# Pest Practice Guide for Voluntary and Non-Profit Management

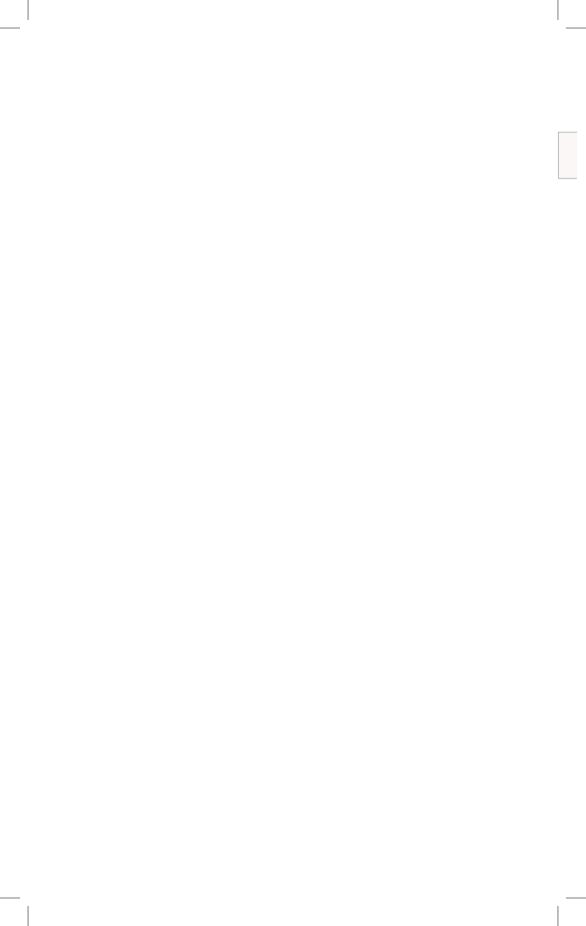
How to Achieve Better Results?

How to Engage New Volunteers in Programs and Activities?

How to Write Grants?

How to Create Impact through Mass Communication?

A Practical Guide for Civil Society Organizations in the Kingdom of Bahrain



# **Contents**

- Acknowledgement5				
- Prefac	e	7		
- Introd	uction: What is "Best Practices"?	10		
•	What Do "Best Practices" Mean?	10		
•	"Best Practices" through Benchmarking	10		
•	"Best Practices" According to the Standards	11		
•	What Are the Benefits of "Best Practices"?	11		
- Chapte	er One: How to Achieve Better Results?	13		
•	The Strategic Model	14		
•	Program Theory	14		
•	Steps, Tools, and Roles	15		
•	Outputs and Results	15		
•	Example: Personal Status Law's Awareness Project:	16		
	o Program Theory	17		
	o Strategic Tools	17		
	o Strategic Roles	18		
•	Conclusion: How to Achieve Better Results?	19		

	vo: How to Engage s and Activities?	
• Why	Do We Need Volunteers	s?21
• Selec	ting New Volunteers	22
• How	to Select New Volunte	eers?22
• Enga	ging New Volunteers	23
• New	Volunteers Questionna	aire26
<ul> <li>Samp</li> </ul>	ole of New Volunteers (	Questionnaire27
	lusion: How to Enga Programs and Activities	
- Chapter Th	ree: How to Write (	Grants?30
• How	to Introduce an Effective (	Grant's Proposal?30
• Writi	ng Style Tips	34
• Conc	lusion: How to Write G	Grants?35
	ur : How to Create	
• Why	Do We Communicate? Ic	lentifying Issues36
• Targe	eted Audience	37
• The I	Message	38
• The I	Media	39
	lusion: How to Create In munication?	
	eveloping Performan Civil Society Organiz	
-References	and Bibliography	44

# **Acknowledgement**

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The program included eight training workshops that covered the following axis of voluntary work: strategies, human resources, managerial operations, and civil campaigns and projects.

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# **Preface**

Many civil society organizations in our beloved country face challenges in the way they work, and the results they pursue. They face difficulties that are generated from their outer and inner working environment – especially managerial and administrative challenges.

That was the main reason for this guide, to present the best practices that have been tried and proven successful in the area of voluntary and non-profit works, either in the Kingdom of Bahrain, or in other parts of the world.

The guide focuses on "Best Practices" in four major fields: How to achieve better results? How to engage new volunteers in programs and activities? How to write grants and ask for financial support? And how to — successfully - mass communicate with the publics?

