

## HOW TO BUILD A GOOD SMALL NGO



NGOs are built in every society since last three decades with purpose to focus on the solution of community problems privately with no or little help of governments. For all starting up an NGO, need three things;

- The first is passion: Establishment of any organization demand passion and keen interest with the welfare and development thinking. That passion encourages towards problem solution.
- The second is a group of people who share this passion, and the vision to match. An individual cannot be in a position to solve community problems without assistance of other people or experts.
- The third is a good relationship with the people you want to help (the beneficiaries). The Group of people wishing to solve community problems must have good working relationships at the grassroots level.

In most countries, NGOs start in two ways: one is where there is a group that has no voice but needs to find one. For example, a few perhaps the parents of children with disabilities start to meet and decide to organise themselves in order to get more resources for their children and for their family. This is the classic bottom-up beginning. Another way (top-down beginning) is that a group of people with education or status decide to adopt a cause, decide that they will help, for example, Welfare minded educated people or village groups who are interested in community problem solution or planting trees.

The difference between these two groups (bottom-up and top-down beginning) is that the parents of disabled children themselves are beneficiaries of the NGO which they are going to establish. This ensures that the beneficiaries are treated well. With the second group there is an “Us”, the people who are doing good, and the “Them”, the people being done good to. Whether this second group of NGOs will build well depends on whether they build good relations with the beneficiaries and give them satisfactory feelings making them part of the “Us”. This should be very quickly, otherwise the relationship becomes unsatisfactory.

There is usually a period of informality, when the group members at initial stages treat each other more or less as equals and everyone does everything, from sweeping the floor to deciding on policy. This is the period that which is remembered later as the best time. This period gives feelings of working together for a common cause.

With the passage of time, number of people gets bigger and jobs are assigned to people having specialisation. Outside organisations push NGO people towards a proper office, a computer, towards legal registration, the creation of a board. Everyone starts to get a salary.

So now the main actors are: the workers; the beneficiaries; the board; and the individual or small group who runs all matters. The group people may be workers or the boss, may be a board member who was previously a beneficiary. But they are important people who keep the NGO running, who provides the energy and drive. As the NGO gets bigger and has different jobs within it, one of the big tasks is to make all the workers feel that they belong in the NGO and that the NGO belongs to them. There is need to create a sense of ownership, among the beneficiaries and also among the workers.

Some organizations form a board but not every organisation makes. A Board becomes important when the workers start to be paid. A Board should have members who truly represent the beneficiaries and who listen to the workers. They ideally have no personal

interest except the good of the beneficiaries. In practice, checks and balances should make sure they are acting appropriately.

**The factors that will help you build an NGO of good quality:**

1. There should be clarity on the part of NGO people about their goals and values, about the field in which they are building their specialism; what approach they are taking, whether advocacy or implementation, and of making a recognisable name profile
2. They should build a relationship with the beneficiary group which has good will and respect on both sides
3. They should adopt a single objective, because then it is easier to achieve it
4. If the NGO is formed in a country with a strong civil society, this means that there are enough NGOs and Associations to form a mass big enough to be listened to, a mass existing between government and people
5. They should build up their professional capacity and build partnerships with other groups.

**Here is a formula to follow:**

**\*\*\* CAPACITY-BUILDING + PARTNERSHIP-BUILDING = POWER \*\*\***

6. The NGO people should build structures and ways of acting which are transparent, accountable and democratic.
7. They should develop a clear and sensible policy on gender.