to know which organizations are most likely to apply for the same funding opportunities as your organization. It helps to know their strengths and weaknesses, and how your organization differs from theirs. Be sure to emphasize these unique benefits that your organization offers.

3 Research potential partners

NGOs rarely work in isolation but bid for projects with other partners. Consider how potential partners could strengthen your response and ability to implement the project. This planning step is similar to knowing your competition. You'll want to know potential partners' strengths and weaknesses, how your organization's capes differ from theirs, and what you could bring to the partnership. In other words, what does your organization do that their organization does not? This will help you "sell" your organization as a worthwhile partner for a project. If the donor thinks highly of your organization, that is an important credential that you bring to a partnership with other organizations.

MODULE 3.3

Capability Statements

TOTAL TIME

3 hours 40 minutes

AGENDA

3.3 Capability statements

- **a.** Defining the capability statement (15 minutes)
- **b.** Looking at the elements of a capability statement (35 minutes)
- **c.** Building your capability statement
  - Steps 1-2 (60 minutes)
  - Steps 3-5 (60 minutes)
- **d.** Refining your capability statement (50minutes)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

If sessions are presented as stand-alone workshops, see "Getting Started" at the beginning of the guide.

Introduction

This module is about helping you to communicate more effectively in writing with prospective funders. Like an elevator speech (see Module 3.1), a capability statement tells potential donors what you have done, who you are, what you do, and how you are different from your competitors, but it does so in writing. Winning donor support is highly competitive. NGOs of all sizes are competing with you for a limited pool of donor funds. A clear capability statement is a critical tool in winning support, no matter what size organization you represent. With that in mind, this module will help you:

- identify the reasons a strong capability statement helps you win support from donors,
- identify the key components of a capability statement, and
- create a capability statement that can effectively sell your organization to potential donors.

The exercises begin by defining a few terms and then take you through the process of developing and refining your capability statement. Many of the tools and worksheets used to identify your "niche" (Module 1.3) and to prepare your elevator speech (Module 3.1), can help you prepare capability statements.

ATTENTION

The exercises in this module are designed to build on one another. It is best if the exercises are completed in the order presented.

Handouts are provided at the end of the module.

MODULE 3.3a

What is a Capability Statement?

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

15 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ define what a capability statement is, and
- ✔ describe two ways a capability statement can be used to support fundraising and other efforts to sustain the organization.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Write a definition of a capability statement on a flipchart page and post. Ask one of the participants to read the definition out loud.

Say: A capability statement describes what an organization has done—its program experience and strengths. Let's look at a simple definition.

(Write on a flipchart.)

> **A capability statement** is a brief written description of **what you have done,** who you are, what you do, and how you are different from your competitors.

ATTENTION

There are many names for a capability statement. Do not be confused! Capability statements are sometimes called:

- Capes or organizational capes
- Capacity statements
- Institutional capacity statements
- Past performance statements

If you are unsure what a funder or partner is looking for, ask for clarification.

No matter how you define it, a capability statement should instill confidence in a potential partner or funder that your organization has the technical and programmatic experience, expertise and past successes to get results.

Here are some other ways to think about capability statements:

- A kind of resume or CV for your organization. Just like in a CV or resume, you want to put your best foot forward while also giving a realistic picture of your skills and experience.
- A brief document that markets your organization's experience and skills to position itself for future funding and partnering opportunities.

Ask: Why are capability statements important? *(Choose one or two participants to respond. Write responses on the flipchart. Discuss.)*

(Suggested responses to supplement ideas raised by participants)

- *It "introduces" your organization to a donor or partner in writing.*
- *You have very little time, even in writing to make a good first impression. In a capability statement you want to show that your organization is "capable" of implementing a project and why your organization is "right for the job."*
- *Many donors use capability statements to compare you with other organizations. Many U.S. government agencies (for example, USAID) require that a capability statement be submitted with proposals.*
- *Prime grant recipients can require potential sub-recipients to submit capability statements before deciding to partner with them.*

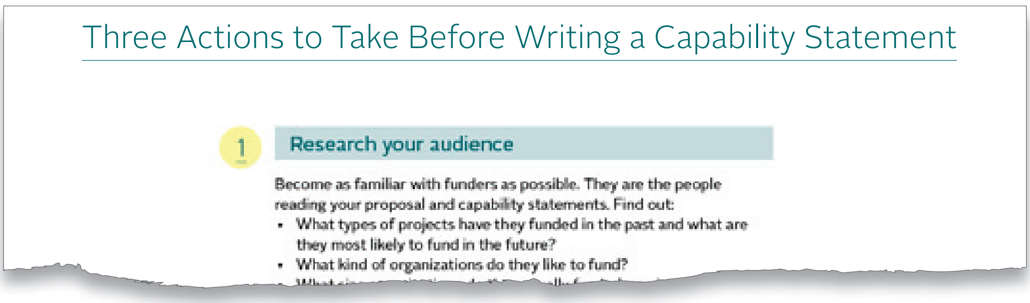
Ask: How are capability statements used? *(Choose one or two participants to respond. Write responses on the flipchart. Discuss.)*

(Suggested responses to supplement ideas raised by participants)

- *proposals*
- *marketing materials*
- *meeting materials*
- *support of your elevator speech*
- *news releases*

Say: For example, an organization might send its capability statement by email to an organization it would like to partner with on an upcoming project. Staff might also incorporate a capability statement into a fact sheet given to donors and partners at a conference. Organizations often post a capability statement on their website.

Refer to handout.


Three Actions to Take Before Writing a Capability Statement

1 Research your audience

Become as familiar with funders as possible. They are the people reading your proposal and capability statements. Find out:

- What types of projects have they funded in the past and what are they most likely to fund in the future?
- What kind of organizations do they like to fund?

Wrap up

Before you start to write, be sure to do three things:

1. Research your audience.
2. Research your competition.
3. Research your potential partners.

Securing funding or a partner is not unlike getting a job. The more you know about the employer—your target audience—the more you can tailor your CV to compete. The same goes for writing to secure funding or other resources—whether you are writing a cape statement, an elevator speech or a proposal: the more you know, the better your chances of succeeding.

Take a few minutes to review *Three Actions to Take Before Writing a Capability Statement* before going on.

MODULE 3.3b

Looking at the Elements of a Capability Statement

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

35 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ identify the four main components of a capability statement

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers
- ☐ Handouts—**Hope Ethiopia *Sample Capability Statement; Elements of a Capability Statement***

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Write each of the components of a capability statement on a flipchart to read loud.

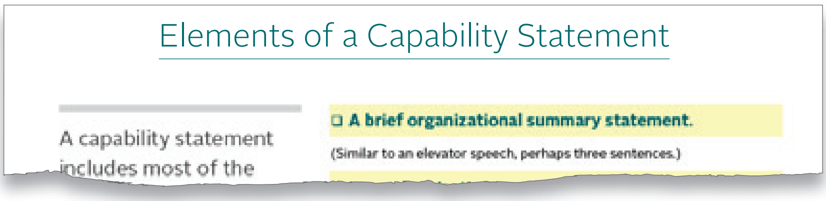
Review what each of the four categories of information includes, referring participants to *Hope Ethiopia*'s sample cape statement. Ask participants to circle the corresponding category. Then, discuss.

Say: What is included in a capability statement? Look at the capability statement for Hope Ethiopia, an imaginary NGO working on HIV and AIDS prevention. What types of information are included?

Hand out: *Hope Ethiopia* sample capability statement; *Elements of a Capability Statement*


Hope Ethiopia

Mobilizing Ethiopians to Combat HIV/AIDS


Elements of a Capability Statement

A capability statement includes most of the

☐ **A brief organizational summary statement.**

(Similar to an elevator speech, perhaps three sentences.)

EXERCISE

Cape detectives

20 minutes

A capability statement should include the following categories of information about your organization:

1. core attributes
2. past performance
3. differentiators
4. contact information/data

Say: We will explore each of these elements using the *Hope Ethiopia* example.

Explain: What are **core attributes?**
They include:
- What you do (draw on language in your mission statement)
- Who you are, when you started
- Where you work (country, region, city; urban, rural)
- Who you work with (the populations you serve)
- Technical expertise

Ask: What are *Hope Ethiopia*'s core attributes? *(Circle and label on the handout or list them.)*

Explain: Past performance, what does it include?
- Past and current projects
- Results (outputs) and impact (outcomes) (For example, the number of people you served or reached, the change your program brought about.)
- Past and current partners and funders

Ask: What does *Hope Ethiopia*'s past performance include? (*Circle and label on the handout or list them.)*

Explain: Differentiators are what makes your organization different from peers or competitors. Differentiators answer the questions:
- What does our organization do that peers or competitors do not do?
- What skills or expertise does our organization possess that our peers or competitors do not possess?
- How is our organization, staff and/or approach different from others who do what we do?
- What do we offer beneficiaries/clients that peers or competitors do not offer?

Ask: What are *Hope Ethiopia*'s core differentiators? *(Circle and label on the handout or list them.)*

Explain: Last, but not least, what **contact information/data** is included?
- The organization's legal name and physical address
- Name of primary contact as well as office telephone, office fax, email address
- Website address, if there is one
- Any relevant codes such as DUNS* number if the organization has one
- Registration status in the country(s) where the organization works

A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit number the U.S. Government requires some organizations to provide as part of their grant applications and proposals. It is assigned free of charge. (See http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform).

Say: Notice *Hope Ethiopia*'s contact information and data on the capability statement.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Suggest that participants search the Web for sample capability statements using these key words:

- Capability statement
- Capability statement example
- Capability statement template
- NGO capability statement
- HIV AIDS NGO capability statement
- How to write a capability statement

Wrap up

There are many formats you can use to present a capability statement. *Hope Ethiopia*'s is only one example.

Organizations often adapt capability statements to appeal to different funders or partners and to suit different uses—for example, posting on the Web or supporting a proposal.

Before you decide on a format, look at other resources and examples on the Web. Regardless of format or template, the work you did in this module helped you lay the foundation for writing your own capability statement.

Organizations devote a lot of time and thought to developing and refining their capability statements. Next, we will go through the step-by-step process of drafting a capability statement.

MODULE 3.3c

Building your Capability Statement (Steps 1-2)

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

60 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- ✔ describe the organization's core attributes and past performances, and
- ✔ use these key components in a cape statement.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers
- ☐ Handouts—***Capability Statement Worksheet with Examples***

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Depending on how many people are gathered, you may want to break the group into two or three. Guide participants through the worksheet one step at a time.

Keep strict time. Ask the group(s) to share their results after each step is completed, then debrief about the process.

EXERCISE

Taking the first steps

40 minutes

Hand out: *Capability Statement Worksheet with Examples*


Capability Statement Worksheet with Examples

Follow the steps to put together the information you

STEP 1 Make a list of your organization's **core attributes.**

- What you do (draw on language in your Mission statement)
- Who you are, when you started

Say: In this session you will start developing your own capability statement using the *Capability Statement Worksheet with Examples*. This is a step-by-step process that you will follow until you have all of the building blocks for a complete capability statement.

Before you begin, there are three more things to keep in mind when writing a capability statement. They are called the three Cs. *(Write on flipchart and post.)*
- Concise (brief)
- Convincing (persuasive)
- Connected

Ask: The first two Cs are self-explanatory. What does "connected" mean in the context of a capability statement?

Explain: Connected means that what you tell funders or partners connects with or responds to a need that they have. For example:
- If a donor wants to fund male circumcision projects in your area and you have experience motivating men to participate in family planning, your work with men connects with that donor.
- If an international disaster relief organization wants to make a sub-grant in a remote community affected by drought where you have

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Ask each group to choose a secretary to write responses and a representative to report out.

Move around the room and observe how the drafting is going. Encourage the groups and answer questions. Periodically, announce how much time is left.

Keep strict time. After participants finish each step, ask each group to read what they wrote, point out the similarities and differences.

Be supportive and encourage the participants. This is hard work!

implemented malaria projects, the fact that you have already built relationships in that community **connects** with a need of that relief organization.

Cape statements are most convincing when they are connected to a specific funder or partner. As you complete the cape statement worksheet, do so with a specific funder in mind. It may be USAID, the Global Fund, the Ministry of Health or a local business. Connect what you chose to write with what you know are that funder's concerns.

Step 1. You will have 10 minutes to write down your core attributes. Feel free to refer to Hope Ethiopia's capability statement. Remember, core attributes include:

- Where you work (country, region, cities, rural areas)
- Who you work with (the populations you serve)
- Technical areas
- Impact: number of people you served/reached

For this exercise, leave blanks where you need to confirm specific data, for example number of people served.

Say: Time. What core attributes did you decide to include in your capability statement?

Step 2. You will have 20 minutes to write about your past performance. Feel free to refer to *Hope Ethiopia*'s past performance. Remember, past performance includes:

- Past and current projects
- Results (outputs) and impact (outcomes) (For example, the number of people you served or reached, the change your program brought about.)
- Past and current partners and funders

For this exercise, leave blanks where you need to confirm specific data or information.

Say: Time. What did you say about your past performance? (10 minutes)

Wrap up

Now that you have explored two of the key elements of a capability statement, after a short break, you will gather the remaining building blocks for your cape statement.

BREAK: 10 minutes

MODULE 3.3c

Building your Capability Statement (Steps 3-5)

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

60 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ describe the organization's differentiators (what sets it apart from peers and competitors),
- ✔ combine all of the elements into a rough draft of a capability statement, and
- ✔ understand the DOs and DON'Ts in developing a capability statement that is concise, convincing and connected to a specific funder.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers
- ☐ Handout—***Capability Statement Worksheet***

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Participants continue to work on the cape statement.

Say: In this module you will gather the remaining building blocks for your cape statement. As you plan and write, keep in mind the same target audience—funder or partner—you addressed when you described your core attributes and past performance. Remember, cape statements are most compelling when they are connected to a specific funder or partner.

Now you will be answering all of the questions related to your differentiators and contact information on the *Capability Statement Worksheet with Examples.*

Step 3. You will have 20 minutes to write down what differentiates you, that is, what sets you apart from your peers or competitors. Also this may be thought of as your niche (see Module 1.3).

Remember, differentiators answer the questions:

- What does our organization do that peers or competitors do not do?
- What skills or expertise does our organization possess that our peers or competitors do not possess?
- How is our organization, staff and/or approach different from others who do what we do ?
- What do we offer beneficiaries/clients that peers or competitors do not offer?

Feel free to leave blanks where you need to confirm specific information.

Say: Time. What differentiators did you decide to include in your capability statement? (15 minutes)

Steps 4 and 5. On your worksheet, fill in the contact information for the person who will be responsible for communicating with the target audience you chose for this cape statement. Then, write two to three sentences that summarize what you've written. These will become the **introduction** to your organization's capability statement.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Ask each group to choose a secretary to write responses and a representative to report out.

Move around the room and observe how the drafting is going. Encourage the groups and answer questions. Periodically, announce how much time is left.

Keep strict time. After participants finish each step, ask each group to read what they wrote, point out the similarities and differences.

If the participants have developed an Elevator Speech (Module 3.1), suggest they refer to it as a starting point for their introduction.

Discuss with the group their plans to finalize the capability statement. Remind them to create an action plan with tasks, timeline and person(s) responsible.

If you have an elevator speech, adapt it for this purpose. If not, review all of the information on this worksheet and boil it down to two or three short, informative sentences that answers the questions WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHAT IS UNIQUE about your organization.

Do not worry about being perfect. This is a first draft that will be revised many times to respond to specific needs and audiences.

Your will have 20 minutes to complete steps 4 and 5.

Say: Time. Pens down. Review your entire worksheet.

Debrief: *Ask the group a few questions about the process they just completed.*

- *How did you find the exercise—easy or difficult?*
- *Were you successful? What does that mean?*
- *To what extent did the step-by-step process make you more likely to customize capability statements to connect with different audiences?*

Wrap up

Developing a capability statement is hard work. Most organizations do not develop a capability statement in one hour or even one day. Successful organizations put time and effort into their marketing materials and particularly the capability statement. A strong capability statement is essential to support your efforts to mobilize resources to sustain your organization and programs.

