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INTRODUCTION

During the last two decades UN Global Initiatives triggered an increasing mobilization of civil society, setting political agendas for issues of paramount importance such as population issues, eradication of poverty, human rights, environmental destruction, peace and disarmament, trafficking, terrorism, drugs, HIV AIDS etc.

Civil society has become a prominent feature of today's political and social development. In this context one may define civil society as the social space distinct from the private sector and State, that functions through organized, collective expression in the form of associations, social movements, grassroots groups and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Though organizational structures and aims differ between NGOs, associations and grassroots groups, they all represent millions of people to whom they are committed and seek to protect and promote their interests and ideals.

Women's NGOs in particular are characterized by values-driven, action-oriented commitments and voluntary work. Through programs, lobbying, research and information, initiation and implementation of projects, women's NGOs reach out to socially and economically disadvantaged people providing needed services and support. Their numbers increase every year and among them new grassroots groups emerge without skills and resources necessary to their survival. These groups lack experience in organization development or managerial skills and have no access to economic resources.

An organization develops from a "seed"; that seed might be a critical issue, a problem, or a common concern. Women who share common problems and concerns meet, talk, exchange ideas and experiences and often decide to act collectively to form groups. These grass roots groups, mostly managed by unpaid volunteers may be a first step towards expanding and establishing a more formal, legal, competitive, well-managed and self-supporting organization. This means well – planned programming, sound financial base, competent staff, a board of directors and good community relations.

This module may be used as a guide on how to build step by step and manage an NGO, and how to Plan and Manage a Project.

PEACE BUILDING

Peace building is not something we simply talk about. It is a concept, an *awareness*, a *love* to keep safe our families, our societies, our countries, our world.

Peace building may start with signing of a peace agreement, but it takes many years and continuous efforts to stabilize the political system, to regenerate the economy and to rebuild conflict-torn societies. In effect, peace building involves three types of approaches, all necessary to the successful transition from a state of conflict to a state of peace.

a. Political transition deals with agreements, drawing-up of a peace agenda, developing democratic structures, putting in place a legal framework to ensure the functioning of political parties, equal participation of women and men in all areas, freedom of speech etc.

b. Structural and economic development deals with the restructuring of the state infrastructure, the macro-economic planning, all ‘physical’ conditions in which a new system will function effectively.

c. Social Peace building is about relationships. It means building and sustaining relationships and learning to live together. It deals with feelings, attitudes, belief systems, values, memories as they are held between peoples, individually and in groups or organizations. It is about building a human infrastructure of people who are committed to embrace a new culture, a ‘peace’ culture within the social fabric of communal and inter-group life.

Women have a key role to play in all these areas and their contribution is essential for a dynamic peace process.

Women are generally excluded from peace talks and peace agreements. Even in cases where women are sitting on the negotiating table, they tend to withdraw and are marginalized in the long run.

Women’s inclusion in the process of **political transition** is necessary for two reasons. First, women as victims have a right to participate in the decision making process that impact their life directly, and second, their views on security can be valuable to the implementation of security programs that reinforce peace building.

In **structural and economic development**, women as family caretakers, are in a better position to identify the communities’ critical needs and priorities for reconstruction, and given the opportunity, they can revitalize the local community.

Women’s role in **social peace building** is critical. Women have the power to dispel fear, restore hope and confidence, promote good neighborliness, re-unite the community, nurture the new generations. They are a vital element of stability.

The **main tasks** for women's NGOs in post-conflict situations are:

- a) to formulate an 'Action Plan' to address the three areas of peace-building,
- b) to find ways for the integration of NGO's strategies into the national peace-building Agenda,
- c) to build alliances with other social groups in order to promote democratization and advocate for change in the social and political structures.

The **main challenge** is how to 'empower' women, enabling them to contribute to the decision-making process of their communities and societies, to achieve an equal status with men, and to participate in the post-conflict peace-building process in their countries.

PART ONE: Establishing an NGO

CHAPTER 1: Preparation

When you decide to establish your organization, you have to consider various issues and elements. Following is a checklist of considerations you have to make and actions you must take:

1. Define the purpose, vision, goal, aims, objectives and state the mission clearly.

What will be achieved by setting-up the organization? What is the vision? What are the set of values that will characterize the work? What are the long term goals? What is the aim? What kind of services will the organization be providing?

Be sure the mission statement defines the purpose of the organization, it is short and clear, so that the staff, the members and the community can remember.

2. Consider name, status, size and location of the organization.

What is the name of the organization? The name is very important as it immediately defines the nature. Furthermore it is important to consider whether the organization will be independent? non-profit? religious? a research center? And where will it be located?

3. Decide on the organizational structure according to particular needs and values.

The organizational structure concerns itself with decision-making. What decisions are made and by whom?; who is responsible for the execution of these decisions?; who is accountable?

4. Determine the kind of activities which must be developed.

Various activities must be planned in order to achieve the objectives of the organization including fundraising, research, training in skills development, etc.

5. Locate legal and accounting expertise.

Both are important skills that will need to be applied in the beginning stages of set up.

6. Draft the articles of the ‘Statute’ of the organization (with legal help if possible).

The Statute is the legal document that spells out the guiding rules of the organization: it defines who the organization is and how it functions, who is governing, who has the power, how responsibilities are distributed, and the means and sources of securing funds.

7. Submit your Statute to the local authorities in order to get legal status and permit to work.

One cannot work freely and effectively if one is not officially recognized, and – most important – one may not fundraise if the organization is not legal.

8. When you are ready, start with a bang, not a whimper!

This is a very important moment for the organization. It is a good idea to call a Press conference, with friends, community leaders, local authorities, and other NGOs to present your organization.

Celebrate your success !

VISION, MISSION, GOALS, AIMS, OBJECTIVES

An organization needs a clear **vision** of where it wants to go and what its **mission** is. This will enable people to share a common purpose.

The organization's vision reflects its **values** and its culture. Vision and values are interlinked; values are the foundation upon which the vision is created. Having common values is another link that brings people together.

Creating a vision is a collective task. One sits down with a team making an assessment of the **current reality**. The team assesses the problem and the expectations of those who the organization seeks to represent. Next, one defines the **future reality**. This is the **vision**. A vision has no time limit-no deadline, it may happen sometime in the future.

For example, suppose that the NGO's vision is '*A democratic society based on gender equality and justice, that ensures women's equal treatment and equal opportunities*'. The vision describes the kind of society you want to live in, and it is founded on your values i.e. *equity, justice, equality, democracy*.