Theguide starts with the definition of «Best Practices» according to two concepts, which are: determining best practices in a certain field through benchmarking, or according to the highest applied standards. Through four chapters the guide presents the best practices to improve the managerial performance of the organizations. The first chapter focuses on the importance of differentiating between the outputs and the outcomes of any project. The positive social impacts are the real objectives of any

societal project, which should be launched according to a proper strategic model. Based on that the program's working theory is decided, the working process, the strategic tools and roles. A brief example - will also be presented - of an awareness campaign that had been launched in Bahrain to promote the idea of enacting a written law of personal status that is based on the Islamic Shari'a.

In the second chapter, the guide gets into an important subject, which is the engagement of new volunteers in activities and programs. There are two faces for this challenge, the first is the shortage of volunteers in some cases, and the second is the volunteers who have been engaged in a bad process or weak working procedures.

The second face is what this chapter is focusing on. It starts by explaining the advantage of having volunteers for any project, and the two types of volunteers (the seasonal, and the consistent). Then it explains the three rules of selecting new volunteers (need, qualification, and time), the engagement process using job description, proper training, proper delegation, and honoring and rewarding. A brief example on engaging domestic violence volunteers has been presented. Finally, an important tool has been focused on, which is the new volunteers' questionnaire. Such questionnaires help in categorizing the new volunteers, and assigning them to their proper roles.

The following chapter discusses a critical issue,

which is financial donation, and writing grants' proposals to ask for financial support from donors. It starts by explaining the main structure of a proposal, where we identify the project idea, the reasons behind it, its social benefits, the process details, the organization behind the project, the budget and financial data — with a sample budget -, and a final conclusion. The chapter ends with writing style tips for such proposals.

The last chapter discusses ways of utilizing the advancements in communications and information technology to reach the public audiences. It starts by answering the question of «why do we communicate?» To identifying issues. This is done by a clear identification of social issues, and by targeting the right audience. The audience is divided into two parts: the influential audience that might be hard to attract, and the inactive one that might be easy to gain.

The message is another crucial part of the communication process; it should be powerful, clear, reflects the project's strategy, uses a proper language that fits the audience's professional level, and stands criticism. The final part of the process is selecting the right type of media that conforms to the nature of the targeted audience, decreases required efforts, increases impact, and eliminates cost.

The guide concludes by emphasizing the importance of all these practices as ways to enhance the managerial and organizational performance of civil society organizations, and improve their work results and social impacts.

# Introduction

### What is «Best Practices?»

As the work of Civil Society Organizations grows, they will need to change so they can adapt to new circumstances and developments. In such situations, they need to follow various ways of operating that suits their work best. «Best practices» are experiences that have been tried and proven successful in generating better returns and impact.

What Do «Best Practices» Mean?

Best practices mean finding and using the best ways to achieve the organizational objectives. It involves keeping up-to-date with how successful organizations are operating - in your field and others - and measuring your style of working against those used by the society leaders. Best practices may be chosen through benchmarking, or according to the highest standards.

# **«Best Practices» through Benchmarking:**

Applying best practices means learning from, and

Best practices means finding and using the best ways to achieve the organizational objectives through, the experiences of others. One way of doing this is through benchmarking, which allows you to compare your organization with other successful organizations to highlight areas where yours could be improved.

# **«Best Practices» According to the Standards:**

Standards are fixed specifications or benchmarks, which are established by independent bodies (local or international) in a specified field (e.g. management). Applying such standards should lead to high quality achievements in various work experiences.

# What Are the Benefits of «Best Practices»?

«Best practices» strategies can help civil society organizations to:

- Improve the quality of individuals and organizational work.
- Create more impact on society.
- Gain more supporters and better utilization of volunteers' participations.
- Reduce losses and waste in resources, and become more cost-efficient.
- Increase effective usage of ideas and technology.
- Better and quicker responses to field problems and societal challenges.

This guide explains what best practices civil society organizations may follow to develop their managerial performance in important fields, such as:

- Launching initiatives for better social impact and more results.
- Engaging volunteers actively in societal projects.
- Writing grants proposals to support on-going and new projects.
- Communicating for social goods through local mass media.

A proper strategic model is required to help in creating a good structure of societal works, and identifying the right standards

# **Chapter One**

# How to Achieve Better Results?

While most workers in civil fields are sincerely trying to reach better results and sustainable impact in their work, many of them keep wondering about the reasons for low results and weak impact.