MODULE 3.3d

Refining your Capability Statement

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

50 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ improve their capability statement to market to a specific donor or partner, and
- ✔ adapt a capability statement for a proposal.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Handouts—***Capability Statement Summary, Capability Statement Assessment, Four Ways to Refine Your Capes for a Proposal, Cape Template***

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Move around the room and observe how the drafting is going. Encourage the groups and answer questions. Periodically, announce how much time is left.

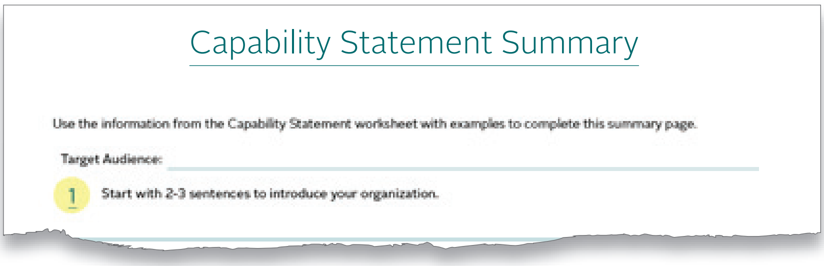
Keep strict time. After 30 minutes, bring all the participants together to read and discuss their summary cape statements.

Say: Just as you create a general CV or resume for yourself, you create a general capability statement for your organization or program. It is important to have a general capability statement for marketing purposes. This is the statement that you can post on your website and distribute at conferences. It should show the range and types of experience and expertise that your organization possesses.

EXERCISE

Putting it all together

Hand out: *Capability Statement Summary* (blank)


Capability Statement Summary

Use the information from the Capability Statement worksheet with examples to complete this summary page.

Target Audience:

1 Start with 2-3 sentences to introduce your organization.

Say: In this session you will create a general cape statement you can use to market your organization to prospective partners and funders.

You will have 30 minutes to use the information you entered into the worksheet to write a concise, convincing and connected capability summary.

Here are some tips to get started.

1. Do not try to include everything.
2. Turn your lists into a few short, clear sentences about each component. Follow sentences with bullet points, if appropriate.
3. Select projects that have demonstrated results (outputs) or impact (outcomes). Show how your work benefits those you serve.

4. Choose and use the most powerful words and phrases you wrote on your worksheet.
5. Tell how your services/skills stand out from peers or competitors

Say: Time. Let's share our drafts. Who will start off by reading their summary statement? *(Discuss)*

(Possible questions to supplement discussion.)

- *What was difficult?*
- *Did the worksheet and examples help?*
- *Was there additional information you wanted to mention? What and why?*

EXERCISE

Rate the capapes

Hand out: *Capability Statement Assessment*

Capability Statement Assessment

Answer YES or NO to each of the following questions.

1. Is your capability statement concise, avoiding long paragraphs and run-on sentences? ❑ YES ❑ NO
2. Do you use clear active language and declarative sentences? ❑ YES ❑ NO

Say: Use the *Capability Statement Assessment* to see the strengths and gaps in your cape summary statement. Take 5 minutes to rate your capes.

After five minutes, call time.

Ask: How did you do? What do need to work on most?

Do not worry if you answered "No" to many of the questions on the assessment. This is a first draft. The next step is to work on turning each "No" into a "Yes".

If donors will not read your capes because they are too dense, or if they misinterpret what you wrote because you were too technical, too vague or too flowery, you have not communicated successfully. Creating convincing capability statements is a process of writing and editing and re-writing.

Hand out: *Four Ways to Refine Your Capes for a Proposal* and *Capability Statement Template*

Four Ways to Refine Your Capes for a Proposal

The "capes" or capabilities section in a proposal is your

The length of your capability statement will depend on the funder's requirements and/or the value or points assigned to this section in the funder's overall evaluation scheme. For example, if the capes are 25 out of a 100 points and the proposal is limited to 10 pages, you will want to devote 25% of the pages or 2.5 pages to your capes.

Capability Statement Template

Logo

Name of Organization

This is a CONTENT template, not a design template. Add color and graphic elements!

Review and discuss *Four Ways to Refine Your Capes for a Proposal.*

Wrap up

In this module, we have discussed and developed a capability statement for marketing your organization to potential donors and partners. We have also practiced refining the capability statement for specific donors. Your general capability statement is one that you will distribute even before funders issue a Request for Application (RFA) or Request for Proposal (RFP). A funder needs to know who you are, what you do, and how you are different from your peers and competitors, before ever reading a proposal.

By developing a capability statement now, when you are ready to apply for specific funds, you can easily adapt your capability statement to suit the proposal.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Adapting your Cape Statement and the accompanying exercise is optional. Determine whether or not to conduct this exercise based on how well participants did drafting cape statements.

OPTIONAL: Adapting your cape statement

Say: Successful organizations have many versions of their capability statement on file in order to be prepared to respond to different potential donors, partners and funding opportunities.

Explain: Developing a capability statement does not take place in isolation. After reading a Request for Application (RFA) or Request for Proposal (RFP) very carefully and before putting pen to paper:

- Research your target audience (funder)
- Research your competition
- Research potential partners

(Refer participants to handout: Three Actions to Take Before Writing a Capability Statement*)*

Ask participants to return to their original groups for this final exercise.

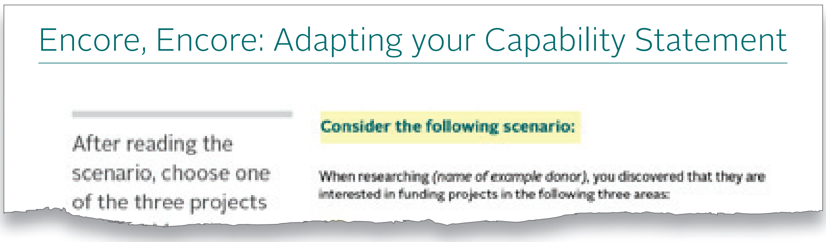
FACILITATOR'S NOTE

The following examples were developed for those working in the HIV/AIDS and health sector. If they are not appropriate for the participants, develop alternatives that fit their sector or ask participants to identify a new funding area that they are interested in exploring.

EXERCISE

Encore, Encore: Adapting your cape statement

Hand out: *Encore, Encore: Adapting your Capability Statement*


Encore, Encore: Adapting your Capability Statement

After reading the scenario, choose one of the three projects

Consider the following scenario:

When researching *(name of example donor)*, you discovered that they are interested in funding projects in the following three areas:

Say: Consider the following scenario:

When researching *(name of example donor)*, you discovered that they are interested in funding projects in the following three areas:

1. Donor is interested in funding a community-based project to screen for and monitor diabetes that has recently increased in prevalence. The project will employ a home-based care model in both an urban and rural area of your country. Your organization has experience in the urban area but not in the specific rural community that the donor has identified.
2. Donor is interested in funding an alcohol and drug abuse prevention program with both in-school and out-of-school youth in urban and rural areas where you have experience. Project will include behavior change communications (BCC), peer counseling and family-based model.
3. Donor is interested in funding male circumcision (MC) projects nationally. The elements of the program are not yet defined but the donor is concerned with a lack of policy support at the national level for MC and lack of health care workers trained in MC.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Ask the participants to return to the full group after 15 minutes. Have one participant from each group read their core competencies one by one. Ask the group to evaluate each core competency. Is it concise, compelling and connected? Is the group convinced that the organization can take on this new project? Why or why not?

After reading the scenarios, choose one of the three projects you would apply for. Adapt the core competencies, past performance or other elements in your capability statement to position your organization to win that grant. You will have 15 minutes. Have fun!

When you are writing, think about:

- How can you market your organization to convince the donor that your experience can be applied to this new project?
- What skills are transferrable from your past projects to this new project?
- What experience can you cite to your advantage? Is it the beneficiaries, an approach, the geographic area in which you have experience?

Wrap up

We have practiced refining descriptions of past performance for the capability statement. You will also need to refine your differentiators and your summary statement so they are tailored to each donor and potential funding opportunity. Remember, if you are refining your capability statement for another organization you want to partner with in the future, you must highlight how you complement that organization.

Hope Ethiopia

Mobilizing Ethiopians to Combat HIV/AIDS

Hope Ethiopia was among the first local organizations to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ethiopia by engaging the most valuable resource in communities—the people. Since 1996, Hope Ethiopia's programming has centered around spreading HIV awareness/prevention and prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) messaging and providing voluntary counseling and testing services (VCT), with a special focus on engaging men. Hope Ethiopia works primarily in the rural regions of Oromia and Amhara, with some activities in Addis Ababa.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Sub-granting:** Sub-granted $890,000 to 41 local NGOs providing VCT and prevention services from June 2008 to March 2012.
- **Training:** Trained 560 promoters in providing HIV prevention messaging, 330 health educators in mother-to-child HIV transmission education, and 120 clinical staff in performing male circumcisions.
- **Capacity-building:** Strengthened institutional capacity of sub-grantees and their partners in areas of operations, financial management and monitoring and evaluation, and facilitated linkages between sub-grantees to create support networks.
- **Community mobilization:** Created networks of HIV+ women in local communities to promote PMTCT messaging and provide peer support.
- **Male involvement:** Provided male-focused HIV/AIDS education sessions for 790,000 men since February 2006.

PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

- USAID—New Partners Initiative Grantee
- Ethiopian Ministry of Health—HIV/AIDS Prevention & Control Office
- Catholic Relief Services
- PACT
- Stephen Lewis Foundation
- IntraHealth
- Women AID Ethiopia

OUR APPROACH

- Focus on working in rural, resource-limited areas.
- Engage local cultural institutions, including traditional male leadership, in HIV prevention activities.
- Implement innovative, easily replicable & sustainable peer education program model.
- Enlist community participation through local community and faith-based organizations and community-led support networks.

Hope Ethiopia | Bole Road, Dasset Building near Brass MCH Hospital | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
+251-0911-517-872 | hopeethiopia@yahoo.com
Registered NGO in Ethiopia

Elements of a Capability Statement

A capability statement includes most of the listed information. Its length will vary depending on the purpose (proposal, brochure, Web posting). It is important to be concise. A full cape statement should range from 1 to 2 pages.

❑ A brief organizational summary statement.

(Similar to an elevator speech, perhaps three sentences.)

❑ Your organization's core attributes.

- What you do (draw on language in your mission statement)
- Who you are, when you started
- Where you work (country, region, city; urban, rural)
- Who you serve (the specific populations)
- Technical expertise

❑ Your organization's past performance.

Briefly describe past and current projects relevant to the purpose and target audience. Do not just say you have been doing something for 15 years, give specific examples of:

- What you did
- When you did it
- How you did it
- Why it mattered then
- Why it matters now
- What were the results (outputs) and impact (outcomes) (For example, the number of people you served or reached, the change your program brought about.)
- Name past and current partners and funders

❑ Your organization's differentiators

Describe what makes your organization different from peers or competitors.

- What your organization does that peers or competitors do not
- What skills or expertise your organization possess that your peers or competitors do not
- How your organization, staff and/or approach differs from that of your peers or competitors
- What do you offer beneficiaries/clients that peers or competitors do not

❑ Your organization's contact information/data.

- The organization's legal name and physical address
- Name of primary contact as well as office telephone, office fax, email address
- Website address, if there is one
- Any relevant codes such as DUNS* number if the organization has one
- Registration status in the country(s) where the organization works

A *DUNS number is a unique nine-digit number the U.S. Government requires some organizations to provide as part of their grant applications and proposals. It is assigned free of charge. (See http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform).

Capability Statement Worksheet with Examples

Follow the steps to put together the information you will need to write a capability statement for your organization. Refer to the examples to give you ideas for the kind of information you want to highlight about your organization. Do not be limited by the examples.

STEP 1

Make a list of your organization's **core attributes.**

- What you do (draw on language in your mission statement)
- Who you are, when you started
- Where you work (country, region, city; urban, rural)
- Who you work with (the populations you serve)
- Technical expertise

STEP 2

List your organization's past funding and projects—your organization's **"past performance."**

EXAMPLES FROM *HOPE ETHIOPIA:*
Note the bold-faced print in each of these example sentences. These are headings an organization might use to highlight specific capabilities they want to promote.

- SUB-GRANTING: Sub-granted $890,000 to 41 local NGOs providing VCT and prevention services from June 2008 to March 2012.
- TRAINING: Trained 560 promoters in providing HIV prevention messaging, 330 health educators in mother-to-child HIV transmission education, and 120 clinical staff in performing male circumcisions.
- CAPACITY-BUILDING: Strengthened institutional capacity of sub-grantees and their partners in areas of operations, financial management and monitoring and evaluation, and facilitated linkages between sub-grantees to create support networks.
- COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION: Created networks of HIV+ women in local communities to promote PMTCT messaging and provide peer support.
- MALE INVOLVEMENT: Provided male-focused HIV/AIDS education sessions for 790,000 men since February 2006.

STEP 3

What is unique about your approach, experience or skills—your organization's **"differentiators"**? What makes your organization stand out from peers or competitors?

EXAMPLES FROM *HOPE ETHIOPIA:*

- Focus on working in rural, resource-limited areas.
- Engage local cultural institutions, including traditional male leadership, in HIV prevention activities.
- Implement innovative, easily replicable & sustainable peer education program model.
- Enlist community participation through local community and faith-based organizations and community-led support networks.

STEP 4

Fill in your organization's **contact information and other data.**

Logo:

Contact name and email:

Phone:

Fax:

Address:

Website:

Corporate Data:

Any relevant codes (DUNS number)/Local registration status

STEP 5

Write a summary statement. These 2–3 sentences will become the introduction to your organization's capability statement.

If you have an elevator speech, adapt it for this purpose. If not, review all of the information on this worksheet and boil it down to two or three short, informative sentences that answers the questions WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHAT IS UNIQUE about your organization.

EXAMPLES FROM *HOPE ETHIOPIA:*

> Hope Ethiopia was among the first local organizations to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ethiopia. Since 1996, Hope Ethiopia's programming has centered around spreading HIV awareness/prevention and prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) messaging and providing voluntary counseling and testing services (VCT), with a special focus on engaging men. Hope Ethiopia works primarily in the rural regions of Oromia and Amhara, with some activities in Addis Ababa.

Capability Statement Summary

Use the information from the Capability Statement worksheet with examples to complete this summary page.

Target Audience: ______________________________

1. Start with 2-3 sentences to introduce your organization.

____

____

2. Describe your organization's core attributes.

____

____

3. Describe your past performance, including funders and partners.

____

____

4. Describe what is unique about your approach, experience, skills—what differentiates your organization from peers or competitors.

____

____

5. Fill in your organization's contact information and other relevant data.

Logo: ______________________________

Contact name: ______________________________

Email: ______________________________

Phone: ______________________________

Fax: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

Website: ______________________________

Corporate Data: ______________________________

Any relevant codes (DUNS number) / Local registration status

Capability Statement Assessment

Answer YES or NO to each of the following questions.

1.	Is your capability statement concise, avoiding long paragraphs and run-on sentences?	❑ YES	❑ NO
2.	Do you use clear active language and declarative sentences?	❑ YES	❑ NO
3.	Do you avoid passive voice? (Passive voice avoids mentioning the subject of the sentence, and sounds vague and unclear. Instead of writing "peer counseling was done by volunteers", say "volunteers served as peer counselors.")	❑ YES	❑ NO
4.	Do you avoid unnecessary adjectives (such as excellent, strong, exceptional)	❑ YES	❑ NO
5.	Do you avoid jargon?	❑ YES	❑ NO
6.	Do you avoid vague language (such as empower, support—what do these mean)?	❑ YES	❑ NO
7.	Do you emphasize your projects' results and client feedback wherever possible?	❑ YES	❑ NO
8.	Do you avoid making claims you cannot prove?	❑ YES	❑ NO
9.	Do you avoid exaggerating or misleading the reader? Tell the truth!	❑ YES	❑ NO
10.	Do you give examples of:		
	• What you did?	❑ YES	❑ NO
	• When you did it?	❑ YES	❑ NO
	• Why it mattered then?	❑ YES	❑ NO
	• Why it matters now?	❑ YES	❑ NO
11.	Is your capability statement convincing? Is it memorable? Does it stand out?	❑ YES	❑ NO
12.	Will the reader care?	❑ YES	❑ NO
13.	Are you demonstrating actual capabilities by talking about activities?	❑ YES	❑ NO
14.	Do you make clear connections for the reader?	❑ YES	❑ NO
15.	Do your differentiators provide a particular benefit to those you serve?	❑ YES	❑ NO
16.	Does your past performance instill confidence that you can get the job done?	❑ YES	❑ NO
17.	Can your past performance and differentiators serve as a foundation to expand your scope and reach?	❑ YES	❑ NO
18.	Is it clear how your services/skills stand out from peers or competitors?	❑ YES	❑ NO
19.	Is it clear what positive benefits your organization offers that others do not?	❑ YES	❑ NO
20.	Does your capability statement create a sense of trust and show that your organization is capable? Does it tell a donor why they should trust you to implement projects with their funding?	❑ YES	❑ NO

If you cannot answer YES to all these questions, go back and refine your capability statement!