Is having a vision enough? What shall the NGO do about it? How will the vision be realized? The organization's mission statement will specify how. The mission statement is very important because it captures in a few simple, clear words how the vision will be realized. In the abovementioned example, the mission statement might be: '*To promote women's human rights in the process of Development and Peace*'. It is brief and clear. The mission statement is the compass that guides all your organization's future actions, decisions and behavior.

With that in mind, the next step is something more concrete: goals must be set. The purpose of a goal is to help measure progress and indicate what is to be done next. Setting the goals defines what is to be achieved within a time frame, how it will be done and who will do it. Goals must be specific, achievable and measurable. It is important to know what the organization is doing, how is it progressing and what is to be done next.

Attempting to reach the goal, is like starting a journey, a quest for its achievement. And to know where and how to get there one must draw a map, a guide. This guide is a detailed picture of how to reach your destination. It defines **aims** and **objectives**.

Coming back to the example one might define the aim as: *'To monitor the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action focusing on the issues of:*

Eradication of female poverty
Economic and political empowerment of women
Combating violence against women'.

Finally, the **objectives** are to develop relevant activities and concrete actions i.e. *'Research, training and capacity building, advocacy and lobbying, writing ' Shadow Reports etc.'*

CHAPTER 2: Organization Structure

GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND MEMBERS

1. MEMBERS

An organization is composed of its members and staff. The members are primarily the ones who share a vision and have decided to form the organization. They are the initiators, founders, and the base of the organization; all together they form the ‘**General Assembly**’, which is the highest body of the NGO. The members’ role is crucial, as they have the voting power to elect the **Board of Directors**, they approve the ‘Annual Report’ (reporting on the year past) and the proposed ‘Annual Plan and Budget’ presented by the Board to the General Assembly of members, they decide on any changes to the Statute and – if need be – the dissolution of the organization. They have the first and last word.

However, a vision, aims and objectives are not enough for the running and development of an organization. One needs interested and skilled persons to translate the vision and goals into policies and functional services. One needs a ‘governing body’ to be responsible for the good management and security of the NGO. The **Board of Directors** can serve these needs.

2. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is the governing body of the organization, its leadership, responsible for legal and financial matters, policy-development and the administration of the organization. The Board must be loyal, duty bound and answerable to the members of the organization and to the State Authorities that regulate and monitor NGOs.

Depending on the nature, size and the needs of the organization, Board members can be:

- i. First, members of the organization, if the organization is an NGO. They share a common vision and goals, and are committed to work towards the success of the organization.
- ii. Knowledgeable individuals that are selected on the basis of their expertise on issues relevant to the work of the organization.
- iii. Community leaders who have community outreach, access to resources and enough time to spend on Board responsibilities.
- iv. People in high public places, but cannot be expected to attend meetings or do any actual work. The purpose of having such Board members is that their name and position will be a benefit in securing funds from local and international donors.

The size of the Board depends on the type, size and needs of the organization. Large NGOs with chapters (branches), tend to have 9 - 11 people on their Board, but smaller/new associations can work effectively with five to seven members.

The Board is elected by the General Assembly for a specific period of time, usually 3 to 4 years. Once elected, the Board chooses first the ‘*chair*’ or President of the Board and some other officers. A typical Board consist of a *Chair*, a *Vice- Chair* (President, Vice President), a *Treasurer* and the *Secretary*. The responsibilities of each officer are defined by the organization’s Statute.

The Chair yields the most power and is considered the head of the organization. He/she represents the NGO, signs all official and legal documents, selects and hires the Executive Director after approval of the entire Board, and assigns tasks to the Board members. The Chair or President is accountable to the whole Board for the decisions she/he makes on concrete issues.

The Board, as the governing body, is responsible for the NGO's operating policies, strategic planning, finances and community relationships.

In a well - established organization, the execution of Board decisions and general management of the organization is the responsibility of the **Executive Director**. In small ones, the Board performs various tasks, assisted by volunteers.

3. DIRECTOR: THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Director is the officer responsible for carrying out the policies and strategic directions the Board has set. She/he focuses on the present, the short-term and the bottom line. Her tasks include preparing and presenting to the Board, the Annual Plan and Budget, and reporting on the previous year's execution of the Plan. The Director sets procedures and ways of working, defines 'key indicators for performance', monitors the organization's progress and if need be takes corrective action. The Director exercises financial control, hires and supervises the staff, manages the day-to-day operations, and often engages in public relations on behalf of the organization. The Director is answerable to the Board.

4. THE STAFF

Staff is recruited according to **skills** and **tasks** needed in an organization, to carry out its work and program, provided the funds are available to pay salaries and other benefits. The staff functions according to the **Staff Rules** that determine the relationships between the NGO to its employees. What does the organization expect of its staff? What the staff expects from the organization?

The **Staff Rules** define:

- **Employee categories:** Is the employee full or part time? Temporary?
- **Hiring practices:** How do you recruit staff? Advertise? Headhunt? Contact someone you know? Find someone from your organization?

Ask them to fill out an application including a CV with their experience and expertise? Do you ask for a recommendation letter? What is the job description and the selection criteria? Education, specific training, knowledge, experience?

- **Salaries and benefits based on skills and experience:** how much will you pay to each staff for regular hours? For overtime? special assignments? Are you covering maternity leave? Insurance?
- **Hours:** minimum hours of work per week or month. How many days for vacations and holidays?

CHAPTER 3: Registering an NGO

THE STATUTE

The last task in establishing the NGO is to draw up the organization's Statute, the guiding rules according to which the organization will function. The organization Statute format is universal and is composed by *articles*. It is better to have legal advice when you draw it.

Following is a classical example of an NGO Statute.

1. Name and purpose of the organization:

First, one writes the name and type of the organization, i.e. religious, non-profit, scientific etc. Then, one states the purpose.

2. Location:

One must specify where the Office of the Organization will be located. This information includes the country and city in which the NGO will have its headquarters.

3. Goals and Objectives:

In this article the organization's aims and activities for achieving its goals are outlined.

4. Members:

All NGOs are based on membership. Depending on the regulations of the State, a certain number of founding members are needed for the setting up of an organization. For instance, in Greece, in order to establish an NGO there must be at least 21 founding members.

a) What are the *qualifications for membership* and the way new members are approved? The main qualification should always be that 'new members must believe in and accept the purpose and objectives of the organization'.

b) *Obligations and duties*. For example, all members must promote the work of the NGO and attend all meetings. Their duties include the election of the Board of Directors, decisions regarding changes of the Statute, approve the Annual Report of the past year and the proposed Operational Plan (presented by the Board of Directors), and decide for the suspension or the expulsion of a member etc.