The main challenges start with the first moment of planning that might go wrong because of miss definitions, e.g. when activities are called «plans» just because they take the shape of actions, or when outputs are called «results» just because they are the first deliveries obtained from the activities.

A proper strategic model is required to help in creating a good structure of societal works, and identifying the right standards that can be used to measure the success of any project.

# The Strategic Model:

Strategic model is the path to plan and execute a project starting with a program theory. A program theory controls the nature of the tools, roles, and steps that are needed to execute the project as organized activities, led by a clear strategic vision, to create high impact results.

# **Program Theory:**

Whether stated or not, programs do have theories. A theory is spelled out through the way we generate activities and produce results (or is intended to be produced).

If we are launching an anti drug campaign, then should the theory we are adopting be based on a preventive model (so we focus on youth who haven't fallen in the trap of drugs yet but are living in socially toxic environment), or should it be based on the healing model (so we focus on people who are already infected)?

Would it be based on direct targeting (focusing on individuals who already are infected, or might be infected), or would it be based on creating a supportive environment (focusing on educating families and schools that should take care of such matters)?

Would the campaign be based on intellectual and emotional coaching (requires personal mentoring and facilitation resources), or on publicized education

Whether stated or not, programs do have theories

and awareness (requires resources and mechanisms of mass communication)?

Specifying a suitable program theory that fits the social context and the reachable resources shall ease the launching of a more reasonable and sustainable process that generates predictable and positive impact.

# Steps, Tools, and Roles:

Steps are practical initiatives planned to be launched; tools are means and instruments intended to be used; and roles are jobs to be assigned to workers and volunteers.

Being guided by a clear program theory should lead to harmonized steps. It will answer questions such as, is there a need for educational publications, train and assign mentors for each group of youth, start training camps, establish specialized health centers, launch a security campaign against drugs, or lobby a legal and political campaign? ...etc.

Those practical steps (sub programs) will guide us to specify the strategic tools that are needed (e.g. media, political, educational, etc) to reach successful results, and the strategic roles (who should do what?); e.g. is it the proper moment to ask for the help of a parliamentarian, an author, a teacher, a doctor, or a police officer, to take a major role at the heart of the new program?

# **Outputs and Results:**

The other question that we should solve is about creating a real impact. When we, for example, conduct a training or awareness workshop against drugs, then we shouldn't count the number of attendants, media coverage, and the distributed leaflets as outcomes or results, because they are not. They are outputs. We have injected resources (inputs) in a certain way (activity) and expected a certain response (outputs), but this is not the end of the story.

We still are to see the direct (or indirect) impacts and results, which might mean the number of people who have stopped dealing with drugs, or have become immune because of this workshop.

The positive return on the psychological and social side of the individuals' lives, the behavioral impact on the society, and the financial effect on health expenditures, are the results that we should look for in the short, middle, or long range.

We should not get satisfied with immediate process's outputs (although positive outputs should be targeted), but the real thing that we should measure is the middle and long range impact.

The real thing that we should measure is the middle and long range impact

# **Example:**

# Personal Status Law's Awareness Project:

This project aims to increase awareness between various groups of society, to emphasize the importance of issuing a written law of personal status, and that this idea does not clash with the Shari'a (Islamic jurisprudence), on the contrary, it goes in line totally with the Islamic legislations, because the Shari'a

contains plenty of laws and declarations that are fair and just, but it suffers from misunderstandings due to unqualified interpretations, or of the absence of written and clear text that is agreed on from all eligible parties.

# **Program Theory:**

The program theory is based on four pillars: Awareness, coaching, agreeable rhetoric, and coalition building. These pillars should be framed as the following:

 $(1^{st})$  Drawing the attention of the public to the importance of having written legislations on personal status,  $(2^{nd})$  coaching the activists in this field to the best awareness practices,  $(3^{rd})$  adopting a conforming rhetoric that is based on and consistent with the Shari'a instructions, and  $(4^{th})$  carefully building a supportive coalition by gaining the collaboration of the religious elite, the legislative authorities, opinion leaders, and the public; all that may lead to the belief that we should go after and accept the idea of issuing the law.