Four Ways to Refine Your Capes for a Proposal

The "capes" or capabilities section in a proposal is your organization's chance to communicate why and how your organization can successfully carry out the proposed activity.

The length of your capability statement will depend on the funder's requirements and/or the value or points assigned to this section in the funder's overall evaluation scheme. For example, if the capes are 25 out of a 100 points and the proposal is limited to 10 pages, you may want to devote 25% of the pages or 2.5 pages to your capes.

When you first receive a solicitation—Request for Application (RFA) or Request for Proposal (RFP):

1 Read it very carefully and ask yourself:

a. What is the proposal about?
b. Is the work requested consistent with our Mission?

2 Create an outline of your proposal based on the requirements of the solicitation

For the capes section, ask:
- How does this project relate to our experience and past successes?
- What do we need to demonstrate to be competitive?
- What data and information do we need?
- What is the point value of this section?

3 Talk to your staff members.

Ask them:
a. What projects have we done that are similar to the proposed project? Think about
    - Technical areas (for example HIV/AIDS prevention, home-based care)
    - Geographic area served (country, region, province, city, village)
    - Approaches (for example, peer counseling, motivating male involvement)
    - Populations served (for example, homeless youth, pregnant women)
b. What past proposals have we submitted on similar work?
    - Use past proposals as a starting point, but ALWAYS update capes statements so they are tailored to each new proposal. Clearly connect your capes to the proposed project's goals. (Do NOT cut and paste from old proposals.)
c. Who are the "go-to" people in your organization for this type of work?

4 Differentiate your organization from others that might compete.

Describe what your organization can add to this project that others cannot.

Capability Statement Template

Logo

Name of Organization

Capability Statement

Call this document a Capability Statement

This is a CONTENT template, not a design template. Add color and graphic elements!

Summary Statement

No more than three sentences. If you have an elevator speech, adapt it.

Core attributes

Add any specific information about who you are, what you do and who you serve that is missing from your summary statement. If the summary statement covers everything, skip this.

Past Performance

Describe past and current projects that are tailored to the funder's mission, problem they are interested in solving or specific opportunity.

Differentiators

Describe what makes your organization different from peers or competitors and how this benefits the targeted funder.

Partners

List past and current partners and funders. If there are too many partners to fit, prioritize based on intended audience for this cape statement.

Funders

List past and current funders. If there are too many funders to fit, prioritize based on intended audience for this cape statement. If requested, provide contact information.

Address, phone numbers (voice, mobile and fax) email, web site and other related contact information

Encore, Encore: Adapting your Capability Statement

After reading the scenario, choose one of the three projects you would apply for. Adapt the core competencies, past performance or other elements in your capability statement to position your organization to win that grant. You will have 15 minutes. Have fun!

Consider the following scenario:

When researching *(name of example donor)*, you discovered that they are interested in funding projects in the following three areas:

1. Donor is interested in funding a community-based project to screen for and monitor diabetes that has recently increased in prevalence. The project will employ a home-based care model in both an urban and rural area of your country. Your organization has experience in the urban area but not in the specific rural community that the donor has identified.

2. Donor is interested in funding an alcohol and drug abuse prevention program with both in-school and out-of-school youth in urban and rural areas where you have experience. Project will include behavior change communications (BCC), peer counseling and family based model.

3. Donor is interested in funding male circumcision (MC) projects nationally. The elements of the program are not yet defined but the donor is concerned with a lack of policy support at the national level for MC and lack of health care workers trained in MC.

When you are writing, think about:

- How can you market your organization to convince the donor that your experience can be applied to this new project?
- What skills are transferrable from your past projects to this new project?
- What experience can you cite to your advantage? Is it the beneficiaries, an approach, the geographic area in which you have experience?

MODULE 3.4

Systems (Capacity) Statements

TOTAL TIME

2 hours 30 minutes

AGENDA

3.4 Systems (Capacity) Statements

a. Defining the systems statement (15 minutes)

b. Exploring the elements of a systems statement (15 minutes)

c. Developing your systems statement (30 minutes)

d. Refining your systems statement (90 minutes)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Before you start, review *Module 3.2: Writing for Sustainability* to set the context for what follows.

If sessions are presented as stand-alone workshops, see "Getting Started" at the beginning of the guide.

Introduction

This module focuses on an important tool for helping you make your case with prospective funders. Most often called a capacity statement, it is a written description of how you support what you do. Because it describes the systems you use to achieve your organizational or program objectives, and to avoid confusing capacity with capability statements (see Module 3.2), we will refer to systems statements throughout this Module. With that in mind, this module will help you:

- identify the reasons a strong systems statement helps you win support from donors,
- identify the key components of a systems statement, and
- create a systems statement that can effectively sell your organization to potential donors.

If you have conducted an organizational capacity assessment (OCA) and/or done strategic planning, revisit your findings. These results will tell you about your organization's strengths and provide a basis for writing your systems statement.

If you have not done an OCA, you can still write a capacity statement. To learn why and how to conduct an OCA, go to www.npi-connect.net/resources/npiguide.

The exercises begin by defining a few terms and then take you through the process of writing and refining a systems statement. By following the steps outlined in this module you will be able to draft a strong systems statement to support your organization's resource mobilization efforts.

ATTENTION

The exercises in this module are designed to build on one another. It is best if the exercises are completed in the order presented.

Handouts are provided at the end of the module.

MODULE 3.4a

What is a Systems (Capacity) Statement?

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

15 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ describe what a systems statement is,
- ✔ understand the difference between a systems statement and a capability statement, and
- ✔ explain why a systems statement is important and how it supports fundraising efforts.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Prepare and post flipchart page: ***Definitions of Capacity (Systems) and Capability Statements***

Say: Capacity or systems statements assure potential donors and partners about the strength of your organization's systems. They answer the questions: Is your organization well managed? Is your organization able to report on funds? How strong is your monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system?

Potential donors or partners often want to know the answers to these questions before they will trust you with funds or form a partnership. Your programs may be well regarded, but donors want to be sure that your internal systems are strong enough to sustain your programs. Systems statements are especially critical for small organizations that might not be well known to donors and partners.

In addition, many donor solicitations, for example, a request for application (RFA), specifically ask for a one-paragraph description of the organization's management structure, financial reporting, and M&E system. By developing these statements in advance, you will have them available for marketing purposes and for future proposals.

Ask: What is the difference between a capability statement and a systems (capacity) statement?

(Call on one or two participants. Jot down the basic definitions on a flipchart page and post it on the wall as a reference for the module.)

Say: In general, a capability statement refers to an organization's program experience and strengths. A systems statement refers to **how and how well an organization is managed.** A systems statement might also be called a capacity statement. But for this module, to avoid confusion, we will use the term systems statement.

Post the following definitions:

A **capacity** or systems statement describes **how** and **how well** your organization is **managed.**

A **capability** statement describes **what** an organization does, its **program experience** and **strengths.**

Wrap up

Next, we will go through a step-by-step process to help you write a systems statement.

MODULE 3.4b

Exploring the Elements of a Systems Statement

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

15 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ identify the essential elements of a systems statement and
- ✔ understand how to apply a systems statement to their organization.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers
- ☐ Handout—*Elements of a Systems (Capacity) Statement*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Refer to the definitions to answer questions about what funders typically mean by governance, management, financial and M&E systems.

Say: A systems statement should be no more than one-page. Ideally, the page should have three short paragraphs that describe your organization's:

1. governance and management structure.
2. financial management system.
3. monitoring and evaluation system.

Ask: How would you describe your organization's management structure or another important part of your operations? *(Call on a participant.)*

Say: It is not unusual for this to be harder than speaking about your programs and mission. Yet, it is very important because donors and partners want to support and work with organizations that are accountable and efficient as well as effective.

What sets you apart from other organizations competing for the same donor funds may be, for example, the strength of your financial management and reporting systems. Moreover, a written description of your systems can grab a donor's attention and instill confidence that you are a serious organization. Even if your systems are not yet perfect, openness and an honest assessment of your systems will help to win trust and confidence from funders and partners.

A systems statement can include the following elements:

- Number of relevant staff
- Experience and training of relevant staff
- Written policies and manuals related to the organization's systems
- Established structures and routines to manage day-to-day operations (for example, a time card system, formal procurement, expense and reimbursement procedures, and so on)
- Proof that a system is functioning (for example, a strong financial management system that is regularly audited and facilitates submission of timely reports to donors)

DEFINITIONS

Financial Management involves planning, organizing, controlling and monitoring financial resources to support the objectives and functioning of an organization. Good financial management requires more than simply keeping accurate accounting records. Many NGOs may have only an accounting or bookkeeping system rather than a financial management system. Accounting is a subset of financial management. A financial management system encompasses both administrative systems and accounting systems.

- **Administrative systems** provide the framework for handling procurement, travel, inventory, facilities and personnel matters such as payroll and benefits.
- **Accounting systems** encompass the methods, procedures and controls established to gather, record, classify, analyze, summarize, interpret and present accurate and timely financial data.

Governance refers to the systems and processes needed to ensure the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organization. This is typically the responsibility of the Board of Directors (Board) who make the policies that the executive director and staff carry out day to day.

- **By-laws** are the rules governing the operation of a nonprofit corporation. By-laws often also provide the methods for selecting the Board of Directors, creating Board committees and conducting meetings.

Management takes direction from and reports to the Board and is responsible for directing the day-to-day operations of an organization, including implementing policies and programs.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) encompasses the process of collecting and analyzing data and information for the purpose of identifying and measuring a project's impact.

- Technical assistance (TA) sought and received to strengthen the organization's systems
- Relevant software/technology in place to support the organization's systems

Ask: What are key organizational domains and systems that support your ability to fulfill your mission? *(Write down answers. Add any of the following that may have been missed.)*

Governance (Board of Directors)
- *By-laws*

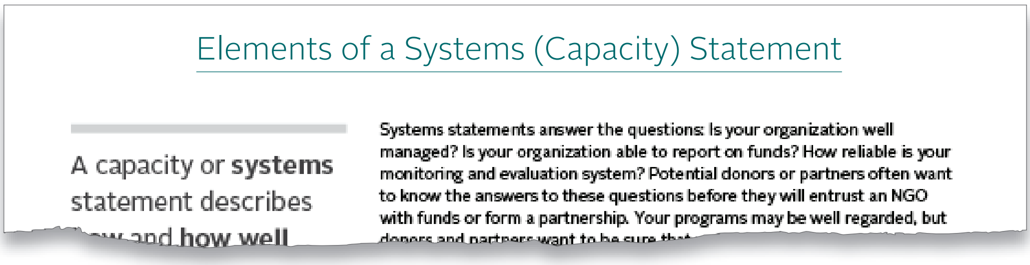
Management (Leadership, structure)
- *Number of relevant staff*
- *Experience and training of relevant staff*
- *Written policies and manuals related to the organization's systems*
- *Established structures and routines to manage day-to-day operations*

Financial Management
- *Written policies and standards for procurement, travel, expenses, reimbursement; timecard system*
- *Proof that a system is functioning (For example, a strong financial management system that is regularly audited and facilitates submission of timely reports to donors)*
- *Relevant software/technology in place to support the organization's systems (For example, QuickBooks™)*

Monitoring & Evaluation
- *Systems for gathering data, assuring its quality, and analyzing it*

Hand out: *Elements of a Systems (Capacity) Statement*

(Review the definitions to reinforce key concepts.)


Elements of a Systems (Capacity) Statement

A capacity or **systems** statement describes

Systems statements answer the questions: Is your organization well managed? Is your organization able to report on funds? How reliable is your monitoring and evaluation system? Potential donors or partners often want to know the answers to these questions before they will entrust an NGO with funds or form a partnership. Your programs may be well regarded, but

Wrap up

(Remind participants to tell the target audience about other key domains where they are strong, such as human resources and/or external relations, promotion, marketing, or resource mobilization.)

If you have conducted an Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) and/or done strategic planning, revisit your findings. These results will tell you about your organization's strengths and provide a basis for writing your systems statement.

MODULE 3.4c

Developing your Systems Statement

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

30 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ answer key questions needed to write a systems statement, and
- ✔ understand the process for how to develop a systems statement.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers
- ☐ Handout—*Activists for Hope: Governance Systems (Capacity) Statement*

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

If the organization does not have a Board of Directors, refer to the *Activists for Hope* sample answers handout.

Say: It is one thing to know the facts about your organization. It is another to try to write them down in a brief paragraph. Writing is a challenge. Answers to the following questions will give you a good start. An important component of an organization's governance structure is its Board of Directors. Answer the questions about your Board. *(Show questions on flipchart or handout.)*

Describe your organization's governance structure

1. Do you have a Board of Directors?
2. How many members are on your Board?
3. Where is your Board located?
4. Who is on your Board? Does your Board represent a diverse cross-section of the community?
5. How often does your Board meet?
6. Does your Board operate according to written by-laws?
7. What is the role of your Board?

Say: The overall direction and accountability of an organization are the responsibility of the Board of Directors.

Let's start with question 1: "Do you have a Board of Directors"? Please respond with a full sentence as these answers will serve as building blocks for your systems statement. For example, say either "Yes, we have a Board of Directors" or "No, we do not have a Board of Directors."

Ask each of the seven questions. Require the answers to be a complete sentence. After all questions have been answered, hand out the governance structure section from Activists for Hope: Sample Answers.

Say: Let's review the answers given by *Activists for Hope (AFH)*, an imaginary organization working in HIV and AIDS in Botswana. Looking at *Activists for Hope*'s answers, is there anything you want to modify about your answers?

Hand out: *Activists for Hope: Governance Systems (Capacity) Statement*

Activists for Hope: Governance Systems (Capacity) Statement

Activists for Hope is an imaginary organization working in HIV and AIDS in Botswana.

To prepare their systems statement, first, they began by answering the

Say: Now, look at AFH and your responses. Work with a partner to combine your information to form **two** short, but informative, sentences about how your organization is governed. In other words, take the information in those seven sentences about your Board and form just two sentences. You will have 5 minutes. Do not include everything. Do not use jargon.

Say: Time. Will someone read his or her two sentences out loud? *(Let all who want to read their sentences out loud do so.)*

Here is how *Activists for Hope* combined its information into two sentences. *(Show prepared flipchart.)*

Activists for Hope's Systems Statement About Its Board

Based in Gaborone, Botswana, our nine-member Board of Directors represents a spectrum of community stakeholders, including the head of a local bank, a school principal, a health worker, and a business owner. As required in our Board's by-laws, they meet every quarter to provide close oversight of our organization's management and activities.

Ask: Do these two statements inspire confidence that *Activists for Hope* has a strong and functioning Board? Why or why not? What do the two sentences tell you about *AFH?*

(Supplement participants' responses.)

Say: These two sentences communicate to a donor or partner the following information:

- *Activists for Hope* has a functioning Board.
- *Activists for Hope* understands the importance of a diverse Board that represents many elements of the community.
- *Activists for Hope* has a Board with a solid number of members (not too many, not too few).
- The Board of Directors meets regularly (every three months).
- *Activists for Hope* both understands the importance of by-laws and that they have written ones.
- *Activists for Hope* understands the role of the Board of Directors (that they provide oversight—they do NOT manage day-to-day operations).

That is a lot of information in just two sentences!

Wrap up

Now that we have read *Activists for Hope*'s two sentences about its Board, review your two sentences. Can you make yours more concise? If they are too long, can you shorten them but still make a strong point? Take 2 minutes to review and revise your two sentences.