5. General Assembly:

Members usually meet once a year in a General Assembly, which is the highest Body of the organization. The purpose of the annual meeting is to approve the implemented Operational Plan and the Financial Report of last year, presented by the President and the Treasurer of the organization respectively. Then, the Executive Director presents the Operational Plan and the Budget for the coming year.

The General Assembly is considered in quorum when the two thirds of its members are present. The meeting of the General Assembly is the responsibility of the Board of Directors; an invitation letter is sent to each member specifying the date and place, as well as, the Agenda of the meeting, at least fifteen days in advance of the meeting. For the election of the Board of Directors, two thirds of the NGO members must be present.

6. The Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors is the Governing Body of the Organization, responsible for its well being and expansion. This article describes the size of the Board, how long the duration is, who can be a Board member and under what circumstances a board member can be expelled. It also specifies how often the Board meets, who is calling the meeting, and how many members must be present for decision – making to be valid. When voting is necessary, half the Board plus one must be present. Finally, this article underlines what the responsibilities of each officer are (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary General).

7. Committees.

If decided that the organization needs Committees, one must describe their function and responsibilities. Of course the decision of the establishment of one or more Committees is up to the Board of Directors, but it is also beneficial if included in the Statute.

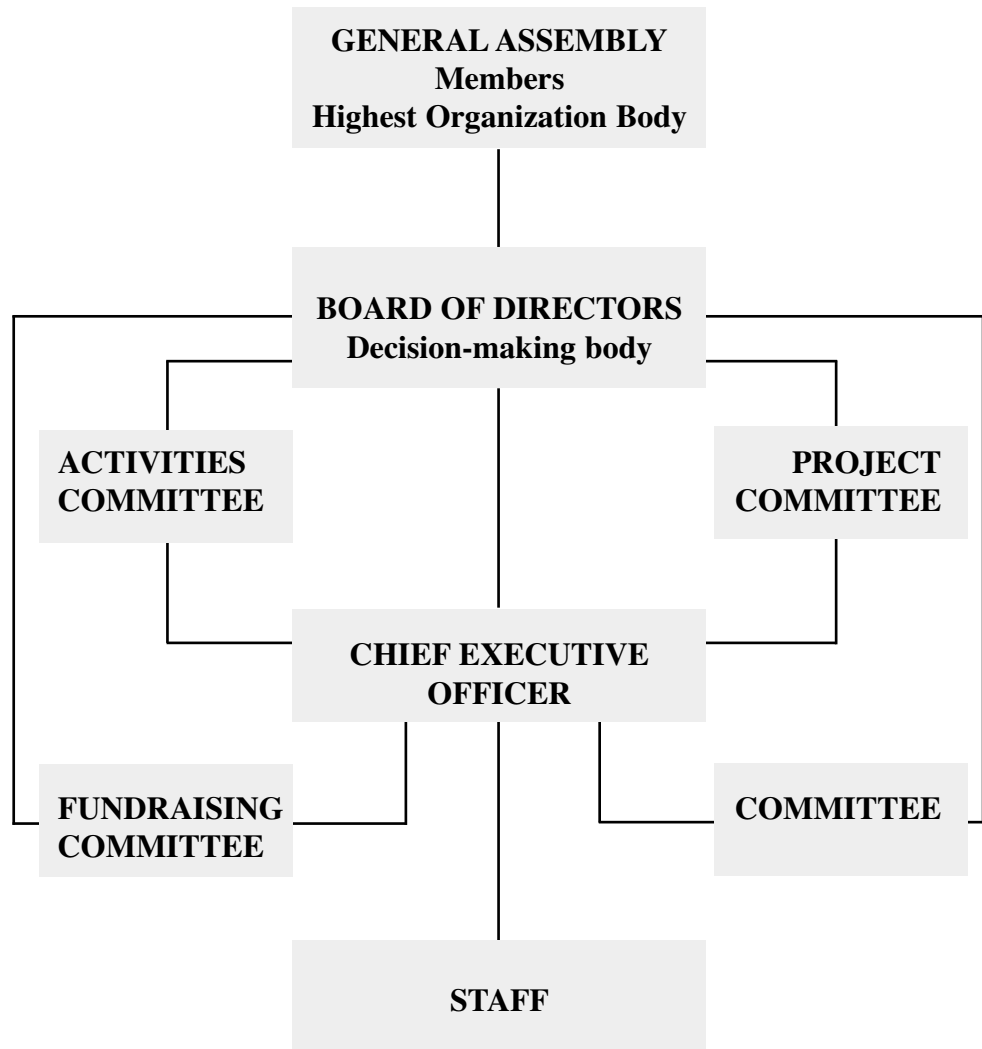
8. Amendment of the Statute.

Sometimes, there is a need to amend or adopt a new article in the Statute. The Board will decide if and when, but it is the General Assembly who will approve the motion or not.

9. Dissolution of the Organization.

This is a serious matter and only the founding members in an *Extraordinary General Assembly* meeting, have the power to dissolve the Organization.

ORGANIZATION CHART



PART TWO: Sustaining an Organization

CHAPTER 4: Managerial Skills

STRATEGIC PLANNING

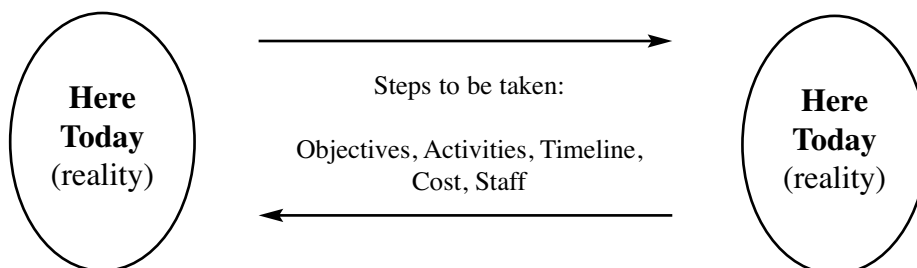
The primary role of the NGO is to plan for the future and the sustainability of the organization. This planning is called *strategic planning*.

What exactly is strategic planning? Strategic planning is the process during which one determines **where** one wants to go, **what** one wants to do, **how** to get there and **when**, including securing the necessary resources. Strategic Plans are usually longer term, for two to three years. Finally one makes specific programs for the implementation of the strategy.

The outcome of strategic planning is the production of a realistic plan and program that will help you reach your goals.

Strategic planning is the Board's responsibility.

STRATEGIC PLANNING CHART



On the basis of the long-term Strategic Plan, the Director prepares the Annual Plan (usually referred as Operational Plan) for the coming year which includes *objectives, activities, timeline, financial and staff requirements*.

What are the priorities for the coming year? What is to be achieved? Objectives must be clear and their outcome "measurable".