### **Strategic Tools:**

Tools are the means that are used to execute the campaign, and being strategic means that they are essential to create major impact. The program had adopted the following tools:

- Qualifying Meetings: Qualifying meetings are gatherings at which campaign organizers aim to inform concerned and relevant parties; exchange views and experiences, and discuss ways to enhance campaign performance and avoid missteps. The meetings worked as a gateway to the program activities. It paved the way – through media coverage – to launch the subsequent activities on a larger scale. Although the qualifying meetings largely targeted elitist groups, such

as activists, legal experts, academics, and Shari'a scholars; it included also public audience.

- **Supportive Frameworks:** Forming committees and teams (either temporarily for a specific task, or sustained for a continuous role). These frameworks are composed of Shari'a scholars, and legal experts, who can perform tasks that support the campaign goals, and whose social and professional status allows them to serve as acceptable people's representatives.
- Mass Communication: Connecting people to the opinions, explanations, and supporting ideas of personal status laws, through mass media, such as local newspapers and magazines, religious tribunes, TV channels, etc.
- Awareness Publications: Releasing publications in printed form (e.g. articles, studies, etc) or picture form (e.g. documentaries, advertisements, etc) that help in transforming ideas, opinions, facts, knowledge, and awareness from the mind of the elites and specialists to the public mind.

# **Strategic Roles:**

A role is a function performed by an individual or an institution that is participating in the campaign. Being strategic indicates their crucial position and effects to the over all success of the program's planning and execution. The following groups performed the most effective roles in the campaign:

- Civil Society Organizations: The most suitable

A role is a function performed by an individual or an institution that is participating in the campaign

party to become the official campaign representative, i.e. its forefront, headquarter, launcher, and speaker, was a women civil organization, especially since it is going to defend mostly women rights (particularly the rights of wives). While the government, judiciary, and other legislative parties are all part of the legislative process, civil society organizations may act as a neutral party in this case, and a fair defender of the victims.

- Shari'a Scholars: Since there wasn't any form of a written Personal Status Law that has been proven or enacted, and because the sensitivity of this issue is high; the support and approval of the Islamic scholars was essential. Their participation in the program is important because they may influence the format that the law might take, the way it might be enacted, and implemented. It is therefore vital to gain the support of this group, involve them in the campaign, and give them a major role in the delivery of the law, in order to gain the acceptance and support of the public opinion to the campaign. Shari'a scholars could be jurists, their local representatives, Shari'a courts' judges, Shari'a academics, and institutions that represent them and organize their activities.

### Conclusion: How to Achieve Better Results?

We need to plan and design projects and programs correctly from the first moment, using a good strategic model, to ease the execution, control, and evaluation of activities and results.

Designing a strategic model involves:

1. A clear program theory to lead the program movement.

- 2. Deciding on the strategic tools and means to be used that conform to the program theory.
- 3. Assigning strategic roles of suitable program partners.
- 4. Targeting direct and indirect results of the program that create the real impact, and avoid mixing it with the activities' outputs.

Volunteers can reduce time and work pressure on the project's main staff

# **Chapter Two**

# How to Engage New Volunteers into Programs and Activities?

Volunteers are people willing to provide support, and may become a powerful workforce of any project. They may be students, retirees, those who are currently unemployed, or others who are looking for a way to make a difference in the world and don't need to be paid for their work.

Volunteers are people who can donate their time to work for your project and can help create a significant impact.

# Why Do We Need Volunteers?

Volunteers can reduce time and work pressure on the project's main staff by enriching work process with their expertise and skills, handle primary tasks that need little experience allowing the staff to focus on key issues, and taking care of protocol or introductory works, such as welcoming guests, distributing flyers, preparing venues, conducting communications, photocopying,

or assisting with other administrative tasks.

There are two types of volunteers:

- **Seasonal Volunteers:** Those who volunteer in certain seasons, or for a limited period (e.g. donating two hours weekly as a typist, therapist, etc).
- Consistent Volunteers: Those who are ready to provide their services and participation for long periods, at different occasions, and could be a permanent member of a certain committee.

Being available when needed is the main condition in any volunteering job

# **Selecting New Volunteers:**

Can we deal with every volunteer as being worthwhile? Some organizations do engage (for such reasons as lack of enough number of them) any volunteer into any project. Experience has taught us that some volunteers would turn into a liability instead of being an asset. This might not be their mistake; it might be a fault made by those who decided to engage them without checking their qualifications, knowledge, behavior, skills, or experience. This situation probably will cause a waste of time, efforts, resources, and may lead to a project's failure.