This is the step-by-step process that we will follow until you have built a complete systems statement. It is like a puzzle—you take small pieces of information and combine until you produce a complete picture.

BREAK: 10 minutes

MODULE 3.4d

Refining Your Systems Statement

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

90 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ identify key information about each organizational domain for a systems statement,
- ✔ develop a draft system statement for three organizational domains, and
- ✔ develop an Action plan for finalizing the organizational system statement.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Handouts—***Systems (Capacity) Statement Questionnaire; Activists for Hope: Sample Answers; Activists for Hope Sample Systems Statements***

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Depending on how many people are gathered, you may want to divide the participants into groups of two or three.

Say: It may take some time to compose all three paragraphs but these initial sentences will serve as the building blocks for your systems statements.

Hand out: *Systems (Capacity) Statement Questionnaire*

> Systems (Capacity) Statement Questionnaire
>
> Capacity or systems statements assure potential donors and partners about
>
> The following questionnaire is designed to give you the building blocks to construct a strong, clear and concise systems statement.
>
> **Instructions: Write a sentence to answer each of the following questions about your organization's operations—governance; management; finance; monitoring and evaluation. Answer as honestly and completely as you can.**
>
> If you do not have all of the experience, systems or structures in place right

EXERCISE

Complete the Questionnaire

Take 15 minutes to answer questions that will help you write short systems statements about your management structure, financial management, and M&E systems. Try your best to answer the questions for your section. Do not worry if you do not have all the answers now or if you make mistakes—just do your best.

Hand out: Activists for Hope: *Sample Answers*

> Activists for Hope: Sample Answers
>
> *Systems (Capacity) Statement Questionnaire*
>
> **Activists for Hope (AFH)** is an imaginary NGO working in HIV and AIDS in Botswana created for illustrative purposes. Below are sample answers to give you an idea of the types of information potential donors and partners find most helpful when deciding whether to fund or to partner with an organization like yours. The questions are in bold, followed by the sample answer.

Say: After you have answered all the questions for your section, look at the *Activists for Hope* sample answers handout. Is there anything that you want to change or add based on the

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Ask each group to choose a secretary to write responses and a representative to report out.

Move around the room and observe how the writing is going. Encourage the groups and answer questions. Periodically, announce how much time is left.

After 20 minutes bring all the participants back to discuss and debrief.

Activists for Hope sample answers? Take 5 minutes to review and revise your answers.

Debrief: *Ask the following questions:*

- *How was that exercise?*
- *Was it difficult or easy to answer the questions?*
- *Were there additional questions that you thought should be included?*

Ask participants to read their 'Governance and Management Structure" answers out loud. Discuss.

EXERCISE

Write, review, and revise

Say: Use your answer sentences as the basis for writing a full paragraph, combining as much of the information as you think is important. You cannot include everything! Paragraphs should be no more than 150 words. Remember, describe what you believe will be of most interest to a potential funder or partner.

You will probably write and revise your systems statement many times. Here is a process for writing and revising:

Once you answer the questionnaire:
1. Write a few sentences about each area.
2. Connect one sentence to another to make them flow naturally into a paragraph.
3. Review what you wrote and circle the clearest, most powerful words and/or phrases.
4. Tighten and clean up your language. Change any long words or jargon into everyday language. Do all of the ideas in the statement make sense? Are there unclear or confusing ideas or sentences?
5. Do you see any problems with grammar, punctuation, or spelling? If you think something is wrong, you should make a note of it, even if you do not know how to fix it. Talk to a colleague about how to correct any errors.
6. Read each paragraph out loud to yourself and edit again, cutting out any unnecessary words, but keeping the elements you circled.
7. Repeat step 6 again, pretending that you are reviewing someone else's work. Repeat this process until you are satisfied that you have been accurate and clear, and that no one paragraph is more than 150 words.

You will have 20 minutes to complete the exercise.

Say: Time. Let's share our drafts. Who will start off by reading the paragraph on Governance and Management?

Debrief: *Ask the following questions after each presentation.*

- *What words or phrases did you hear that worked?*
- *What did you hear that did not work or was confusing?*
- *What was missing?*
- *What could make it better?*

Repeat for the financial management and M&E statements. Be positive and praise something in each statement. What was difficult about writing these paragraphs? Did the sample questions help? Was there additional information that you thought was important? (Lead discussion for five minutes.)

Hand out: Activists for Hope *Sample Systems Statements*

Activists for Hope
Sample Systems (Capacity) Statements

Activists for Hope (AFH) is an imaginary NGO working in HIV and AIDS in Botswana created for illustrative purposes. Below are sample answers to give you an idea of the types of information potential donors and partners find most helpful when deciding whether to fund or to partner with an organization like yours. The questions are in bold, followed by the sample answer.

Say: Look at these paragraphs written by *Activists for Hope.* You may want to refer to the sample as you refine your paragraphs later. Do not worry if you do not have the same experience as this imaginary organization has. As with your elevator speech and capability statement, it is important to be clear and never make claims that you cannot prove. Remember, all three—elevator speech, capability statement and systems statement—should be revised to reflect changes in your organization and its programs.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Discuss the participants' plans to finalize the systems statement for their organization. Remind them to develop an action plan with tasks, timeline and person(s) responsible.

Wrap up

A system statement can be used to complement your capability statement. Consider using both statements in written materials shared with funders and partners and in proposals. Remember to add your logo and contact details. (See Module 3.3.)

Elements of a Systems (Capacity) Statement

A capacity or **systems** statement describes **how** and **how well** your organization is managed.

Systems statements answer the questions: Is your organization well managed? Is your organization able to report on funds? How reliable is your monitoring and evaluation system?

Potential donors or partners often want to know the answers to these questions before they will entrust an NGO with funds or form a partnership. Your programs may be well regarded, but donors and partners want to be sure that your internal systems are strong enough to sustain your programs. In general, systems statements address the following:

Governance (Board of Directors)

- By-laws
- Composition, number of Board members
- How often the Board meets

Management (Leadership, structure)

- Number of relevant staff
- Experience and training of relevant staff
- Written policies and manuals related to the organization's systems
- Established structures and routines to manage day-to-day operations

Financial Management

- Written policies and standards for procurement, travel, expenses, reimbursement; timecard system
- Proof that a system is functioning (For example, a strong financial management system that is regularly audited and facilitates submission of timely reports to donors)
- Relevant software/technology in place to support the organization's systems (For example, QuickBooks™)

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Systems for gathering data, assuring its quality, and analyzing it

DEFINITIONS

Governance refers to the systems and processes needed to ensure the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organization. This is typically the responsibility of the Board of Directors (Board) who make the policies that the executive director and staff carry out day to day.

- **By-laws** are the rules governing the operation of a nonprofit corporation. By-laws often also provide the methods for selecting the Board of Directors, creating Board committees, and conducting meetings.

Management takes direction from and reports to the Board and is responsible for directing the day-to-day operations of an organization, including implementing policies and programs.

Financial Management involves planning, organizing, controlling and monitoring financial resources to support the objectives and functioning of an organization. Good financial management requires more than simply keeping accurate accounting records. Many NGOs may have only an accounting or bookkeeping system rather than a financial management system. Accounting is a subset of financial management. A financial management system encompasses both administrative systems and accounting systems.

- **Administrative systems** provide the framework for handling procurement, travel, inventory, facilities and personnel matters such as payroll and benefits.
- Accounting systems encompass the methods, procedures and controls established to gather, record, classify, analyze, summarize, interpret and present accurate and timely financial data.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) encompasses the process of collecting, assuring quality of and analyzing data and information for the purpose of identifying and measuring a project's impact.

Activists for Hope: Governance Systems (Capacity) Statement

Activists for Hope is an imaginary organization working in HIV and AIDS in Botswana.

To prepare their systems statement, first, they began by answering the following questions about how the NGO is governed.

1. Do we have a Board?
   Yes, we have a Board of Directors.

2. How many members are on our Board?
   We have nine members on our Board.

3. Where is our Board located?
   Our Board is located in Gabarone, Botswana.

4. Who is on our Board?
   Our Board is drawn from a spectrum of community stakeholders—including the head of a local bank, a local school principal, a health worker, and a business owner. The members offer diverse and relevant professional expertise.

5. How often does our Board meet?
   Our Board meets every quarter.

6. Does our Board operate according to written by-laws?
   Yes, we have written by-laws.

7. What is the role of our Board?
   Our Board provides oversight of our organization and helps raise funds in the community.

Then, they took the information in those seven sentences about their Board, chose the most important points, and wrote:

Activists for Hope's systems statement about its Board of Directors:

> **Based in Gabarone, Botswana, our nine-member Board of Directors represents a spectrum of community stakeholders, including the head of a local bank, a school principal, a health worker, and a business owner. As required in our Board's by-laws, they meet every quarter to provide close oversight of our organization's management and activities.**

Systems (Capacity) Statement Questionnaire

Capacity or systems statements assure potential donors and partners about the strength of your organization's systems.

The following questionnaire is designed to give you the building blocks to construct a strong, clear and concise systems statement.

Instructions: Write a sentence to answer each of the following questions about your organization's operations—governance; management; finance; monitoring and evaluation. Answer as honestly and completely as you can.

If you do not have all of the experience, systems or structures in place right now, that is OK. This questionnaire is designed to help you describe what you do have.

Do not try to include everything. Choose only those details that you think are most important. You will write and revise your statement many times, especially to support specific proposals. That is normal.

Once you answer the questions:

1. Review the answer sentences for each question in each domain and circle the clearest, most powerful words and/or phrases.
2. Change any long words or jargon into everyday language.
3. Connect one sentence to another with additional phrases into a paragraph to make them flow naturally.
4. Read each paragraph out loud to yourself and edit again, cutting out any unnecessary words, but keeping the elements you circled. Read it again. Edit as appropriate.
5. Repeat step 4 again and again for each paragraph until you are satisfied that you have been accurate and clear, and that no one paragraph is more than 150 words.

Remember to talk about those things you know are of most interest to your target audience/donor.

1. DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE.

Board of Directors

Do you have a Board?

How many members are on your Board?

Where is your Board located?

Who is on your Board?

Does your Board represent a diverse cross-section of the community?

How often does your Board meet?

Does your Board have a set of by-laws?

What is the role of the Board?

2. DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

Management Team

Does your organization have a (senior) management team?

What are the titles of your management team?

How many years of experience working in the field of _______________ *(identify the area(s) that best fits your organization)* does each member of your management team have? How many years in total?

Staffing

How many full-time staff do you have (indicate including or not including management team)?

How many part-time staff?

How many program staff do you have?

Do you have financial staff?

Do you have M&E staff?

How many administrative staff?

Volunteers

Do you have volunteers?

How many volunteers do you have and what do they do?

What is the total number of hours that volunteers provide to the organization in a week, a month or a year?

Structure

Does your organization follow formal lines of reporting and supervision? If yes, how is it documented?

Does your organization have an organogram (organizational chart), that is a diagram that shows the structure of your organization and the relationships and relative ranks of its parts and positions/jobs?

Do all staff work at one site? If not, at how many sites and where?

Does your organization have an employee or human resources policy manual?

Does your organization manage sub-grants?
If yes, do you have a USAID compliant sub-grants manual?

3. DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CAPACITY FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING.

What staff are responsible for financial management—accounting, compliance, procurement?

What is the experience/training of the finance personnel?

What accounting systems or software do you use to ensure strong controls?

Is your accounting system able to track income and expenses broken out by donor and/or project?
If yes, describe.

Does the accounting system provide for a logical and consistent method of allocation of indirect costs to intermediate and final cost objective?

When does your financial year begin and end?

Does your organization have and follow a written financial management manual? (For example, are there written policies or procedures for banking; handling cash; delegating authority; travel reimbursement; ordering and purchasing?)

What is your policy on audits?

What external firm(s) audit(ed) your organization? Under what guidelines have you been audited? For example, *USAID Guidelines for Financial Audits Contracted by Foreign Recipients*

Have you ever received funds from USAID?
If yes, do you consistently submit quarterly financial reports to USAID or, as a sub-grantee, to the grantee organization? Other financial management system strengths?

Have you received technical assistance (TA) for financial management and reporting?

If yes, describe in one or two sentences what TA was provided and how your financial systems were strengthened?

4. DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CAPACITY FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E).

Do you have staff responsible for conducting M&E?
If yes, how many M&E full time staff; part-time staff?

Are they solely responsible for M&E?

What is the training/experience of the M&E personnel?

What is their experience with PEPFAR or other indicators?

Do you routinely audit the quality of your data? If yes, how and how often?

Have you received TA and training for M&E? If yes, what specifically was the nature of the TA/training?

Describe in one or two sentences a particular strength and/or success of your M&E efforts?

Do you use your M&E data to inform decision making about your programs?

What else do you want to say about your capacity for M&E?

USAID recipients: Describe how and how often you reported on your targets to USAID/DC and to the Mission?

5. OTHER AREAS

Has your organization received any TA in governance, management, finance, human resources, M&E or organizational development? If yes, describe briefly what and from whom.

Do you have a strategic plan? If yes, what period of time does it cover (from when to when)?

What else do you want to say about your organization?

Activists for Hope: Sample Answers
Systems (Capacity) Statement Questionnaire

Activists for Hope (AFH) is an imaginary NGO working in HIV and AIDS in Botswana created for illustrative purposes. Below are sample answers to give you an idea of the types of information potential donors and partners find most helpful when deciding whether to fund or to partner with an organization like yours. The questions are in bold, followed by the sample answer.

1. DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE.

Do you have a Board of Directors?

Yes, we have a Board of Directors.

How many members are on your Board?

We have nine members on our Board.

Where is your Board located?

Our board is located in Gabarone, Botswana.

Who is on your Board?

Our board is drawn from a wide spectrum of community stakeholders, including the head of a local bank, a school principal, a health worker and a business owner.

Does your Board represent a diverse cross-section of the community?

The members offer diverse and relevant professional expertise.

How often does your Board meet?

Our board meets once every quarter.

Does your Board have a set of by-laws?

Yes, we have written by-laws

What is the role of the Board?

Our board provides oversight of our organization and helps mobilize resources.

2. DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

Management Team

Does your organization have a (senior) management team?

Yes, we have a senior management team.

What are the titles of your management team?

Our senior management team includes the Executive Director, Program Manager and Project Officer.

How many years of experience working in the field of ________________ (identify the area(s) that best fits your organization) does each member of your management team have? How many years in total?

Our Executive Director has 20 years of experience. Our Program Manager has 12 years of experience. Our Program Officer has 12 years of experience. They have a combined total of 44 years of experience.

Staffing

How many full-time staff do you have (indicate including or not including management team)?

We have 20 full-time staff not including the management team

How many part-time staff?

We have four part-time staff.

How many program staff do you have?

We have seven program staff.

Do you have financial staff?

We have three finance staff

Do you have M&E staff?

We have two M&E staff.

How many administrative staff?

We have one full-time administrative coordinator and one part-time administrative assistant.

Volunteers

Do you have volunteers?

Yes, we have volunteers.

How many volunteers do you have and what do they do?

We have 10 volunteers who help us by answering phones, greeting clients, and handing out brochures at markets.

What is the total number of hours that volunteers provide to the organization in a week, a month or a year?

Our volunteers contribute approximately 10 hours each a week, that is 400 hours a month.

Structure

Does your organization follow formal lines of reporting and supervision? If yes, how is it documented?

Yes, all of our staff have job descriptions and written reporting lines.

Does your organization have an organogram (organizational chart), that is a diagram that shows the structure of your organization and the relationships and relative ranks of its parts and positions/jobs?

We are now developing an organogram with a consultant and formalizing our reporting and supervision system. It will be documented in our Human Resource (HR) or employee policy manual once it is complete.

Do all staff work at one site? If not, at how many sites and where?

All of our staff are based in Gabarone but our volunteers are divided between our office in Gabarone and our sites in Tlokweng and Kanye. Our staff make daily visits to the field sites.

Does your organization have an employee or human resources policy manual?

We have hired a consultant to develop our HR policies and it is in the process of being completed.

Does your organization manage sub-grants? If yes, do you have a USAID compliant sub-grants manual?