For instance, your objective might be "*to assist many women refugees with small children to find community resources to secure child care, health services, family planning and counseling*". This objective is clear and measurable: (a) everyone understands it and (b) the number of assisted women refugees, the kind of resources they found etc., can be determined.

When annual objectives are defined one asks "*what programs, actions, activities will help to reach those objectives*"? According to each objective in your program you set up activities and a time framework: "When will the activity start and how long will it last? Who will be responsible of the specific job?"

OPERATIONAL PLAN: PROGRAM AND BUDGET

1. Financial Planning and Management

Financial planning is a key activity whose aims are to: ensure the long-term sustainability of the NGO, make sure that it has no cash problem and is provided with the financial resources to keep the organization running and growing.

Financial planning is a continual process, which includes various elements such as:

- a) the identification of the financial needs, problems and opportunities for the NGO,
- b) the development of realistic short, medium and long-term financial strategies.

Thinking about financial plans the NGO must focus on the future, keeping in mind the *Strategic Plan* of the organization, its *vision* and objectives..

2. Short – Term Financial Plan: The Budget

The budget is the financial plan that defines what the NGO wants to accomplish from a financial perspective during a year. The budget includes both income sources and expenditures. It is a process, which includes realistic planning covering a certain period of time, cash-flow management, regular budget reviewing, taking corrective action and financial reporting.

The starting point is the *Annual Operational Plan* already made, that defines your priorities, the staff you need, the activities and the projects you have developed, for which you need funds in order to be implemented.

The first part of the budget describes the expenditures, which are “fixed costs/basic costs” and “variable costs”. An example of basic costs are staff salaries, office rent and utilities such as water, electricity, heat, telephone etc. Variable costs depend on the various activities throughout the year.

The second part of the budget reflects “income”. What are the sources of income to depend on?

Many NGOs charge a membership fee; others sell handicrafts; educational organizations charge fees for courses, some even provide paid services.

One has more control over the abovementioned activities than over grants and donations. Before calculating them it would be wise to contact the private or public donors that are interested in your work and find out the size of donations and grants they usually give to NGOs. Finally, a large portion of the income depends on specific programs, such as *projects*.

ANNUAL OPERATIONAL BUDGET

A. EXPENDITURES	TOTAL COSTS
1. Fixed Costs:	
- Office rent
- Staff
- Utilities
- Materials
Total Fixed Costs
2. Variable Costs:	
- Organization of Conference
- Fundraising campaign
- Travel
- Unexpected
- Project A.
Total Variable Costs
TOTAL EXPENDITURES
B. INCOME	TOTAL COSTS
- Leftover from last year
- Membership fees
- Fundraising event (bazaar)
- Handicraft sales
Anticipated revenues:
- Cash grants
- Contributed equipment
- Project A.
TOTAL INCOME

CASH-FLOW MANAGEMENT

The prepared budget shows how much one plans to spend and the anticipated revenues for the period of one year. However, while one may be certain of the expenses, one cannot be not sure if the money will be available when you will need to spend it. It is one thing to raise 12 thousand dollars to cover your yearly expenses, but it is another to have the cash ready at hand when you have to pay bills.

How can one manage, so that these great difficulties do not occur?

The good manager develops a 'cash-flow schedule', which breaks - down the expenses and income on a monthly basis.

Though most of the expenses are steady, some may fluctuate at some point.

Accordingly, one must calculate the revenues: how much is left over from last year? When will fees, subscriptions, fundraising activities, donations, grants be implemented.....It is important to keep in mind that it takes time and persistence to receive a promised donation or an approved grant.

The 'cash-flow' plan must be closely monitored and regularly viewed, in order to make sure that everything is on the right track. If at some point you realize that there is a shortage and one will not be able to cover the expenses, and may take *drastic measures*. What can one do to get out of this difficult situation?

Some NGOs get a loan and repay it when the money is available – but interest rates might make the amount you owe much higher than the amount you borrowed. However, most organizations cut down on their expenses.

At the end of the year when the financial report is complete one can identify what went wrong. Were the goals unrealistic? Was the cash-flow management inadequate? The findings will help you make the next annual budget of the organization.

ANNUAL BUDGET BREAKDOWN

1. EXPENDITURES:			
Expense Item	Estimate	Monthly	Annual
A. STAFF:			
1. Director	Full-time	\$	\$
2. Secretary	Full-time		
3. Accountant	2 days per week		
Total staff salaries:		_____	_____
	
B. OFFICE:			
1. Rent			
2. Utilities: Electricity, Water, Heat, Telephone	Average		
3. Cleaning	Average		
4. Supplies (paper, pens etc.)	Average		
Total office expenses:		_____	_____
	
C. EQUIPMENT:			
1. Computer			
2. Photocopier			
3. Maintenance			
Total Equipment expenses:		_____	_____
	
D. VARIOUS:			
Postage stamps, books, subscriptions, etc.			
Total various expenses:		_____	_____
	
E. ACTIVITIES:			
1. Conference			
2. Fundraising			
3. Workshop			
4. Sensitization campaign			
Total activities expenses:		_____	_____
	

BOOKKEEPING

Preparing the NGO's Annual Operational Plan and Budget is not enough; the next step is to develop a method to document / record where the money comes from and where it goes. In other words, a bookkeeping system is necessary for your accounts. Finally, one must find a person knowledgeable in accounting to be responsible for your 'Books'.

Good bookkeeping is necessary because:

- a) it gives all kind of information concerning finances at any time
- b) it helps estimate fund raising needs and
- c) it provides the necessary information to prepare a Financial Statement and the Annual Financial Report.

Good Bookkeeping reflects the efficiency of the organization to manage financial matters prudently and competently. In fact, the sustainability of the organization depends on it, and the golden rule of 'good bookkeeping' is:

Keep books up to date – it gets harder to do the longer you leave it

Financial Statements are usually done every 3-4 months, but they can be done any time, i.e. when the Board meets and 'finances' is an item on the agenda, the person responsible for accounts prepares it and the Director presents it to the Board. *Annual Financial Reports* are made at the end of each year and give a clear picture of the financial situation: **what** the balance is from the previous year (as of December 31st); **how** the money was spent and **where**, as well as, **if and how much** will be left in the Bank account to start over the next year.

The Financial Report is a 'strong card' when one goes hunting for funds.. Private donors, public institutions and international funders, want to view the Financial Report before committing themselves, and often ask that the Report be validated by a certified Public Auditor.