### **How to Select New Volunteers:**

**1- Need:** Project operations and roles should be clearly identified, to clarify whether it needs volunteers in the field of engineering, nursing,

entertainment, designing, etc.

- **2- Qualification:** Clarity of needs leads to the clear requirement of qualifications, capabilities, and resources; thus guiding us to proper volunteer selection.
- **3- Time:** It doesn't help when you have the proper person to do a job, but lack the time to perform it. Being available when needed is the main condition in any volunteering job.

# **Engaging New Volunteers:**

Engaging new volunteers in the organization's work and projects — new or already existing - is one of the most important skills in managing voluntary activities and non-profit management. Perhaps the first serious step in this matter would be assigning a dedicated business unit (i.e. a committee to assign new volunteers to work) to handle the following:

- 1- Job Description: It has been said that a clear role leads to clear commitment. The clarity of a role serves many objectives, such as achieving proper mixture of roles and skills, better usage of capabilities, better control and evaluation process, and more predictable results. Some volunteers start to leave after a short period of membership when they realize that their initiative hasn't been taken seriously (e.g. an engineer being assigned to a societal-like role), or they still after a certain period don't know how they can contribute to the on-going activities (somebody might tell them «just do what you feel is right», without telling them really what is the right thing to do).
- **2- Training:** While some of the volunteers may possess various skills and capabilities, training might be the only

way to prepare volunteers to work at certain roles and projects. It doesn't mean providing the proper information, because training is much more than just that. Training implies building the right skills of the volunteers, and the right relationship between the working team. Assigning the right type of trainers is as important. A good trainer can energize the new comers, while the opposite might occur with a weak one.

# Example: Volunteers' training program to help domestic violence victims:

The actual training for volunteers will vary widely from program to program. Some will be as little as 8-hours, while others may be as much as 40-hours. The length of any training program is determined by the information and amount of training you want each volunteer to have prior to being scheduled to work.

### Possible volunteer classes:

- Family violence dynamics
- Family protection laws and investigation
- · Identification of the dominant aggressor
- Criminal prosecution policies
- Civil protective orders
- Family violence advocacy services
- Assessing danger and safety planning
- Identification of family violence injuries and strangulation
- Community partners and on-site services

Delegation
is a very
important
issue. It
defines those
who are
responsible
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and its results

VOICES (Stories shared by survivors of family violence)

These courses are designed to help volunteers understand the experiences of family violence and elder abuse victims, why victims stay or recant their original stories to authorities, as well as understanding the roles and responsibilities of onsite professionals.

- **3- Clear Delegation Process:** Delegation is a very important issue. It defines those who are responsible for the work and its results, and makes rewarding and accountancy processes easier. In many cases even good preparations and strong procedures fail because of bad delegation processes. A good delegation process consists of correlated factors, such as:
  - Clear job description that includes a clear process, authorities and responsibilities of the delegate, and other team members.
  - A delegate with proper qualifications, or whom had gained such quality and experience through training.
  - Informing all those who are related to the job of the delegate, and the authorities and responsibilities that have been delegated. This step avoids any misunderstandings, bypasses, or clashes between authorities.
- **4- Honoring and Rewarding Volunteers:** Volunteers should be well supervised at all times. Supervision gives them a sense of support and protect against possible problems. Once a volunteer is properly trained and supervised, the most important task is to honor and reward them for good work.

# Ways to show your appreciation for volunteers:

- Service time awards (number of hours or years of service)
- Letter or certificate for outstanding contribution
- Volunteer of the month acknowledgments
- Volunteer of the quarter award
- Volunteer of the year award
- Annual volunteer appreciation event

Honoring and rewarding volunteers should not be the final chapter of the relationship. Keeping them informed of the projects' progress may lead to future reiteration of their contributions and support.

# New Volunteers' Questionnaire:

A questionnaire is a group of enquiries that ask the volunteer to answer questions about himself/herself to ease the process of assigning, and locating him/her to the proper role. These enquiries shall request information about his/her qualifications, skills, preferred roles, timing, and resources he/she is willing to volunteer.

The questionnaire should be presented to the new volunteers once they apply to join the organization. In the case of the existence of a good database, the new volunteers' data will become an active management tool to coordinate work, distribute roles, and utilize available resources.

The questionnaire should be presented to the new volunteers once they apply to join the organization

# Sample of New Volunteers' Questionnaire:

It is recommended to start every questionnaire with a short introduction that explains its importance, and objectives, and thanks in advance to those who are going to provide answers for their cooperation. Then it may start by enquiring about basic data, such as:

- First , and surname
- Address, contact numbers, and e-mail.