We have never managed sub-grants. We have been a sub-grantee however.

3. DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CAPACITY FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING.

What staff are responsible for financial management—accounting, compliance, procurement?

Currently we have 10 staff within the organization and we have a Finance Manager with over 12 years' experience managing both USAID and other donor-funded projects. In addition to the Finance Manager, and to ensure adequate segregation of duties, the organization has a Finance Assistant with over 5 years' experience providing financial management assistance to the organization.

What is the experience/training of the finance personnel?

The current finance manager holds a XXXXX [educational experience] and has undertaken numerous workshops and trainings in managing U.S. Government rules and regulations. The finance assistant holds a XXXX [educational experience].

Is your accounting system able to track income and expenses broken out by donor and/or project? If yes, describe.

The organization currently uses XXXX [list the accounting system] to track income and expenses. The accounting system is set up using cost centers so that income and expenses can be tracked by donor and also the organization can report on all the costs and income within the organization.

Does the accounting system provide for a logical and consistent method of allocation of indirect costs to intermediate and final cost objective?

The organization follows a cost allocation policy so shared costs are allocated consistently between the various donors and projects.

When does your financial year begin and end?

The financial year follows the calendar year, begining January 1 and ending December 31.

Does your organization have and follow a written financial management manual? (For example, are there written policies or procedures for banking; handling cash; delegating authority; travel reimbursement; ordering and purchasing?)

Yes. The organization has written a Financial Management Manual that includes accounting routines, cash and banking procedures, travel and procurement policies all approved by our Board of Directors. Copies of the Financial Manual were given to all staff and a training on new policies is held as needed. (AFH Financial Manual available on request.)

What is your policy on audits?

We conducted an annual statutory audit (please see attached audit report) for the financial year ending XXXX. The organization has also undertaken specific audits as required by donors. Because the organization has received multiple USAID grants and has exceeded the threshold of expending more than $300,000 in USAID funds within the organization's financial year, an audit has been conducted for the financial year end XXXX, in accordance with the USAID guidelines on foreign recipients.

We were audited once by an external auditor.

What external firm(s) audit(ed) your organization? Under what guidelines have you been audited, for example, USAID GUIDELINES FOR FINANCIAL AUDITS CONTRACTED BY FOREIGN RECIPIENTS?

Deloitte Botswana audited our organization.

Have you ever received funds from USAID? If yes, do you consistently submit quarterly financial reports to USAID or, as a sub-grantee, to the grantee organization? Other financial management system strengths:

The organization is a sub-grantee to XXXX and as a requirement submits monthly expense reports and is the recipient of numerous site visits to ensure that the supporting documentation is reasonable, allowable and allocable.

Other financial management system strengths:

- The organization uses a timesheet system that allocates employees' time worked on respective projects. The timesheets are also used to allocate the salaries and wages of staff to the respective donors/projects. The organization has a policy that documents the timekeeping system (please see attached).
- The organization has a policy on how to account for unallowable costs, as included in the finance manual.

Have you received Technical Assistance (TA) for financial management and reporting? If yes, describe in one or two sentences what the TA provided and how your financial systems were strengthened?

The organization maintains a fixed asset register that keeps track of all items over $XXX [list the threshold for which the organization records assets]; has received training around the U.S. Government rules and regulations pertaining to financial management and one-on-one support from the prime recipient. The TA has focused on ensuring that we have documented policies and procedures for the organization that are in line with USG rules and regulations, and also that there is adequate supporting documentation for income and expenses so that we could successfully manage the program while achieving our targets.

4. DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CAPACITY FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E).

Do you have staff responsible for conducting M&E? If yes, How many M&E full time staff; part-time staff

We have one M&E Manager, an M&E Officer and two people who do data entry and processing.

Four people. All are full-time staff with our organization.

Are they solely responsible for M&E?

The manager and officer work only on M&E. The other two work part-time on M&E and they also work on finance.

What is the training/experience of the M&E personnel?

The M&E Manager has a bachelor's degree in economics, including some courses in statistics and demography. He worked for five years with the Department of the Census and 2 years with the National AIDS Control Program (NACP) before coming here. The M&E Officer has a bachelor's degree in sociology and worked with a research firm for two years before coming here. The two data entry staff have training in accounting and data entry.

What is their experience with PEPFAR or other indicators?

This is our second PEPFAR project. All our staff have worked with PEPFAR indicators. In addition, the M&E Manager developed the indicators to meet national priorities. We also have experience setting malaria indicators for a PMI program we implement.

Do you routinely audit the quality of your data? If yes, how and how often?

Yes, we audit data quality annually for the routine program data.

Have you received TA and training for M&E? If yes, what specifically was the nature of the TA/training?

Yes. Our M&E staff have received training in M&E. They received a weeklong course in how to set indicators, and collect, process and report data. In addition, the manager and officer each took a two-week course on survey implementation. They have also received training in data processing and management, as well as ethical considerations for human participants for which all have completed online courses and received certificates. Also, we had TA from the prime recipient who reviewed our reporting data and suggested ways to improve it.

Describe in one or two sentences a particular strength and/or success of your M&E efforts?

Our manager is very good at analyzing and interpreting data. He noticed that the numbers of men getting tested at our clinic was very low and did some qualitative research to find out that men prefer to come at the end of the day, when the clinic is usually closed. So we decided to keep the clinic open several evenings a week and promoted this activity to men and we saw the numbers increase.

Do you use your M&E data to inform decision making about your programs?

Yes, as explained in the example just above.

What else do you want to say about your capacity for M&E?

Our organization is committed to M&E, especially since we see it can improve programs. Our PEPFAR project allocates 5 percent of the total budget to M&E. It is the first priority for the two data entry/processing staff among their other activities.

USAID recipients: Describe how and how often you reported on your targets to USAID/DC and to the Mission?

We report the results on all the routine national indicators and results from any special studies to the PEPFAR coordinator here annually.

5. OTHER AREAS

Has your organization received any TA in governance, management, finance, human resources, M&E or organizational development? If yes, describe briefly what and from whom.

Yes, as a sub-grantee under the Botswana Capable Partners program we received technical assistance in governance, management, finance, and human resources.

Do you have a strategic plan? If yes, what period of time does it cover (from when to when)?

We don't have a strategic plan but we are intending to start that process in the near future.

What else do you want to say about your organization?

We have a very collaborative and dynamic team—we value participation and try very hard to promote effective communications among the staff and with beneficiaries and donors.

Activists for Hope
Sample Systems (Capacity) Statements

A capacity or **systems** statement describes **how** and **how well** your organization is managed.

Below are the capacity or systems statements developed by *Activists for Hope,* an imaginary NGO, based on the answers to the Systems (Capacity) Statement Questionnaire.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Our Senior Management team—the Executive Director, Program Manager and Project Officer—brings 44 years of experience in public health and HIV/AIDS to the organization. They lead a dynamic and collaborative team of 20 full-time employees, including 7 program staff, 3 finance staff and 2 monitoring and evaluation staff members. Our team is based in our office in Gaborone and members travel daily to field sites in Tlokweng and Kanye. We also have a strong volunteer base of 10 dedicated individuals who contribute approximately 400 hours each month to our organization. Our nine-member Board of Directors, which meets on a quarterly basis as required in our by-laws, provides close oversight of our organization's management and activities and helps mobilize resources.

As a sub-grantee on a Round 9 Global Fund HIV project and several USAID-funded projects, our management structure, and reporting and supervision systems were sufficient to successfully manage and implement HIV/AIDS activities under those awards. In addition, as a sub-grantee of the Capable Partners Program, we received training on governance, effective leadership and supervision, and financial management, which further enhanced our management capabilities. We also hired a consultant to help us refine our human resources manual and employee performance appraisal system.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

Our finance team is composed of our Senior Finance Manager, who has more than 12 years of experience managing USAID and other donor-funded projects, and two finance support staff to ensure adequate segregation of duties. As a sub-grantee on several USAID awards, our organization has received training on U.S. Government rules and regulations, sound financial management, and has also received one-on-one support from the prime recipient. The technical assistance has ensured that we have documented policies and procedures that are U.S. Government compliant and that all costs are reasonable, allowable and allocable so that we can successfully manage programs while achieving our targets. The financial year end of the organization is 31 December and our organization undertakes an annual statutory audit. Our organization has also undertaken an audit in accordance with the USAID guidelines on foreign recipients that was conducted for the financial year end 2011. Our organization has written finance, travel, procurement and human resource policies that are applicable to all staff and there is a timekeeping system that identifies employee labor by intermediate or final cost objective.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Our M&E Manager, who brings extensive experience with both the Department of Census and the National AIDS Control Program (NACP), supervises our M&E Officer and two part-time data entry assistants. As a sub-grantee on the Local Partners Capacity Building Project (LPCB) and as direct USG grantee on the New Partners Initiative (NPI), we reported regularly on PEPFAR Indicators. In addition, we currently report on malaria indicators as a sub-grantee to FHI 360 on a PMI project. We audit data quality annually for the routine program data, and report the results on all the routine national indicators and results from any special studies to the PEPFAR coordinator here annually. Our M&E Manager is skilled in data analysis and interpretation and regularly disseminates learnings to senior management and throughout the organization to inform decision making.

MODULE 3.5

Connecting with Donors

TOTAL TIME

2 hours 45 minutes

AGENDA

3.5 Connecting with Donors
- a. Culture matters (45 minutes)
- b. Learning to check our assumptions (40 minutes)
- c. Developing cross cultural bridges (40 minutes)
- d. Managing donor communication (60 minutes)
- e. Connecting with donors (40minutes)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

If this module is presented as a stand-alone workshop, see "Getting Started" at the beginning of the guide.

Introduction

This module is about helping you communicate more effectively in person with prospective funders. Finding support for your program(s) may be something outside your experience that requires new skills, new tools, perhaps even learning a new culture—one with its own language and rules, especially if you are interacting with international donors. With that in mind, this module is designed to help you:

- enhance your awareness about how cultural assumptions influence communication and relationships with international donors, and
- develop some strategies to more confidently communicate and nurture relationships with donors.

The exercises begin by defining a few terms and inviting you to consider some of the key processes and concepts that support culture and communication. Then, the module explores ways you can apply these concepts to strengthening your communication and interactions with international donors.

ATTENTION

The exercises in this module are designed to build on one another. It is best if the exercises are completed in the order presented.

Handouts are provided at the end of the module.

MODULE 3.5a

Culture Matters

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

45 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ define culture,
- ✔ understand why culture is important, and
- ✔ recognize how cultural assumptions affect communication and relationships with donors.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handout—*What Matters Most?*

EXERCISE

What matters most?

Open with a series of questions.

Say: What makes you special?

- Why do you dress the way you do?
- Why do you do things the way you do?
- What are the most powerful influences in your life?

One answer to these questions is "culture." It is culture's impact that is explored in this module and in the next exercise.

Hand out: *What Matters Most?*

What Matters Most?

Directions

1. Answer each question in the list below with one phrase or sentence.
2. Rate each item from 1-10 (1 is the most important, 10 is the least important) according to how much it means to you.

Review the nine questions on your handout. Answer each question in the list with one phrase or sentence. Then, rate each item from 1-10 (1 is the most important, 10 is the least important) according to how much it means to you.

Your answers to these questions are shaped by cultural influences. For example, what you wear on holidays is not just an individual choice, but is influenced by the group of people you are part of. You will have five minutes.

(After five minutes call time.)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Write the definition of culture on a flipchart page and post as a point of reference for modules. Emphasize that we are not looking at culture through the lens of an anthropologist.

Debrief:

- *Ask participants to share what they wrote and their rankings.*
- *Ask, what do you value most. What do you value least? Why?*
- *What do you think this says about your culture?*
- *Are there more cultures represented in the room than initially thought?*

Explain: Culture has many definitions. For our purposes, "culture" refers to features of life shared in common by a group of people. This includes shared outlook, expectations, behaviors, attitudes, and experiences.

Ask: What are some cultural features or characteristics that might be shared by a group of people? Let's brainstorm answers to this question. For example, gender, marital status, fan of ____________ football team.

EXERCISE

Group Brainstorm on Features of Culture

(At the top of a page, write "Features of Culture." As participants call them out, list the characteristics under the heading.)

(Suggested responses to supplement those of participants.)

- *gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status*
- *geographic location, language, history, customs*
- *values, norms, beliefs, attitudes, religion*
- *education and literacy, occupation, income, social class and status, leisure activities*

Ask: How can such a list—"Features of Culture"—help us understand differences and similarities among people?
(Possible answer: Differences may seem less strange or unusual when we understand that individuals belong to many different cultures at once and, therefore, if we look beyond the surface, we may find we have more in common than we thought.)

(To reinforce the point that there are things that unite people in ways they might not expect, ask a question about a non-threatening characteristic. For example, "Raise your hand if you play a musical instrument.")

Say: When we think of culture this broadly, we realize we all belong to many cultures at once.[1] And, we realize that we can acquire a new culture, for example, by moving to a new place, getting married, taking a new job, or joining a sports team.

[1] *Working on Common Cross-cultural Communication Challenges,* Marcelle E. DuPraw and Marya Axner, www.pbs.org/ampu/crosscult.html (accessed 6.19.12)

Ask: Thinking about culture in this way, would someone please share a brief personal experience about becoming part of a different culture?

Say: Keeping our broad definition of culture in mind, when we think of current and potential funders—whether from an international agency like USAID or from a national government or business—it may help to think of them as members of a "culture" who have their own language and set of rules for how they operate. The more you know about a funder's culture, the more you may be able to minimize misunderstandings and maximize the potential to communicate effectively and build strong relationships. Before we explore aspects of communicating with funders, let's take a look at some aspects of our starting point or baseline—ourselves.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

If the group is small (3 or fewer) do this as a group exercise. If larger, break into pairs. Each pair lists its ideas on a flipchart sheet. Give the group 2 minutes to brainstorm two different lists—worries/hopes. Discuss and compare the two lists.

EXERCISE
Mirror, mirror

Ask: When communicating with people different from you—

1. What do you **worry** may happen?
2. What do you **hope** may happen?

Take 2 minutes to brainstorm two separate lists—one for hopes, one for worries. For example:

Worries	Hopes
Example: I may appear disrespectful.	Example: I may learn something new.

Say: Time. Ask participants to share what they wrote.

Wrap up

Any time we are interacting with people different from ourselves, it is likely they have similar lists of worries and hopes in their heads. Understanding that you both may feel uncertain helps create a bridge between you. It is easy to misinterpret things people do in a cross-cultural setting. To keep from misunderstanding the behavior of individuals from another culture, it helps to try to see the world from their point of view, not yours.

MODULE 3.5b

Learning to Check Our Assumptions

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

40 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

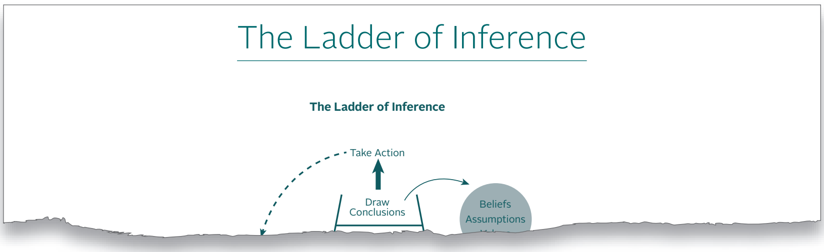
- ✔ list at least two steps on the Ladder of Influence—a process for describing how we leap from facts to actions, and
- ✔ analyze how facts and assumptions may influence decisions and actions.

MATERIALS

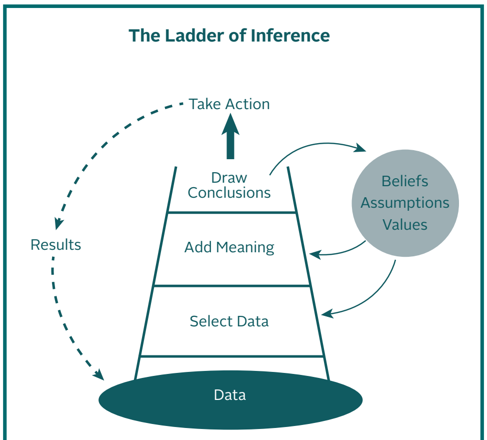
- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handout—*The Ladder of Inference; Between the Lines;* Article—*Working on Common Cross-cultural Communication Challenges*

The Ladder of Inference

Hand out: *The Ladder of Inference*



Say: The Ladder of Inference comes from Peter Senge's book "The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook." It describes the thinking process that we go through, usually without realizing it, to get from a fact to a decision or action. We move up and down the Ladder of Inference in *milliseconds* all day long. It happens when we interact with people, read email or listen to the news. It also affects how others see us as they climb their own Ladders of Inference.