FINANCIAL REPORTS MUST BE:

CLEAR

Anyone should understand them
They are public statements and should be accessible to the public

CONCISE

Keep it short but accurate

DETAILED

Include all financial activities

TIMELY

Must be prepared after the end of the period as possible

CHAPTER 5: Leadership and Communication

1. FUNCTIONS OF LEADERSHIP.

Leadership is necessary for the development of an organization. It creates the vision, sets goals, ensures that objectives, resources and responsibilities are located and selects the 'values' and 'culture' of the organization. Organization culture means 'the way of doing things' and includes all the cultural aspects of people - rituals, symbols, ceremonies, norms etc.

The group leader:

- a. **Prepares the members and starts interaction.** Members in an NGO usually work in groups, and often need guidance for productive discussion. The leader has to carefully plan the meeting in order to make the best of the member's time and energy. Members need to understand the purpose of the meeting, be briefed on the issue or problem to be discussed; perhaps read relevant material or see a video before the meeting. Whatever the needs, the leader is responsible for organizing and coordinating them.
- b. **Supports effective interaction.** When the group starts working together, the leader needs to monitor the members' interaction, in order to ensure that the discussion keeps going.
- c. **Ensures member satisfaction.** All individuals have psychological needs and wants that motivate them. In all group discussions, the leader should take into account member's needs and motivation and allow space for the expression, not only of opinions but also of feelings.
- d. **Manages Conflict.** Conflict is a frequent event in group interaction. Usually conflict occurs when one member dominates the group, when someone monopolizes the discussion, or when a member does not want to participate. It is the leader's responsibility to address it by ensuring the dignity and respect of all members.
- e. **Breed other leaders.** One of the functions and responsibilities of the Organization is to breed other leaders. Only by doing so can the NGO survive and develop. This can be done through expert training and by mentoring.

People often ask if one can learn to be a leader. We consider that most people can learn leadership skills and play a leading role. Of course it is not easy. It takes effort, appropriate training, application, practice and dedication to succeed. Above all one must possess that very important quality, courage to change yourself, to try new things and take risks.

2. COMMUNICATION

Among our knowledge and skills, communication is the most important and useful. Our communication ability is the strongest asset in our personal, social and work lives.

Communication involves the use of all our senses. We speak, hear, see, touch, and feel. All these means of communication are important but we don't pay equal attention to them. We usually consider communication synonymous with speaking and writing.

There are three kinds of communication: **Interpersonal communication, Group communication** and **Public communication**.

In **interpersonal communication**, we talk with people, listen, learn about them and reveal ourselves to them (family, friends, colleagues etc.)

Through interpersonal communication we can establish, maintain, destroy or repair personal relationships. We communicate interpersonally when we face each other, through telephone, during counseling, when we collect information etc.

In **group communication**, we interact with the other members to exchange information and experiences, generate new ideas, solve problems etc. This happens in social functions, in the place we work, in our organizations, in board meetings etc.

In **public communication** we inform the others and in turn we receive information. This type of communication is when we give a lecture, make a speech, sit on a panel etc., in order to persuade others to do something, to buy something, to change an attitude, an opinion or a value.

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

Culture influences all forms of communication. It influences what one says and how one says it. It influences the topics one talks about and the strategies one uses in communicating information. Culture also plays an important role in selecting what information is absorbed from the volume of messages that are received daily from various sources (radio, T.V., the Internet etc.). The selection depends on the relevance of the message to the particular culture. Success in interpersonal, group or public communication, in our job or our social life depends on our ability to communicate with people who are culturally different from ourselves.

Intercultural communication is facilitated if we:

- **Share feelings without judgment**
- **Share contradictory feelings**
- **Share personal experiences**
- **Assume good faith on the part of the speaker unless we have reason to assume otherwise**
- **Assume the others have information you don't have and do not feel you know everything you need to know about the other or the situation.**
- **Ask questions out of a sincere desire to learn or clarify**
- **Ask open-ended questions that help the speaker tell his/ her story**
- **Withhold judgment, at least until you feel you have a more complete understanding of their perceptions and feelings**

PART THREE: Project Planning and Management

CHAPTER 6: Project Cycle

1. WHAT IS A PROJECT?

Projects are the ‘bread and butter’ of the organization. Knowing how to plan and manage them efficiently, enables survival in the very competitive twenty first century.

What is a Project and what is Project Management?

The leading expert on Project management, J.M. Juran, defines a project a ‘a problem scheduled for solution’.

In our experience a “Project is a multi-task activity with a *purpose*, a *clearly developed plan*, a *budget* and a *team* to implement it within a *specific timeline*”.

Both definitions are correct because, in reality, a project is initiated and implemented to solve or work towards solving some kind of problem. Furthermore it produces an outcome, it is done only once and it has a life-cycle.

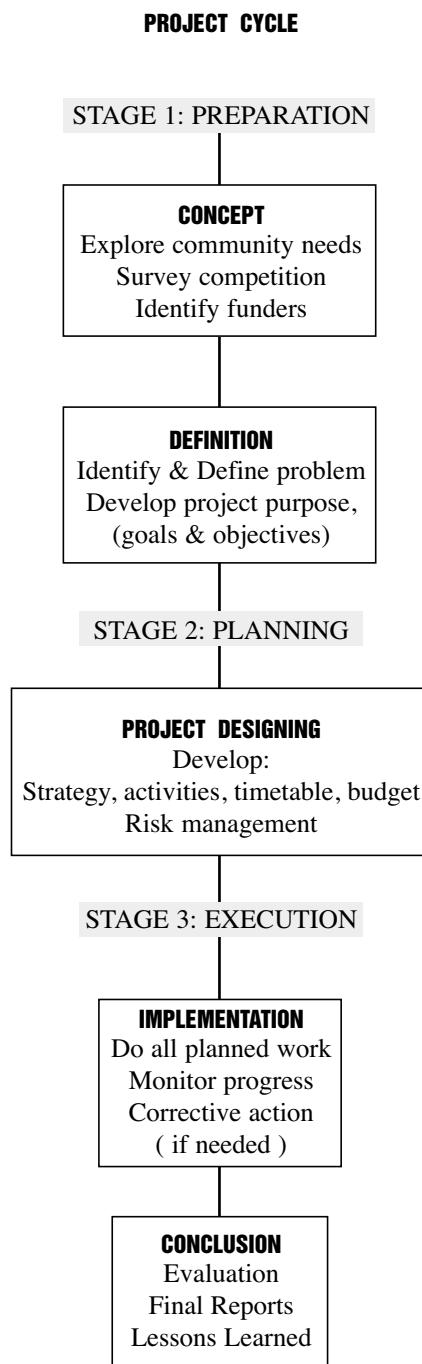
An important component for the success of a project is good **Project Management**. And by project management meaning the facilitating of planning, scheduling and carrying out all the tasks that must be done to achieve the project objectives.