Then the main questions may follow, such as:

- 1. Where did you first find out about the possibility of volunteering with our organization?
- 2. What are you hoping to gain from this volunteering experience?
- 3. What are you hoping to contribute to the organization's work?
- 4. Have you volunteered anywhere else before? If yes, where and what tasks did you perform?
- 5. What activities would you like to get involved in?
  - Newsletter
  - Office Administration
  - Events and Forums
  - Fundraising
  - Support Groups
  - Support and Information Line
  - Publications
  - Others
- 6. Do you have any ideas for other projects that you would like to discuss with us?

- 7. Do you prefer to work independently or with others?
- 8. Are you available:
  - During office hours
  - After office hours during the week
  - Weekends
  - University, school, or work holidays
- 9. Would you like to receive regular email updates regarding the progress of the organization's projects?

# Conclusion: How to Engage New Volunteers into Programs and Activities?

In many societies there is no problem in getting volunteers to do social work. The main challenge emerges in processing the proper engagement of those volunteers. To achieve this we need:

- 1. Clear job descriptions of roles and activities that may be assigned to volunteers.
- 2. How-to training of new volunteers.
- Clear delegation process coincides with informing all related parties of the delegation decisions.
- 4. Honoring and rewarding volunteers with all possible means.
- Keeping a database of the organization's activities and needs, to facilitate the categorization process of the new volunteers.

The main challenge emerges in processing the proper engagement of those volunteers

6.	Preparing a new volunteers' questionnaire to ease managing the voluntary process from the moment the volunteers hit the door.

# **Chapter Three**

# **How to Write Grants?**

The summary works as the gate of the whole subject

A grant proposal is a formal written request for funds to support a specific program or project, and it has two main goals:

- 1. Inform the reader of the project's plans.
- 2. Persuade the reader that their project is worthy of funding.

# How to Prepare an Effective Grant Proposal?

The main challenge lays in introducing a proposal that influences the mind and the will of the reader to accept to support the project with his/her own money. Creating such influence requires following six main grant writing steps, which are:

**1- Executive Summary:** This summary might be up to one page in length, in which the main idea of the project is briefly explained, its importance highlighted, and which also includes a brief

explanation of the grant. The summary works as the gate of the whole subject; it either opens the way to the grant in the possible donor's mind, or closes it. Lots of donors are business people or important figures that have no time to spend on trivial matters. So, if they like what's in the summary, then they will continue reading, which may lead in the end to obtaining the grant. But if the summary is weak or fuzzy, then the furthest place it may reach is the recycle bin.

# Example of a brief program idea:

«Youth's social, economic, and political marginality is a major challenge in our society. With more cultural and political mobilization that is created by official and societal parties, youth become more eager to have their share of participation in all those fields. To reach a positive level of participation they need to acquire different skills and capabilities to be more influential and have more impact. That's why our organization has introduced the idea of "Practice and Lead" as a program that is targeting to qualify 100 of the local community youths in the field of leadership through practical experiences and experiential learning supported by training workshops.»

- **2- Statement of Need:** This paragraph (one page) presents the main reasons behind launching such a project, the main problem that it solves, the beneficiary groups, and the good impact and results that would be reflected on society; e.g.:
  - The skills that the youth will gain through participation in the program
  - The social roles and opportunities that will be open to the youth after gaining the skills

- The various societal parties that will benefit from those results
- The social challenges that will be solved according to those results.

It is important to point out clearly the benefits that the donor himself/herself will gain either directly (through media promotions, economic support, etc), or indirectly (through environmental, social gains, etc) by donating.

- **3-Project Description:** This part (2 pages) presents the project operations and practical details, such as:
  - Practical steps that will be held as part of youth leadership training.
  - Training environment within the workshops.
  - Training providers, and their history and experiences in this field.
  - Project timings and duration.
  - Evaluation process and how to measure social impact.
- **4 -Budget:** The program budget should be presented (one page), so the reader can catch in a glance the main details of the major and sub-activities. Budget should punctually be calculated, and all necessary items should clearly be presented.