Based on: *The 5th Discipline Fieldbook,* Peter Senge, 1994.

The thinking process is seen as rungs on a ladder. Starting at the bottom of the ladder, we observe, see what happens, hear what is said, or experience a situation—no more and no less. From there, we:

- Select data. That is, narrow our focus by selecting (unconsciously) the data or information that interests us.

- Add meaning, make assumptions, sometimes without even realizing it.
- Draw conclusions based on the interpreted facts and our assumptions.
- Develop beliefs based on these conclusions.
- Take actions that seem "right" because they are based on what we believe.

Our beliefs have a big impact on what we select from reality and can lead us to ignore the real facts. Soon we are jumping to conclusions—by missing facts and skipping steps in the reasoning process. Even when we have the best of intentions, it is easy for us to run up the ladder and get things wrong.

EXERCISE

Climbing up the ladder

Read the example[2]:

> John is working on a report to a donor and needs help and information from Mary. Unable to reach her, he sends her an email. When she does not respond, he calls her mobile and leaves her a voice mail, or two, or three. He remembers that the last time they worked together, he and Mary had some disagreements. So, he concludes that she is avoiding him. As days go by, he convinces himself that Mary is trying to sabotage him. In fact (he thinks to himself) as he recalls, she never liked him. He decides then and there that the next time she needs something from him for her projects he won't give it to her. Soon he starts looking for examples of how she is trying to make him look bad. He decides that he does not like her either and might even say bad things about her when talking with colleagues. The next time John sees Mary, he gives her a dirty look and soon other teammates notice the communication breakdown between them.

Ask: How did John climb up the Ladder of Inference?
Suggestions follow:
- *He started with facts—real observable data. (Fact: Email and voice mail were not responded to.)*
- *He interpreted the facts and made assumptions based on the meaning he applied to his data/facts. (He remembers that they had disagreements and assumes the lack of response relates to this.)*

[2] Adapted from, *The Ladder of Inference: How assumptions can cause miscommunication.* Yvonne F. Brown. JAD Communications International. www.jadcommunications.com/yvonnefbrown/files/The%20Ladder%20of%20Inference.pdf (accessed 6.27.12)

- *He drew conclusions and made decisions based on his assumptions. (He concludes that Mary is avoiding him and is trying to sabotage him by not helping, and also that she does not like him.)*
- *Then he acted based on those conclusions and assumptions. (He decides he will not help her in the future.)*
- *Going forward each time he interacted with Mary, he looked for evidence to support his conclusions and assumptions. Each time he did that, he convinced himself that Mary was out to make him look bad, when in fact, he was creating the reality to support his actions. (He decides he does not like her, says bad things about her to others and gives her an angry look when she returns.)*

Ask: What other conclusions might you draw from the data—the unreturned emails and voice mails?
(Possible conclusions)
- *Mary was on holiday*
- *Mary was at home because her son was ill*

And so on . . .

Say: The only facts that John could be sure of were—he did not receive an email or voice message from Mary. Everything else he imagined, he guessed or assumed.

We cannot live our lives and interact with people without adding meaning or coming to conclusions. However, we can improve our communication and the actions we take by using the Ladder of Inference in three ways:
1. Becoming more aware of our own thinking and reasoning (reflection);
2. Making our thinking and reasoning more visible to others (transparency);
3. Inquiring into others' thinking and reasoning (inquiry).

In practice this might play out as follows:
- You ask for data in an open-ended way, using a neutral voice: "Mary, why haven't you returned my calls or answered my emails?" OR
- You test your assumptions: "Mary, are you upset with me?" OR
- You simply test the observable data, and in a neutral voice say: "Mary, you haven't returned my calls or emails." To which she might reply: "Sorry, I was on holiday. How can I help you?"

EXERCISE

Between the lines[3]

Hand out: *Between the Lines*

Between the Lines

Think about how culture and The Ladder of Inference interact in the following email written by Robert, an American who observed a meeting between international donors and local grantees from a developing country.

Say: Think about how culture and the Ladder of Inference interact in the following email written by Robert, an American who observed a meeting between international donors and local grantees in a developing country.

Ask a participant to read the email aloud.

> The meeting was set to begin at 9 AM. Donor representatives arrived early and were seated before the start time. Grantees began to arrive and sit down a few minutes after nine o'clock, others continued to trickle in until 10. Grantees were dressed in business clothes; the men wore ties and jackets. The donors were much more casual; none wore neckties. There were name cards at each seat. A copy of the participant list was handed out along with the agenda. The chairman, from a donor agency, waited five minutes before he began the meeting by reviewing the agenda. When asked if anyone wanted to add to the agenda, donors spoke up; no grantees did. For the next hour, donors spoke up, sometimes interrupting one another. Grantees sat at attention in their seats, speaking quietly and only when spoken to. As a result, I believe none of the grantees is interested in continuing their projects with the present donors.
>
> —Robert

Robert, the email author, makes a number of assumptions about time, relationships, and the way people communicate. Take 5 minutes to analyze Robert's reasoning as he climbed up the ladder. Jot down the cultural assumptions you think lead to his conclusion that none of the grantees is interested in continuing their projects with the present donors. *(Refer to handout/worksheet).*

[3] *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook.* Craig Storti. 2011. www.peacecorps.gov/wws/publications/culture/pdf/workbook.pdf (accessed 6.25.12)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

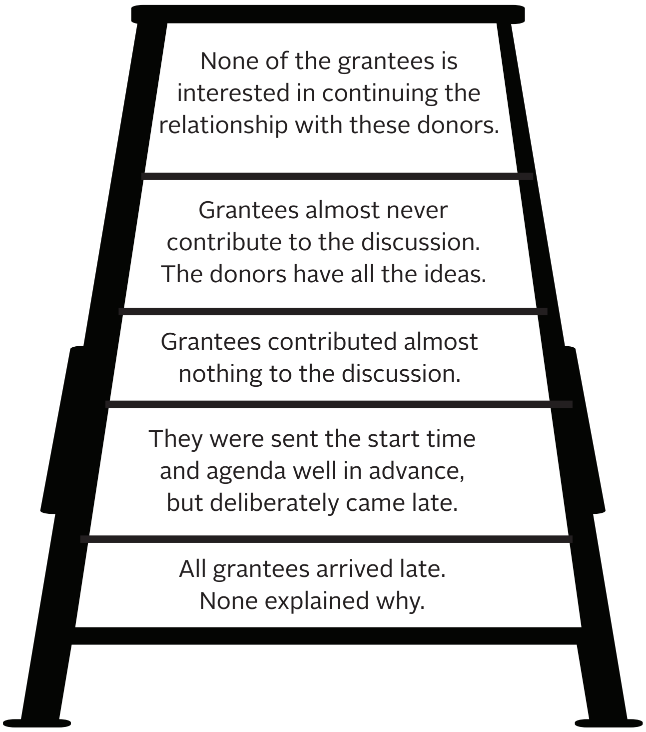
Possible points of discussion follow. Draw a ladder on a flipchart showing Robert's conclusion at the top.

Debrief: *How did Robert climb up the ladder of inference? What did Robert believe or assume?*

(Suggested responses to supplement those of participants.)

- *Being punctual signals respect for other attendees.*
- *Apologizing when late to a meeting is appropriate.*
- *Not taking time to introduce everyone around the table is acceptable behavior.*
- *Speaking only when spoken to shows a lack of interest.*
- *Interrupting someone while he is speaking is acceptable behavior.*
- *Speaking freely shows engagement.*
- *Participants who do not speak up are not interested in the topic.*

Robert's climb up
The Ladder of Inference



Say: Now imagine for a moment a culture in which people do not share these beliefs. Imagine that a group of people actually believe the opposite. How would they view the same meeting?

The fact that people from two different cultures can view the same behavior differently is precisely what makes cross-cultural encounters so challenging.

Ask: Which behaviors/actions described in this meeting do you think were appropriate or inappropriate in your culture? Why?

Hand out: *Working on Common Cross-cultural Communication Challenges*

Working on Common Cross-cultural Communication Challenges

by Marcelle E. DuPraw and Marya Axner

Used with permission.

We all communicate with others all the time—in our homes, in our workplaces, in the groups we belong to, and in the community. No matter how well we think we understand each other, communication is hard. Just

Six Fundamental Patterns of Cultural Difference

1. Different Comm

Wrap up

When we have infrequent or superficial contact with other cultures, we often unconsciously use stereotyping as a way to save time or to classify people to make it easier to work with them (or so we think). Stereotypes at their most basic level are a set of assumptions about others whose actual beliefs, habits and realities more often than not disagree with our own. This is risky because when we stereotype (Africans love football, Americans are time obsessed, and so on) we may be trying to show affinity for a culture, but end up revealing ignorance instead. By using the Ladder of Inference, we can reflect on our assumptions to guard against stereotyping. By looking at how we arrive at our conclusions, we can learn to get back to the facts and use our beliefs and experiences to positive effect.

To learn more about this, you may want to read the article *"Working on Common Cross-cultural Communication Challenges"* by Marcelle E. DuPraw and Marya Axner. This article offers a perspective on differences that need not become obstacles to communicating with and understanding one another.

MODULE 3.5c

Building Cross Cultural Bridges

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

40 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ list at least two strategies leading to improved cross-cultural communication.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Handout—***Seven Tips to Improve Communication with International Donors***

EXERCISE:

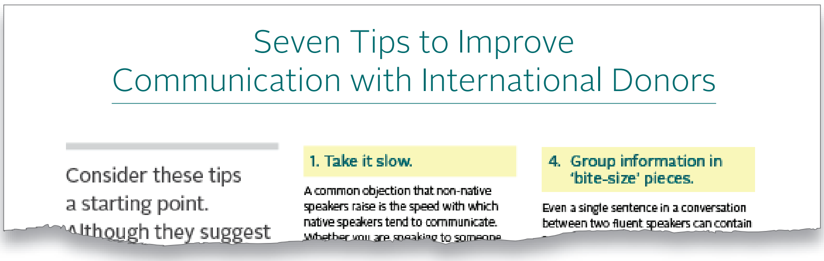
An awkward moment

Say: Think of the most awkward moment you have experienced when meeting with a donor at a conference—either a moment when you were confused, embarrassed or annoyed. Do not worry—you do not have to share it. After the meeting, later that day, write down three things you think you could have done differently to improve the communication between you?

Debrief: *What are lessons you learned from your awkward moment?*

Say: We will review some ways to help improve cross-cultural communication. Consider them a starting point. Although they suggest some useful DOs and DON'Ts for enhancing communication with international donors, remember, a list of behaviors or a script cannot prepare you for every situation. What is a "do" in one set of circumstances might very well be a "don't" in another.

Hand out: *Seven Tips to Improve Communication with International Donors*
(Review aloud or ask participants to read silently.)


Seven Tips to Improve
Communication with International Donors

Consider these tips a starting point. Although they suggest

1. Take it slow.

A common objection that non-native speakers raise is the speed with which native speakers tend to communicate.

4. Group information in 'bite-size' pieces.

Even a single sentence in a conversation between two fluent speakers can contain

Say: Once we consider a broad definition of culture and realize that its diverse beliefs and practices influence our decisions and actions, we can be more open to respecting our differences and collaborating across cultural lines.

BREAK: 10 minutes

MODULE 3.5d

Managing Donor Communication

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

60 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ identify who speaks for the organization on a range of issues, and
- ✔ develop a plan for communicating more effectively with donors.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers
- ☐ Handouts—*Sample Donor Communications Management Plan Matrix; Donor Communications Management Plan Matrix* (blank)

Ask: How do you manage communication with donors or other important audiences? *(Possible follow-up questions: Who speaks for the organization or project? How is information transmitted?)*

Say: Effective communication is one of the easiest and most important strategies for strengthening your relationship with donors and maintaining their interest and loyalty. Aside from submitting required reports, communication is often taken for granted, overlooked or done at the last minute. There are three simple steps to harnessing the power of communication:

1. plan
2. define roles and responsibilities
3. implement consistently

Hand out: *Sample Donor Communications Management Plan Matrix*

Sample Donor Communications Management Plan Matrix

Name of donor: USAID **Project:** Build agricultural skills for OVC caregivers **Date:** 8 August 2012

External Point of Contact (POC)	Communication Type	Objective(s) of Communication	Medium	Frequency	Audience	Owner	Deliverable
Executive Director	Kickoff Meeting	Introduce the	Face to face	Once	• Funder-USAID	• Project	Agenda

Let's look at a Communication Management Plan (CMP)—a tool that can help you do all three. A CMP can be used to define the communication requirements for your organization or for a specific donor-funded project. A CMP contains the following elements:

- Who receives the communication (audience)
- Type of communication (meeting, brochure, annual report)
- Objective of the communication
- How the information will be communicated (medium)
- When information will be distributed (frequency)
- Who does the communicating (owner)
- What is the output. (deliverable)

A CMP is not written in stone. Parts of it will evolve to reflect changes in the project.

Ask: Let's look at a sample CMP framework. What is included in this matrix? *(Follow-up by asking what type of information is commonly shared with a donor, who shares the information and how it is shared.)*

EXERCISE

Communication Management Planning

Hand out: *Donor Communications Management Plan Template*

Donor Communications Management Plan Template

Name of donor: **USAID** Project: **Build agricultural skills for OVC caregivers** Date: **8 August 2012**

External Point of Contact	Communication Type	Objective(s) of Communication	Medium	Frequency	Audience	Owner	Deliverable

Say: Look at the CMP sample plan and blank matrix. In the next 20 minutes, use the template to create a CMP for one of your current donor-funded projects. Adapt as you see fit, for example, where titles are listed, names can be substituted.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Depending on how many people are gathered, you may want to break the group into twos or threes. If possible, each group should work on a CMP for a different project.

Move around the room and observe how the groups are doing. Provide input if asked.

Debrief: *Now that you have had a chance to work with the CMP matrix, let's talk about the experience.*

- *How did you find the process of filling in the matrix?*
- *Was the information readily available or do you need to dig for it after the session?*

Say: Who speaks for your organization? Who does the talking, about what and to whom? Do you have one spokesperson or several who represent the organization depending on the nature of the donor inquiry or interaction?

Attention: Identify who will communicate with donors and about what. Consult your agreement or contract because these documents often specify the points of contact between donor and grantee.

If the points of contact are not specified, decide who is your point of contact to answer different questions. Look at your Donor CMP matrix and write down who interacts with donors on the following:

Who	About What
Exec Director, Name	Performance management plan
Financial Manager, Name	Financial reports
Communication coordinator	Signs, branding, Website

Ask: What are three next steps you will take to improve communication with international donors? *(Write on flipchart.)*

(Suggested responses to supplement those of participants.)

- *Implement donor communication management plan (refer to your matrix)*
- *Ask each donor what form of communication the donor prefers (email, phone, etc.) and what issues/results are of greatest interest. A good time to ask is when you are concluding a meeting with a donor— For example, "What is the best way to keep you informed?"*
- *Start conducting communication debriefs internally after donor contacts to provide opportunities for reflection among the team.*
- *Enhance your own and encourage your team to enhance their knowledge about each current and prospective donors—go to their Website, read brochures, annual reports, talk with other NGOs. This knowledge will create more awareness and understanding about those from different backgrounds.*
- *Practice 'active listening' skills to improve your ability to communicate.*
- *Encourage your team to understand their own cultural attitudes and develop communication skills through training (for example, sharing the Ladder of Inference).*
- *Always check that you and everyone on the team have understood important points and instructions from donors.*

Wrap up

Communication goes in two directions. The clearer that both you and the donor are with one another, the more likely you both will be to avoid misunderstandings or confusion. Remember, a donor might have a preference. You might also have a preference!