Is there a difference between Organization management and Project management?

Organization management and Project management are two different things. The management in an Organization goes on as long as the NGO exists and functions, while Project management is restricted to the duration of the Project.

2. PROJECT CYCLE

Every project has a life-cycle which includes the following stages: Preparation, Project Planning and Execution.



3. DRAFTING A PROPOSAL

All funding agencies and grant donors have application forms that specify the kind of information they need and their reporting requirements. However the majority of funders will want the project proposal to include:

Brief Description

Project Title, responsible NGO, summary of proposal, duration.
1 page



Statement of need

Documentation of project need and of the problem you intend to address



Detailed project description

Work plan with strategies, tactics and methods for monitoring and evaluation



Budget

Financial plan to cover anticipated expenditures



Organization information

History, performance and qualifications of your Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive summary includes:

1. NAME OF THE NGO SUBMITTING THE PROJECT:

Fill in the name of the organization, address, phone number etc.

2. TITLE OF PROJECT:

The title of the project usually reflects what one intends to do, so it is important to spend some time thinking about it. It must be catching to attract the donor's attention straight away.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The brief description is critical because it must transmit with few sentences the entire content of the Project. It must be concise and include the vision, the problem, the overall goal, the aims, the activities, the location, the time line, and the cost.

It must be explicit because donors are busy people with too much to read, so give them a comprehensive sketch to impress them.

CHAPTER 7: Project Management

Stage 1: Preparation

Every project begins as a **concept**, an idea, the beginning of the formulation of a plan of what the project will accomplish and why. It is the preparation stage.

The first step is to start gathering information concerning the needs and problems of the community. Coming from conflict-torn areas one will find out that there are many needs to be addressed: population groups to be helped, gaps in services to be filled, environmental disasters to be reduced, social problems to be solved...To gather the information you want it is necessary to incorporate a *gender perspective*.

Data collecting, reveals if other NGOs are working in your community and what kind? What their focus may be? If anyone is already working on a problem that the organization intends to tackle? And if your work is interacting with others? The Project will not be viewed in isolation but as part of a package of Programs and Projects many NGOs have submitted for approval. You have to persuade donors that **your Project** is necessary, original, and effective for addressing the community's needs, and it does not duplicate or overlap some other NGOs' work.

Another area for investigation is '**potential funders/donors**'. The information collected will be of great value which will reveal: **Which** donor funds what type of projects? What is the average size of funds they give? One may need to adjust the Project budget within the range of donations. **What** are the reporting requirements, their Format guidelines? Each donor has specific guidelines that must be followed when designing the Project. One can save time, effort and money by avoiding the submission of the Project to a donor that is not interested in the line of your work.

Next, one must **identify the problem** to be addressed. What kind of problem is it? What is the dimension of the problem? Who and what is related to the particular problem? What possible solutions are there to the problem? Is the particular problem within the scope of activities of your NGO? In this phase you use '*gender analysis*'.

After identifying the problem and a potential solution, one may start thinking about the **Project's purpose**. The Project purpose includes goals and objectives. Goals must be achievable. Do not forget that the Project will be implemented in a realistic world.

The donors must know that the work will make a difference in the lives of people living in traumatized environments. Do not forget that donors have visions as well. They do not give money because they think it is their duty. They participate in particular efforts because they also want to make a difference in the world.

The **goals** set will help to measure progress. **Objectives** are the concrete steps to achieve the Project goals.

There is cause to celebrate after the first two steps are completed. The principal idea has emerged, data has been collected related to community needs, research regarding competitors and potential funders has been conducted, the problem has been identified, and various possible solutions have been considered and the project's purpose has been developed. Now it is time to act and prepare the project **plan**.

Stage 2: Planning

A plan is a detailed document that lays out all the components to success: it includes **strategy, tactics and logistics**.

STRATEGY is the overall approach, the methodology that will be applied to do the work. The strategy begins with the assessment of the organization's strong and weak points. The strategy to be adopted must be based on best assets. For example, the organization has a team of good researchers, so when 'research' is conducted they will be used. Or expertise in 'gender analysis' will come in handy in analyzing certain information.

TACTICS are the details, the breakdown of how to do the work. This includes the target group and answers to questions such as: the location, which activities are necessary, what skills are needed, how long will it take, what materials will be used, what measures will be taken if difficulties occur during the execution of the project.

LOGISTICS are the calculations of all costs of the entire Project; they constitute the **Budget**.

The planning stage is crucial because **the Project Proposal** is designed and the work-plan presented including specific goals and schedules, potential outcomes and alternative plans. How will the organization deal with setbacks? How can one bring in new resources? What outside elements could affect the project? In other words, show the Donor that the organization can plan well and is thinking ahead.

After designing the project submit it to the Donor and wait for approval.

When the project has been approved one may start the **execution stage**, which includes, as we already have pointed out, the implementation and conclusion phases.

Stage 3: Execution

a. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation phase includes *monitoring* and risk *management*

Monitoring: Monitoring is the process used to oversee, check and record how the project is progressing.

According to the Plan, every activity has an objective, a cost and a certain timeframe in which it is to be performed. The activities plan defines the sequence of activities, the timetable defines when each activity must take place, and the budget defines the cost of each activity.

The monitoring tool is the 'Status Review' which is usually conducted every two to three months to see where the project stands. The Status Review serves a) to measure the results of the tasks and activities already implemented against the original plan, and b) to identify possible problems that need to be addressed.

Using this tool constantly, the project manager maintains **control** of the Project. We use the word **control here** not as a means of power and coercion, but as a means of assessing progress in a project so that corrective action might be taken if a problem occurs in the implementation. In other words, the 'information' is utilized as the main element of control, rather than power.

To understand it better, imagine that one is driving a car and suddenly realizes that they took the wrong track. What shall be done? Surely one will see that they must go back to the right road, otherwise they will get lost.

Risk management: Risk management is the corrective action taken if things are not going according to plan. Most projects are exposed to hazards at some point or another. Of course, one can not anticipate when and if the project will run into difficulties, however, one must be prepared to cover the unknown elements of risk. What can go wrong? There are various elements that might influence the progress of the project. The donor's cash contribution might be late in coming, government policies might change, political unrest might occur, weather conditions might make implementation difficult, the management may not be satisfactory, the project may run out of schedule etc.