It is important to point out the high qualifications and experiences of the organization

## Sample of a budget:

No.	Item	Description	Cost
1	Training Workshops	\$\$/workshop X No. of workshops (charges of trainer, location, hospitality, printing, and training materials)	\$\$\$
2	Measuring Program Impact	Program analysis	\$\$\$
3	A Computer	Laptop computer for workshop presentations.	\$\$\$
4	Program Coordinator	\$\$ X No. of months	\$\$\$
5	Program Secretary (Part Time)	\$\$ X No. of months	\$\$\$
6	Office Rental	\$\$ X No. of months	\$\$\$
7	Communications	\$\$ X No. of months	\$\$\$
8	Stationery	\$\$ X No. of months	\$\$\$
		TOTAL =	\$\$\$\$

**5- Organization's Information:** (One page) whoever is willing to donate to the social good, wants to be sure that the money he/she has spent time and effort collecting, will not be wasted. That's why it is important to point out the high qualifications and experiences of the organization in managing projects, and socially utilizing financial resources. This can be done through a brief summary of similar projects that have been executed by the organization, and their impact on society. It is appropriate —in this section - to point out the Board's most influential members. Good reputation is a great factor in gaining financial support.

**6- Conclusion:** This last part (half page) summarizes all of what has been mentioned, and emphasizes the importance of the grant and its effects on the project's success. Finally, contact's names and information should be clearly added to the end of the proposal.

# **Writing Style Tips:**

- 1- Use Clear Specific Language: Plain, and straightforward language is often the most effective approach. Big words and jargons often complicate rather than clarify a message. It is better to act as if you are writing to an important, intelligent colleague or supervisor in a professional setting.
- **2- Provide New Information:** Don't just talk about already-known information. Move from known information to new information that may be considered as an added value to the proposal.
- **3- Use Correct Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation:** Writing without revision is a bad habit. Sloppy writing indicates carelessness, low respect, and poor qualification.
- 4- Use Different Font Sizes and Styles for Headings and Body Text: These styles create an easy shift from one point to another, in understanding the structure of the proposal and the way the information is presented, makes the reading more relaxed, and encourages the reader to continue reading.

Plain, and straightforward language is often the most effective approach

### **Conclusion: How to Write Grants?**

It is the way we write grants that – in many cases– influence the decision of the donors to financially support social projects. To guarantee this kind of support we need to consider the following:

- 1. Clear Justifications of the project's idea and the grant.
- 2. Clear process, and working steps and procedures.
- 3. Clear evidence of the organizational qualifications to launch such a project.
- 4. Clear budget and financial data.
- 5. Clear writing style that reflects high degree of care and respect to the reader.

# **Chapter Four**

# How to Create Impact through Mass Communication?

A classic definition of communication can be found by answering six questions: Who? Says what? To whom? Why? Using which channels? Using what effects?

Vague issues do not attract public audience (or any audience)

# Why Do We Communicate? Identifying Issues:

Organizations use media to communicate and reach out to the public audience in order to address social problems, announce their approach to handling these problems, gathering support, and to explain consequences. Using communications the right way requires:

 To address problems and issues clearly. Vague issues do not attract public audience (or any audience).

• Knowing what people (the targeted audience) already know regarding this issue, how they look at it, do they have the political awareness (its political effects), technical (its societal applications), economical (its cost and liabilities), or any other factors that might lead to a supportive or aggressive approach? Do they approach it from their political, religious, or economic interests? Having an awareness of all these dimensions shall facilitate the communication process, and point out all the angles that need either to be emphasized, or just briefly recognized.

The Communication process should also present the main approach towards the issues; what is the organization's theory of change (e.g. how does it think its efforts can prove helpful)? What does it - and the experts - think should be done to improve/solve these issues? And how do the two opinions meet?

# **Targeted Audience:**

There are two types of audiences:

- 1. Those who have the power to make change in favor of the raised issues (they might be hard to attract).
- 2. Those who are easier to attract, and are willing to listen to your message (without much power or influence).

Organizations better decide if they are using communications to create change, or to gain an easy response from a powerless audience. That's why they should - correctly – point out the audience that is critical to achieve their goals, e.g. it might be more feasible to target government officials, economists, health

experts, or industrialist (depending on the field of action) instead of the youth, parents, or workers. It is also wise to deal with the audience as the beginning of the chain in certain issues. Targeting parents in learning disability issues (since their children are the heart of such situations) may drive them to add pressure on teachers (the executers in this case) whom also might shift the pressure to the curricula departments (people with the authority); in other cases the chain effect may need to be reversed where the pressure starts at the top (the authority) and ends at the parents level.