MODULE 3.5e

Connecting with Donors

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

TIME

40 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ✔ answer key questions to help decide whether to pursue a specific donor, and
- ✔ develop strategies to meet donor expectations and keep donors engaged.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart, markers, tape
- ☐ Handouts—***Key Questions to Answer Before Meeting a Donor; Ten Ways to Meet Donor Expectations***

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

If the group is small (3 or fewer) do this as a group exercise. If larger, break into pairs, each pair listing its ideas on a flipchart.

Give the group 3 minutes to brainstorm a checklist with at least 5 things to do to learn about a potential new donor before contacting them. Ask the teams to list their ideas on flipchart paper. After the brainstorm, distribute handouts and discuss what participants missed.

Say: Whether the donor is the U.S. government, a national or local government agency, a foundation or a business, donors are "investors" who help you achieve your mission. When you get results, donors do, too; when you succeed, they succeed. Like you, donors are held accountable and must show results to their funding sources.

It is essential to do homework to prepare to meet a prospective donor. You do not want to waste time—yours or theirs—pursing opportunities that do not match your mission or program expertise. So, it is important to answer the key questions **before** you contact and meet with a potential donor.

BRAINSTORM

Before you meet a donor

(Refer to handout for 10 questions to answer about a donor before pursing contact.)

1. What is their mission?
2. What are their specific topics of interest?
3. What type of support do they provide
4. Who are their beneficiaries?
5. What is their current funding strategy?
6. How much money or commodities do they donate every year?
7. What programs/organizations have they funded in the past?
8. What are their donation policies?
9. What is the application process?
10. What connections do they have, if any, to your organization? *(For example, do they have personal or professional relationships with Board members or staff?)*

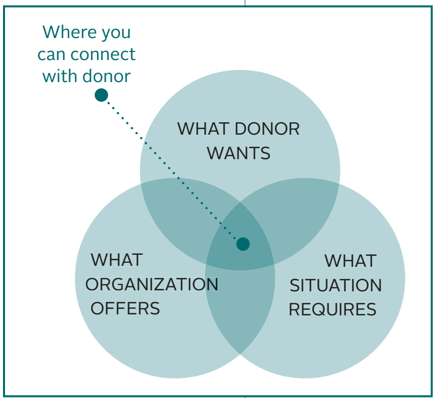
Hand out: *Key Questions to Answer Before Meeting a Donor*

Key Questions to Answer Before Meeting a Donor

It is essential to do homework to prepare to meet a new,

Answer the following questions before you contact and meet with a potential donor:

1. What is their mission?
2. What are their specific topics of interest?



Say: Doing this research is as essential to meeting in person as it is when writing a capability statement. You want to connect with the donor, to make the meeting worthwhile for both of you. That means thinking about how you can connect with or help solve the problem or address the issue most important to that donor.

Now, there are three additional questions that can help you decide whether to go pursue that donor or not. *(Draw on flipchart a Venn diagram showing where the 3 circles overlap)*

1. What does the donor want?
2. What does the situation require?
3. What does our organization have to offer?

Where the answers to these three questions overlap, are the areas you should focus on in requesting a meeting with a donor. For example: If a donor wants to fund male circumcision projects in your area and you have experience motivating men to participate in family planning, you can describe your work with men so that it connects with that donor.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

If the group is small (3 or fewer) do this as a group exercise. If larger, break into pairs, each pair listing its ideas on a flipchart.

Give the group 3 minutes to brainstorm a checklist with at least 5 other things to do to prepare for a meeting with a potential new donor. Ask the teams to list their ideas on flipchart paper. When time is up, ask each participant to silently review the list(s) and put a check mark by the top 5 ideas. Discuss those that get the most votes.

BRAINSTORM

Five more ways to prepare for a donor meeting

Five ways to prepare for a meeting with a donor:

1.
2.
3
4.
5.

(Suggested responses to supplement those of participants.)

- *When planning a visit, always ask how much time the donor's representatives have available.*
- *Try to set aside 30 minutes to one hour for the first "getting acquainted" meeting. This is not the time to tell the donor everything about your NGO. Just as with a potential friend, developing a relationship with a donor takes time. You will likely need to meet with them several times before you get to the point where you should make a request.*
- *Find out who will attend the meeting. Do your homework. Tailor your presentation to the audience. Present more or less technical information based on their background and interest.*
- *Make sure all members of your delegation are clear on their roles.*
- *Share what you learned about the potential donor's vision, mission, interests and scope of work with all members of your delegation.*
- *Anticipate and prepare for any possible controversial or difficult questions that might be asked during the meeting.*
- *Try to keep to the agreed-upon amount of time for the meeting (Western donors typically are very sensitive about time), unless the donor has indicated she or he has plenty of time or would like to continue the discussion.*
- *At the end of the meeting, make arrangements for a follow-up meeting or identify and agree on next steps.*
- *When you meet with a potential donor, be sure to bring:*
  — business cards
  — paper copies of your presentation
  — relevant materials, such as a brochure, a poster, newspaper article, success story

Once you have established a relationship with a donor, it is important to your program's sustainability to keep the donor engaged.

EXERCISE

Brainstorm ways to engage donors

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Give the group 3 minutes to brainstorm ideas for engaging donors. Ask the teams to list their ideas on flipchart paper. When time is up, ask each participant to silently review the list(s) and put a check mark by the top two ideas. (See box on the next page for ideas.)

Discuss the top ideas and ask for specific ways the participants would implement them.

Say: As with any mutually beneficial relationship, it is easier to nurture and build on an established connection than to start from zero. Here are a few ways to reinforce your rapport with donors and meet their expectations.

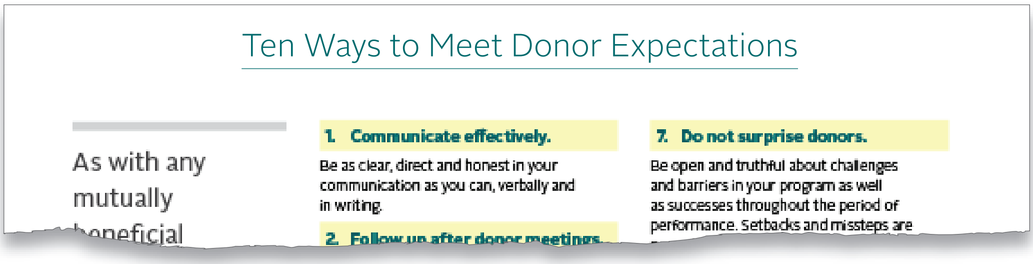
Hand out: *Ten Ways to Meet Donor Expectations*

Some Ways to Engage Donors

Some ideas to mention if they are not listed during the brainstorm:

1. Invite donors to your organization. Arrange site visits to connect them with program and other staff.
2. Invite donors to special events.
3. Go out to meet donors.
4. Keep in touch with donors using their preferred methods (email, phone, etc.).
5. Share proof, not just passion, about what you are accomplishing through success stories, testimonials from beneficiaries
6. Always thank donors for their generosity.
7. Recognize donors in ways that they approve of.
8. Do not burn any bridges. (Even if you did not win their support, thank the donors for considering your proposal.)

Review handout with participants.


Ten Ways to Meet Donor Expectations

As with any mutually

1. Communicate effectively.

Be as clear, direct and honest in your communication as you can, verbally and in writing.

7. Do not surprise donors.

Be open and truthful about challenges and barriers in your program as well as successes throughout the period of performance. Setbacks and missteps are

Wrap up

By communicating effectively, a donor will see you as a reliable and trusted partner and may become both an important advocate for your organization and instrumental in sustaining its long-term financial health. Building a strong relationship through open, two-way communication is key to making this a reality. The confidence people have in an organization has a great deal to do with their loyalty to it and their willingness to support it.

What Matters Most?*

Directions

1. Answer each question in the list below with one phrase or sentence.
2. Rate each item from 1-10 (1 is the most important, 10 is the least important) according to how much it means to you.

Your answers will not be shared.

Example:

6 ____ What language(s) do I speak?
English, French, Russian

Rating (1 is most important, 10 is least)

____ **What language(s) do I speak?**

____ **What is my religion?**

____ **What music do I listen to?**

____ **What foods do I eat at home?**

____ **What do I wear on special occasions?**

____ **What holidays and ceremonies are important to me?**

____ **What is most important to me?**

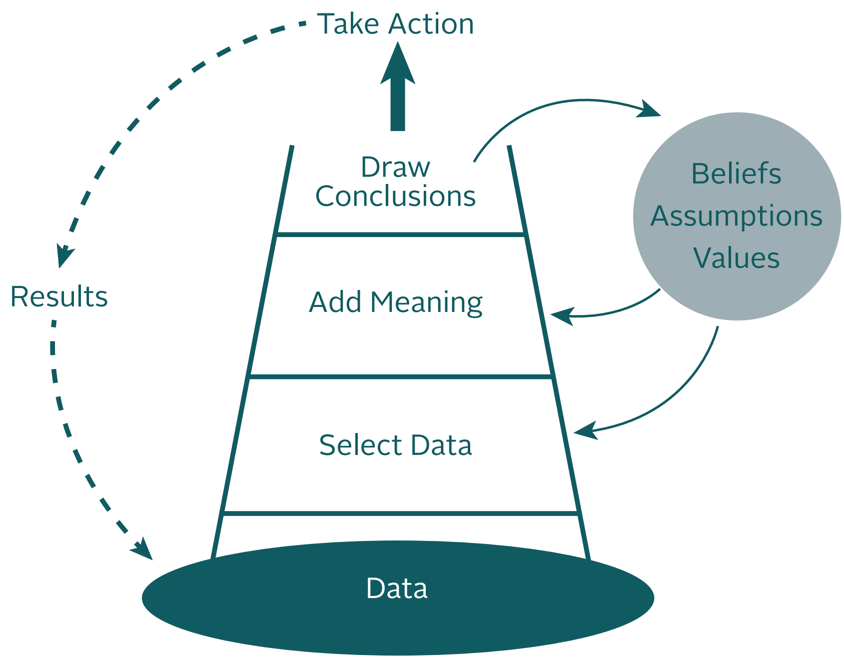
____ **What things do I believe are right and wrong?**

____ **How important is my extended family?**

* *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook.* Craig Storti. 2011. www.peacecorps.gov/wws/publications/culture/pdf/workbook.pdf (accessed 6.25.12)

The Ladder of Inference

The Ladder of Inference comes from Peter Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization.* It describes the thinking process that we go through, usually without realizing it, to get from a fact to a decision or action. We move up and down the Ladder of Inference in **milliseconds** all day long. It happens when we interact with people, read email, and listen to the news. It also affects how others see us as they climb their own Ladders of Inference.



Based on: *The 5th Discipline Fieldbook,* Peter Senge, 1994.

The thinking process is seen as rungs on a ladder. Starting at the bottom of the ladder, we observe, see what happens, hear what is said, or experience a situation—no more and no less. From there, we:

- Select data. That is, narrow our focus by selecting (unconsciously) the data or information that interests us
- Add meaning, make assumptions, sometimes without considering them.
- Draw conclusions based on the interpreted facts and our assumptions.
- Develop beliefs based on these conclusions.
- Take actions that seem "right" because they are based on what we believe.

This can create a vicious circle. Our beliefs have a big impact on what we select from reality, and can lead us to ignore the real facts. Soon we are jumping to conclusions—by missing facts and skipping steps in the reasoning process. Remember, it is easy for us to **run up the ladder** and get things wrong even when we have the best of intentions.

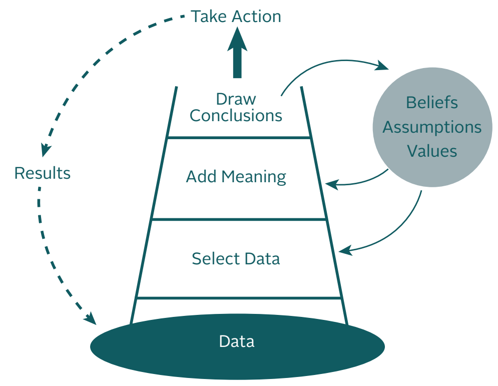
Between the Lines

Think about how culture and The Ladder of Inference interact in the following email written by Robert, an American who observed a meeting between international donors and local grantees from a developing country.

The meeting was set to begin at 9 AM. Donor representatives arrived early and were seated before the start time. Grantees began to arrive and sit down a few minutes after 9, others continued to trickle in until 10. Grantees were dressed in business clothes, the men wore ties and jackets. The donors were much more casual, none wore neckties. There were name cards at each seat. A copy of the participant list was handed out along with the agenda. The chairman, from a donor agency, waited five minutes before he began the meeting by reviewing the agenda. When asked if anyone wanted to add to the agenda, donors spoke up, no grantees did. For the next hour, donors spoke up, sometimes interrupting one another. Grantees sat at attention in their seats, speaking quietly and only when spoken to. As a result, I believe none of the grantees is interested in continuing their projects with the present donors.

—Robert

The Ladder of Inference



Based on: *The 5th Discipline Fieldbook*, Peter Senge, 1994.

You have 5 minutes to analyze Robert's reasoning as he climbed up the ladder, including the cultural assumptions you think lead to his conclusion that **"none of the grantees is interested in continuing their projects with the present donors."**

Working on Common Cross-cultural Communication Challenges

by Marcelle E. DuPraw and Marya Axner

Used with permission.

We all communicate with others all the time—in our homes, in our workplaces, in the groups we belong to, and in the community. No matter how well we think we understand each other, communication is hard. Just think, for example, how often we hear things like, "He doesn't get it," or "She didn't really hear what I meant to say." "Culture" is often at the root of communication challenges. Our culture influences how we approach problems, and how we participate in groups and in communities. When we participate in groups we are often surprised at how differently people approach their work together.

Culture is a complex concept, with many different definitions. But, simply put, "culture" refers to a group or community with which we share common experiences that shape the way we understand the world. It includes groups that we are born into, such as gender, race, or national origin. It also includes groups we join or become part of. For example, we can acquire a new culture by moving to a new region, by a change in our economic status, or by becoming disabled. When we think of culture this broadly, we realize we all belong to many cultures at once.

Our histories are a critical piece of our cultures. Historical experiences—whether five years ago or ten generations back—shape who we are. Knowledge of our history can help us understand ourselves and one another better. Exploring the ways in which various groups within our society have related to each other is key to opening channels for cross-cultural communication.

Six Fundamental Patterns of Cultural Difference

1. Different Communications Styles
2. Different Attitudes Toward Conflict
3. Different Approaches to Completing Tasks
4. Different Decision-Making Styles
5. Different Attitudes Toward Disclosure
6. Different Approaches to Knowing

Respecting Our Differences and Working Together

Guidelines for Multicultural Collaboration

SIX FUNDAMENTAL PATTERNS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

In a world as complex as ours, each of us is shaped by many factors, and culture is one of the powerful forces that acts on us. Anthropologists Kevin Avruch and Peter Black explain the importance of culture this way: ...One's own culture provides the "lens" through which we view the world; the "logic"... by which we order it; the "grammar" ... by which it makes sense.[1] In other words, culture is central to what we see, how we make sense of what we see, and how we express ourselves.

As people from different cultural groups take on the exciting challenge of working together, cultural values sometimes conflict. We can misunderstand each other, and react in ways that can hinder what are otherwise promising partnerships. Oftentimes, we aren't aware that culture is acting upon us. Sometimes, we are not even aware that we have cultural values or assumptions that are different from others'.

Six fundamental patterns of cultural differences—ways in which cultures, as a whole, tend to vary from one another—are described below. The descriptions point out some of the recurring causes of cross-cultural communication difficulties.[2] As you enter into multicultural dialogue or collaboration, keep these generalized differences in mind. Next time you find yourself in a confusing situation, and you suspect that cross-cultural differences are at play, try reviewing this list. Ask yourself how culture may be shaping your own reactions, and try to see the world from others' points of view.

1. Different Communication Styles

The way people communicate varies widely between, and even within, cultures. One aspect of communication style is language usage. Across cultures, some words and phrases are used in different ways. For example, even in countries that share the English language, the meaning of "yes" varies from "maybe, I'll consider it" to "definitely so," with many shades in between.