Keeping all that in mind helps one in deciding what preventing measures one may take.

b. CONCLUSION

The project is done when all planned tasks and activities have been implemented. The conclusion stage includes:

- Overall evaluation by the project manager
- Overall assessment by an external Evaluator
- Preparation of final Activities Report
- Preparation of Financial Report
- Validating the Financial Report by a Public auditor
- Printing and distributing Lessons learned

The external evaluation is necessary to ensure that mistakes are not swept under the carpet. The evaluator is expected to be objective and to carefully scrutinize the information on the basis of which the evaluation will be done in relation to the performance, the outcomes and whether the results met the set goals and objectives. The overall evaluation will highlight the successes, as well as the mistakes. From it one can 'learn' the good points which can be applied in the future, and what to avoided in the next project.

The '*lessons learned*' are usually printed and disseminated so that other NGOs can benefit from the experiences.

PART FOUR: Fundamental Organization Activities

CHAPTER 8: Searching for funds

FUNDRAISING

So far the aforementioned material has provided a framework for setting-up an organization, defining a vision and objectives, drawing up the Annual Operation Plan and budget. Now it is time to consider how to find the money to finance the activities and keep the NGO growing and running effectively.

This chapter deals with “**fundraising**”: fundraising plan, funding sources and requesting contributions.

Fundraising is probably the most important activity; the future of the organization depends on it. It is not a one-time activity but a continuous process; it is a difficult and copious operation, but a necessary one. Pulling together human resources, using critical thinking and analytical skills, are all important in determining what the fundraising plan of the organization will be.

As all serious operations, ‘**Operation Fundraising**’ needs a **Strategic Plan**. Unless one maps out a workable plan, one will not be able to know how to use the resources, how to structure the program or how to design fundable proposals.

Funding Strategic Plan. When a **Fundraising Plan** is designed, it is created with the future/sustainability in mind and ideas for further sources of funding. It is a **plan for success**. But how?

A fundraising expert developed a five-step guide to successful fundraising: “**The Five Rs**”:

Readiness
Research
Reality
Relationship building
wRiting

Readiness means ‘getting ready’ to answer all the questions the potential donor will ask: What are your organization’s goals, mission and objectives? Are there resources to reach the goals? What kind of programs are there? Who is in the Board of Directors? Is the Board able to support the NGO? Funders need evidence of Board involvement and support. Is the Financial Statement clear and transparent? Funders want to see how competent the organization is in managing its finances. In sum **Readiness** means building a ‘**Credentials Portfolio**’ and becoming credible.

The next step is **Research**: Research is an ongoing activity, and it is preferable if a ‘dedicated’ staff member is assigned – on a part-time basis – to research and cultivate contacts on a continuous basis. To raise money one must find the best sources for each

type of the financial needs: Who provides general operational support? (i.e. core funds for the running of the organization - which are most difficult to find). Who is giving grants for single activities such as conferences, seminars, workshops? To find the necessary information, one has to research *Who is Who* in the funding world. Who are the funding sources? Private individuals? Foundations? Public institutions? International or regional organizations? The researcher will collect all sorts of data relating to the kind and size of donor agencies, what their specific focus is, what kind of programs they usually fund, what sort of NGOs they are willing to fund, the size of donations they make, if they have rules that must be followed or application forms which must be filled.

PREPARING YOUR BANK OF FUNDERS

Main funding sources are:

A. PRIVATE SECTOR:

* Foundations. Foundations are independent agencies that fund a broad range of programs and NGOs. Some world known foundations are the Americans Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Paul Getty Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation; the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Aidenhaouer Foundation, etc. You can find most big foundations listed in library directories.

* Religious organizations. Those donors are connected to religious denominations such as churches, synagogues, mosques etc. They usually fund charitable and community development programs and most support activities promoting peace building.

* Corporations. Corporations are private business companies that usually provide funds for activities related to the Corporation's business interests, or make donations. For instance, soft-ware firms often fund training seminars on 'new technologies'; they also donate soft-ware equipment. Bill Gates, the ICT magnate, offers computers to schools and many NGOs in developing countries.

B. PUBLIC FUNDING SOURCES:

Funds also come from the public sector: Government Institutions, Ministries, Local Government and Banks. They provide:

a) *Grants*, that support research, training, technical assistance, facilities and equipment.

b) *Contracts*, legal agreements between the public agency and the NGO, that usually cover studies and surveys, consulting, conferences, publications, etc.

One can identify which public agency / institution funds what type of activities and try to approach the ones that are the most suitable. Perhaps a Board member that is a prominent figure can undertake this task. Follow and attend the activities the donors organize – it is a good opportunity to develop contact channels.

C. INTERNATIONAL FUNDERS:

The bulk of NGO funding comes from International Donors.

Some United Nations agencies provide funds of specific focus:

- UNDP – United Nations Development Program – supports development projects of all kinds.

- ILO - International Labor Organization, based in Geneva, Switzerland, supports mostly projects related to employment.
- UNIFEM, based in New York, provides grants to projects targeting women.
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund - supports a broad range of projects and NGOs working on population and related issues.
- UNESCO, based in Paris, France, provides small grants for projects focusing on science and culture.

Many UN agencies have Country Offices in developing and transition countries.

- The World Bank is another International Donor, which has developed special relations with NGOs. Its funding often takes the form of 'Purchasing of Services' that is, instead of the Bank doing a certain activity, it contracts a local NGO to deliver the services. This might be a research study, surveys and / or consultative services.
- One of the largest international funders is the European Union.

The EU funds governments, the public and private sectors and NGOs. Their Funding Program is different from other international donors and covers various areas. It breaks-down into 'thematic programs'. The European Commission decides when to 'open' a thematic program, according to the priorities set by the Council of Ministers. When opening a thematic program, the responsible Direction issues specific guidelines, sets a closing dead-line and invites interested parties to submit proposals related to the specific theme.

One must regularly check their website to see if there is a 'Call for Proposals' and whether a particular 'call' is of interest.

- The Commonwealth Secretariat, based in London, UK, provides mainly technical assistance to governments of developing countries in the Commonwealth. (54 countries worldwide)
- Foreign Diplomatic Missions, may provide support to NGOs in developing countries.

When finished, the Researcher compiles a List of Funders with addresses, contact numbers and websites.

The 'Five Rs' of successful fundraising, means becoming aware of community realities, and community needs.

Armed conflicts leave behind destruction, demolished infrastructures, shortages in social services, open wounds, widows and orphans, refugees and displaced persons, shattered communities. The task is to assess your community's needs, to find out which of those needs relate to the organization's goals, mission and capacity. Information is gathered about: a) the section of the population the organization is targeting: single mothers, refugees, abused women etc.), b) the extent of the problem intended to address: unemployment, violence against women, HIV-AIDs etc. and c) existing services, running Projects focusing on the above, other NGOs working on similar issues.