There is another type of audience, which is the mediator; e.g. the legislators who are targeted to make the laws that force executive parties to act.

Finally, there are the adventitious beneficiaries, e.g. manufacturers of special needs and medical instruments that may support a law that obligates big industrial companies to create a disabled-friendly working environment, since these kinds of laws would increase demands on their products.

The Message:

A successful message should move the target audience from the position, attitude, or behavior it currently holds to a new position, more closely aligned with the campaign goals. This requires the translation of an organization's agenda into language, values, and frames that catch the interests of targeted audience.

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# Framing a good communication message requires:

- Determining what we want the audience to do, think, or feel as a result of this communication.
- A strategy that reflects what we know about the public's opinion in general, and the particular opinions of our target audience.
- Adequately translating the message to suit the educational level (complexity of experts, or simplicity of the non-educated), perspectives (pro, against, or neutral), and values (cultural, religious, social, etc) of the targeted audience.
- Strong logic that stands up to confrontation and criticism.
   A weak message may lead to the failure of a campaign, despite all other preparations and costs.

### The Media:

The right media is the piece that completes the picture. Using the internet may prove more feasible if communicating to the youth, while TV or radio may suit housewives and the home environment where they spend most of their time. Professional magazines fit experts and professionals, while daily newspapers target the public. This applies also to text messages, street signboards, printed flyers, etc.

The choice of media should be made on the basis of increasing impact, speeding up the reach out process, decreasing costs, and matching with the audience.

The revolutionary progress in communication technology has made the mass media and communication an easy, affordable, and available tool for every organization, and has opened doors to change and development. All what is needed now is cleverly utilizing these advancements to serve its objectives effectively.

# Conclusion: How to Create Impact through Mass Communication?

The latest revolutionary advancements in information technology and media have made mass communication an affordable and available tool to civil society organizations. But success in such issues is not inevitable; it requires a group of key factors, such as:

- Clearly identifying the issues to the audience.
   Obscure issues fail to attract followers.
- 2. Targeting the right audience –not the easy one- that has the power to change, and create influence.
- 3. Using a message that reflects the organizational strategy, and uses the right language that fits the audience's education, values, and which can stand up against criticism.
- 4. Choosing the proper media that conforms technically, socially, and culturally to the audience, and that can easily be reached.

Information technology and media have made mass communication an affordable and available tool

# **Epilogue**

# Developing Performance and Enhancing the Social Impact of Civil Society Organizations

«Best Practices» are means and tools that have proven through experience their feasibility, success, and positive results more than others. These practices may be determined through benchmarking, or according to standards.

Many major challenges within voluntary and non-profit works start in the planning stage where planning gets mixed up because of misunderstandings and wrong definitions. It also happens when actions are called plans just because they are executable tasks, or when ideas are considered realities just because we have intentions to execute them.

Misunderstandings might continue when we mix between outputs and outcomes, in which outcomes are the real results that create impact.

Designing an effective strategic working model is a good

indicator of having a clear vision and working theory in regards to the way the project is going to be built, the tools and instruments that are going to be used, the strategic roles, and the outcomes to be generated.

On the volunteer's side, despite the fact that there may be many volunteers wanting to help out with the project, it is crucial that the volunteers recruited understand the nature of the work. To do that we need to have clear job descriptions, qualifying training, proper delegation, and the honoring and rewarding process. Keeping a good database of all organizational activities and needs shall facilitate the categorizing process of the new volunteers, along with having a proper questionnaire.

Since financial resources are one of the most critical pillars of voluntary work, then - for many projects - writing grants is the milestone in gaining or failing to acquire financial support. To guarantee success, grant proposals should include the justifications and needs for the intended project or idea, the working process, the social benefits and outcomes, and the budget and financial data. The proposal should be written in a professional and attractive style.

Mass communication has never been easier and affordable. The information technology revolution has facilitated this factor to all civil society organizations. But success needs more than just IT, it needs a clear identification of social issues, the right targeted audience – that has the power to change - a good

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message that reflects the organization's strategy and speaks the language of people, and the utilization of the right media outlet.

Using these guidelines may have a huge effect on improving the managerial performance of civil society organizations, and will effectively enhance their social influence and impacts.

# References and Bibliography

The experiences and discussions of the participant organizations at «Operating for Impact: Improving the Efficacy of CSOs in Bahrain» program's workshops have been a crucial part of this guide, along with the guidance and opinions that have been extracted from the following resources and readings:

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