Another major aspect of communication style is the degree of importance given to non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes not only facial expressions and gestures; it also involves seating arrangements, personal distance, and sense of time. In addition, different norms regarding the appropriate degree of assertiveness in communicating can add to cultural misunderstandings. For instance, some white Americans typically consider raised voices to be a sign that a fight has begun, while some black, Jewish and Italian Americans often feel that an increase in volume is a sign of an exciting conversation among friends. Thus, some white Americans may react with greater alarm to a loud discussion than would members of some American ethnic or non-white racial groups.

2. Different Attitudes Toward Conflict

Some cultures view conflict as a positive thing, while others view it as something to be avoided. In the U.S., conflict is not usually desirable; but people often are encouraged to deal directly with conflicts that do arise. In fact, face-to-face meetings customarily are recommended as the way to work through whatever problems exist. In contrast, in many Eastern countries, open conflict is experienced as embarrassing or demeaning; as a rule, differences are best worked out quietly. A written exchange might be the favored means to address the conflict.

3. Different Approaches to Completing Tasks

From culture to culture, there are different ways that people move toward completing tasks. Some reasons include different access to resources, different judgments of the rewards associated with task completion, different notions of time, and varied ideas about how relationship-building and task-oriented work should go together.

When it comes to working together effectively on a task, cultures differ with respect to the importance placed on establishing relationships early on in the collaboration. A case in point, Asian and Hispanic cultures tend to attach more value to developing relationships at the beginning of a shared project and more emphasis on task completion toward the end as compared with European-Americans. European-Americans tend to focus immediately on the task at hand, and let relationships develop as they work on the task. This does not mean that people from any one of these cultural backgrounds are more or less committed to accomplishing the task, or value relationships more or less; it means they may pursue them differently.

4. Different Decision-Making Styles

The roles individuals play in decision-making vary widely from culture to culture. For example, in the U.S., decisions are frequently delegated—that is, an official assigns responsibility for a particular matter to a subordinate. In many Southern European and Latin American countries, there is a strong value placed on holding decision-making responsibilities oneself. When decisions are made by groups of people, majority rule is a common approach in the U.S.; in Japan consensus is the preferred mode. Be aware that individuals' expectations about their own roles in shaping a decision may be influenced by their cultural frame of reference.

5. Different Attitudes Toward Disclosure

In some cultures, it is not appropriate to be frank about emotions, about the reasons behind a conflict or a misunderstanding, or about personal information. Keep this in mind when you are in a dialogue or when you are working with others. When you are dealing with a conflict, be mindful that people may differ in what they feel comfortable revealing. Questions that may seem natural to you—What was the conflict about? What was your role in the conflict? What was the sequence of events?—may seem intrusive to others. The variation among cultures in attitudes toward disclosure is also something to consider before you conclude that you have an accurate reading of the views, experiences, and goals of the people with whom you are working.

6. Different Approaches to Knowing

Notable differences occur among cultural groups when it comes to epistemologies—that is, the ways people come to know things. European cultures tend to consider information acquired through cognitive means, such as counting and measuring, more valid than other ways of coming to know things. Compare that to African cultures' preference for affective ways of knowing, including symbolic imagery and rhythm. Asian cultures' epistemologies tend to emphasize the validity of knowledge gained through striving toward transcendence.[3]

Recent popular works demonstrate that our own society is paying more attention to previously overlooked ways of knowing.[4] Indeed, these different approaches to knowing could affect ways of analyzing a community problem or finding ways to resolve it. Some members of your group may want to do library research to understand a shared problem better and identify possible solutions. Others may prefer to visit places and people who have experienced challenges like the ones you are facing, and get a feeling for what has worked elsewhere.

RESPECTING OUR DIFFERENCES AND WORKING TOGETHER

In addition to helping us to understand ourselves and our own cultural frames of reference, knowledge of these six patterns of cultural difference can help us to understand the people who are different from us. An appreciation of patterns of cultural difference can assist us in processing what it means to be different in ways that are respectful of others, not faultfinding or damaging.

Anthropologists Avruch and Black have noted that, when faced by an interaction that we do not understand, people tend to interpret the others involved as "abnormal," "weird," or "wrong."[5] This tendency, if indulged, gives rise on the individual level to prejudice. If this propensity is either consciously or unconsciously integrated into organizational structures, then prejudice takes root in our institutions—in the structures, laws, policies, and procedures that shape our lives. Consequently, it is vital that we learn to control the human tendency to translate "different from me" into "less than me." We can learn to do this.

We can also learn to collaborate across cultural lines as individuals and as a society. Awareness of cultural differences doesn't have to divide us from each other. It doesn't have to paralyze us either, for fear of not saying the "right thing." In fact, becoming more aware of our cultural differences, as well as exploring our similarities, can help us communicate with each other more effectively. Recognizing where cultural differences are at work is the first step toward understanding and respecting each other.

Learning about different ways that people communicate can enrich our lives. People's different communication styles reflect deeper philosophies and world views which are the foundation of their culture. Understanding these deeper philosophies gives us a broader picture of what the world has to offer us.

Learning about people's cultures has the potential to give us a mirror image of our own. We have the opportunity to challenge our assumptions about the "right" way of doing things, and consider a variety of approaches. We have a chance to learn new ways to solve problems that we had previously given up on, accepting the difficulties as "just the way things are."

Lastly, if we are open to learning about people from other cultures, we become less lonely. Prejudice and stereotypes separate us from whole groups of people who could be friends and partners in working for change. Many of us long for real contact. Talking with people different from ourselves gives us hope and energizes us to take on the challenge of improving our communities and worlds.

FOOTNOTES

1. Avruch, Kevin and Peter Black, "Conflict Resolution in Intercultural Settings: Problems and Prospects," in **Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application,** edited by Dennis Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.
2. This list and some of the explanatory text is drawn from DuPraw and Warfield (1991), an informally published workshop manual co-authored by one of the authors of this piece.
3. Nichols, Edwin J., a presentation made to the World Psychiatric Association and Association of Psychiatrists in Nigeria, November 10, 1976.
4. For example, for research on women's approaches to knowledge, see
   - Lorraine Code, **What Can She Know?: Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge.** Ithaca: Cornell, 1991
   - M.F. Belenky, N.R. Goldberger, & J. M. Tarule, **Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of the Self, Voice and Mind.** New York: Basic Books, 1986
   - Carol Gilligan, **In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development.** Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1982.
5. Avruch and Black, 1993.

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Seven Tips to Improve Communication with International Donors

Consider these tips a starting point. Although they suggest some useful DO's and DON'Ts for facilitating communication with international donors, remember, a list of behaviors or a script cannot prepare you for every situation. What is a "do" in one set of circumstances might very well be a "don't" in another.

1. Take it slow.

A common objection that non-native speakers raise is the speed with which native speakers tend to communicate. Whether you are speaking to someone who is just beginning to learn a language or a long-time English speaker who hails from a different culture, it is helpful to modulate the pace of your speech. If you are speaking with a donor who is not fluent in your language, slow down your own speed. If you are not fluent in the donor's language and he or she is speaking too quickly, politely ask him or her to slow down. Remember, communication is a two-way street. Speakers often do not realize listeners do not understand unless you tell them.

2. Practice active listening; check meaning.

An effective strategy for improving cross-cultural communication is what experts call "active listening." This technique involves restating the other speaker's statements to ensure you understand their meaning and asking frequent questions. This is a great way to ensure that important information doesn't "slip through the cracks" in a cross-cultural conversation. For example, "Am I correct in understanding that you want us to arrange a meeting with you next month after we receive approval for our workplan?"

3. Separate questions.

Try not to ask double questions such as, "Do you want to carry on our discussion or shall we stop here?" In a cross-cultural situation the listener may have understood the first or second question. Let your listener answer one question at a time.

4. Group information in 'bite-size' pieces.

Even a single sentence in a conversation between two fluent speakers can contain a great deal of information. That is why cross-cultural communication experts recommend limiting the amount of information you try to convey at one time. Stick to simple, direct instructions and explanations. Try to avoid complex, multi-part sentences.

5. Watch out for cultural assumptions.

If you have ever traveled to a foreign country, you probably realize just how much of our verbal and non-verbal communication relies on a shared set of cultural beliefs and attitudes. When you are speaking to someone from another culture, try to avoid things like jokes, slang or references that might be confusing or misleading to a non-native speaker.

6. Write it down.

If you are unsure whether something has been understood write it down and check. This can be useful when using large figures. For example, ten thousand in the USA is written 10,000.00. In France it is written 10.000,00. (The use of comma and decimal point is different.)

7. When in doubt, opt for friendly formality.

North American English speakers often adopt a casual, informal approach to conversations, even when they are addressing a stranger or a new acquaintance. This might be confusing to you if you are not familiar with North American culture. Remember, your job is to cement the connection between donors and the NGO for which you work. That is where your effort should be directed. Always keep the relationship professional, use a more formal mode of speaking and gradually scale back the level of formality as the relationship develops.

Sample Donor Communications Management Plan Matrix

Name of donor: **USAID** Project: **Build agricultural skills for OVC caregivers** Date: **8 August 2012**

External Point of Contact (POC)	Communication Type	Objective(s) of Communication	Medium	Frequency	Audience	Owner	Deliverable
Executive Director	Kickoff Meeting	Introduce the project team to funder. Review project objectives and management approach.	Face-to-face	Once	• Funder-USAID • Project Team	• Project Manager • Technical Lead	Agenda Meeting minutes
Communication Coordinator	Project brochure	Introduce project objectives to prospective beneficiaries.	Print	Once	• Prospective beneficiaries • Funder • Stakeholders	• Project Manager • Communication Manager	Brochure
Communication Coordinator	Website	Build awareness of our organization. Distribute information.	Internet	Update monthly	• Funder • Stakeholders • Prospective beneficiaries • Prospective funders	• Communication Manager	Web content
Communication Coordinator	Success story	Capture evidence of progress, positive change.	Internet Print/news release	As often as possible or semi-annual	• Funder • Stakeholders • Beneficiaries • General public	• Communication Manager	Story
Executive Director, Program Manager	Project Status Meetings	Discuss progress and technical design solutions for the project.	Face to face Conference call	As needed	• Project Technical Staff • Funder	• Program Manager • Technical Lead	Agenda Meeting minutes
Financial Manager	Financial Reports	Report on the status of the project to management.	U.S. government form	Quarterly	• Funder-USAID	• Financial Manager	SF425
Program Manager	Program Reports	Report the status of the project including activities, progress, costs and issues.	Email	Semi-annual	• Funder-USAID • Project Team • Stakeholders	• Program Manager • Technical Lead	Project report

Donor Communications Management Plan Matrix

Name of donor: ____________ Project: ____________ Date: ____________

External Point of Contact (POC)	Communication Type	Objective(s) of Communication	Medium	Frequency	Audience	Owner	Deliverable

Key Questions to Answer Before Meeting a Donor

It is essential to do homework to prepare to meet a new, prospective donor. You do not want to waste time—yours or theirs—pursing opportunities that do not match your mission or program expertise.

Answer the following questions before you contact and meet with a potential donor:

1. What is their mission?
2. What are their specific topics of interest?
3. What type of support do they provide
4. Who are their beneficiaries?
5. What is their current funding strategy?
6. How much money or commodities do they donate every year?
7. What programs/organizations have they funded in the past?
8. What are their donation policies?
9. What is the application process?
10. What connections do they have, if any, to your organization? (For example, do they have personal or professional relationships with Board members or staff?)

Doing this research is as essential to meeting face-to-face as it is when writing a capability statement. You want to connect with the donor, to make the meeting worthwhile for both of you. That means thinking about how can connect with or help solve the problem or address the issue most important to that donor. To help you decide whether to go pursue that donor or not, create three short lists:

1. What does the donor want?
2. What does the situation require?
3. What does our organization have to offer?

Where the answers to these three questions overlap is the area you should focus on in requesting a meeting with a donor:

Ten Ways to Meet Donor Expectations

As with any mutually beneficial relationship, it is easier to nurture and build on an established connection than to start from zero. Here are a few tips to reinforce your rapport with major donors.

By communicating effectively, a donor will see you as a reliable and trusted partner and may become both an important advocate for your organization and instrumental in sustaining its long-term financial health. Building a strong relationship through open, two-way communication is key to making this a reality. The confidence people have in an organization has a great deal to do with their loyalty to it and their willingness to support it.

1. Communicate effectively.

Be as clear, direct and honest in your communication as you can, verbally and in writing.

2. Follow up after donor meetings.

After key meetings or conversations between the leadership of your organization and the donor, send a written summary of key issues discussed and follow-up actions. This creates a record of the meeting and clarifies decisions and actions that will be taken in the future.

3. Be responsive to donor requests.

When a donor requests information, respond quickly. Ask questions to ensure you understand what is being requested and when it is due. If a request is unrealistic, be honest and explain why. If it will take you some time to compile the information requested, be clear about when you can submit it.

4. Make realistic promises and deliver on them.

Be careful not to compromise the quality of your work for the sake of speed. Thus, when facing a deadline, ensure you can deliver what you promise with a worthwhile product. If this is not possible, be honest about it.

5. Use donor funds as expected.

Implement your program as described in your proposal; that is what your donor "bought." Notify the donor of any needed alterations (for example, changes in scope, location of work, target audience) to your work right away in order to get guidance on how the donor would like you to proceed.

6. Submit accurate, complete program deliverables on time.

Reports and other deliverables document your program accomplishments and successes. Therefore, it is critical that deliverables are clear, well-written and without errors so that they reflect well on your organization and may be shared with other funders and stakeholders. Emphasize quality over quantity. Meet the deadlines set by your donor as this demonstrates your professionalism, reliability and responsiveness. Know your donors well enough to link their support with your organization's activities, progress and results they find most meaningful.

7. Do not surprise donors.

Be open and truthful about challenges and barriers in your program as well as successes throughout the period of performance. Setbacks and missteps are normal and most donors understand the challenging environment in which you work. If you maintain an open and collaborative relationship, there should be no surprises when your donor receives your deliverables.

8. Share your achievements. Recognize and give credit to donors.

Tell your organization's story and disseminate program results broadly and through a variety of media—newspapers, radio, Web sites, social media, conferences, meetings, special events. Make sure your donor's support is always acknowledged in accordance with your marking and branding plan as necessary and thank the donor for their support. In addition, you may wish to invite your donor to participate in events, conferences or meetings where you present program findings and results.

9. Take solutions a step further.

Suggest ways in which you can eliminate a problem and articulate how you can share new knowledge with other stakeholders to support lasting solutions. Identify gaps in your present program or interventions, and recommend a new direction or strategy for greater effectiveness. Also, take time to reflect on the approaches that did not have the intended result and note them along with other "lessons learned" that you can compile at the end of the program. These types of proactive approaches may influence donor priorities in future years.

10. Prepare for visitors and opportunities to showcase your program.

Your local, national and global reputation and image can be affected by the impressions made in known and spontaneous interactions with high level officials, international and local visitors in addition to new staff. A well-organized and informative introduction and site visit with program stakeholders is an important way to communicate your successes and needs. Always plan ahead and have strong speakers available to showcase your work to visitors, potential donors and advocates.

References and Resources

How to Craft an Elevator Speech
http://www.creativekeys.net/PowerfulPresentations/article1024.html

Creating your Elevator Speech
http://www.creativity-portal.com/articles/jonathan-vehar/value-elevator-speech.html

Elevator Pitch Essentials. Chris O'Leary
http://www.elevatorpitchessentials.com/essays/ElevatorPitch.html

NPI-Connect.Net—eNewsletters:
Issue 43: Managing Your Relationship with Your Donors
Issue 45: Advancing your Cause by Pitching your Program
Issue 28: Success Story Reporting

Network for Good
www.fundraising123.org

"Ensuring Successful Partnerships: A Toolkit"
www.interaction.org/document/ensuring-successful-partners-toolkit
Originally developed as part of InterAction's Africa Liaison Program Initiative (ALPI) to foster relationships between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and Africa, the Ensuring Successful Partnerships Toolkit includes: a list of recommended commitments for organizations to make before beginning the partnership assessment process; the principles necessary to build and sustain successful partnerships; and an actual partnership assessment tool.

Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook. Craig Storti. 2011. www.peacecorps.gov/wws/publications/culture/pdf/workbook.pdf (accessed 6.25.12)

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