When all the relevant information is gathered, one can design fundable Projects and write grant proposals. The gathered information will serve: a) to describe the Project background, b) help define the project's objectives and activities and c) design an innovative Project.

CHAPTER 9: Developing Public Relations

CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

When the Project proposal is ready, one may start thinking about Community Relationships Building:

The usefulness of the organization and the success of the Programs depend on the relations within the community, people, and the public. Who are they? Firstly those the organization is committed to serve: refugees? one-parent families? the elderly? youth? Then, it is important to conduct relations with local authorities, government agencies, political parties, community leaders, business people, potential donors, various NGOs. Finally, building relationships with clients is also important.

In developing community relations/public relations one must:

DEFINE your community, your public.

Who are the community groups the NGO should have relations with?

DETERMINE the objectives of the community relations.

What can be accomplished by developing relationships with this or that group? or agency? or individual? To support the work? To fund the programs? Or to participate in your activities?

DECIDE the media for communicating with the public.

What kind of communication media will be more effective to achieve the goals? newspaper ads and articles? women's magazines? radio talks? TV spots? printed brochures? door-to-door campaigns? on-line services? a website? Decision can be based on where the audience can be reached. Are they usually at home? at school? the workplace? what hours? This information will determine which type of media is the best.

CHOOSING THE MEDIA COMMUNICATION

Communication media are multiform. You can communicate through:

- a personal meeting
- telephone
- letters
- radio and television spots
- newspapers and magazines
- posters
- brochures
- the Internet

Women's NGOs are using the following means for communicating with their public, depending on the situation.

Personal meetings are direct and effective because they establish good relationships. However, they are time consuming and impractical for large public.

Telephone communication has many advantages. It has immediate feedback and it is useful when there is not much time to organize meetings. However it has its limits, as one can not keep a person on the line for long.

Radio and T.V. spots have high impact as both media have great outreach. However, spots must have quality, be short and clear. It is an expensive way to communicate messages and there is no feedback.

Letters are a common way of communication and have various advantages, as one can explain with precision what they wish to communicate. However, this mode of communicating might be time-consuming.

Posters send messages that are easily absorbed and can reach a large audience, however they are expensive to print and deliver.

Brochures are sent usually to people that might be interested in the work and activities of the organization. However, a mailing list is crucial, stamps and time to design them is also needed.

The Internet is the latest and quickest means of communication. One can send a message to many individuals simultaneously and get immediate feedback. However, this way of communication can only be achieved when the recipient has a computer and is connected with the Internet.

CHAPTER 10: Getting connected

NETWORKING

Networking is one of the fundamental activities for an NGO. In fact, networking is a strategic activity. It means ‘joining forces’ and building a broad base of support through linkages with groups and institutions.

Temporary alliances concerning single issues can accomplish short- term or very specific objectives. However, in order to achieve transformational changes in patriarchal systems, long- term and broad alliances among diverse groups are necessary at all levels.

At *individual level*, alliances are possible and necessary not only among women, but also between women and men. One effective strategy in seeking men’s support, is to present issues in terms of men’s own interests. For example, a male agricultural economist may engage in women’s issues by learning the extent to which rural women are responsible for food production yet excluded from access to improved technologies, new information etc.

At *institutional level*, alliances must be developed among different types of groups involved in women’s issues, and institutions that affect women’s lives. Women’s Organizations include various kinds of voluntary groups – Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), political women’s groups, mass organizations such as Trade Unions, as well as units of Government that have specific responsibility for women.

An important but difficult task in building alliances among women’s groups is to get women to understand and respect their differences, and to coalesce around common objectives. For example in Greece, though women’s NGOs have various and different strategies for achieving goals, when the discussion on ‘women’s reproductive rights was discussed in Parliament, they all linked together to support women’s right to abortion.

Potential supporting groups are Youth Clubs, Research Centers, the mass media, and various progressive movements such as environmentalists, pacifists etc.

Some methods of forming alliances are conferences, reports and publications, testimonial by women in these groups, demonstrations on common concern, contact through the mass media.

At *international level*, networking has been facilitated through the Internet. This method proved very effective because connects people very fast worldwide.

One of the most impressive and effective networks is the INSTRAW (International United Nations Training And Research for the Advancement of Women) ‘GAINS NET’ which links women together all over the globe. Through its website the GAINS Net:

- provides information concerning women. For example, ongoing research projects, training courses, conferences, seminars, publications, articles, papers, specific events focusing on women, funding opportunities, job openings etc.

- provides space to women and women's groups to present their own areas of activities and programs, exchange information and experiences, 'air' their views etc.
- Provides gender training through 'Electronic Forums', inviting whoever is interested to participate
- Links women from around the world over issues of paramount importance to them.
- Reports on violations of women's human rights.

ADVOCACY / LOBBYING

Lobbying is also a strategy, to mobilize women to rally for specific issues of paramount importance to them. It is a practice used for putting pressure on governments, local authorities, international bodies etc., in order to adopt and promote:

- Legislation to strengthen women's rights.
- Measures to combat violence against women, racism, cultural discrimination, crime, trafficking, and other criminal practices.
- Peace and disarmament.
- Inclusion of women in decision making centers etc.

Women's NGOs use lobbying at local, regional, national and international level.

At **national level** women's NGOs lobby for:

- Legislation reforms.
- Employment policies and equal opportunities.
- Establishment of national machineries for women.
- Social benefits i.e. child-care centers, pregnancy leave, pensions, medical care etc.

At **regional and international level** women's NGOs lobby for specific issues:

- Stopping ethnic conflicts, reconciliation of ethnic groups divided by armed conflicts.
- Protection of women's human rights.
- International terrorism.
- Trafficking of women.
- Measures against enforced prostitution.
- Protection of minority women.
- Prevention of cultural harmful practices concerning women's reproductive health.
- Protection of the environment.
- Promotion of peace.
- Banning of the production and use of nuclear weapons.
- Transfer of military funds to meet human needs.

Women also use specific dates for lobbying, e.g. Women's Day for Peace, May 24th, International Women's Day, March 8th etc. On these occasions women develop various strategies, e.g. marches, festivals, meetings, and organization of cultural events.

Various international conferences provide grounds for lobbying, especially during UN conferences (Nairobi 1985, Beijing 1995, New York 2000) focusing on Women, NGOs mobilizes large masses of women to advocate for the promotion of equality in all spheres and levels of life.

In Europe, in order to coordinate women's NGOs advocate activities, the European Women's Lobby was established. This coordinating body numbers over 3.000 member associations from the 15 countries of the European Union. The European Women's Lobby is based in Brussels, Belgium and it serves as a link between political decision makers and women's NGOs.

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