

18 July 2011

Dear Friends,

There is much talk and action surrounding “capacity building;” everyone is buzzing about it, but what is it? How can an organization do it? This week’s Newsflash is about making sense of capacity building so that organizations can engage in it meaningfully and purposefully.

We hope that you find value in the following information and materials.

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

Call for Proposals: Small Grants Opportunity from UNPFII’s Trust Fund for the Second Decade

Call for Applications: USIP seeks applications for the 2011 Annual Grant Competition

Call for Applications: IHEU 2011 Grants Programme

Resource: What is Capacity Building?

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Call for Proposals: Small Grants Opportunity from UNPFII’s Trust Fund for the Second Decade

The Trust Fund for the Second Decade was established to promote, support and implement the objectives of the Decade. The Fund will give priority to projects concerning the main areas of the Second Decade: culture, education, health, human Rights, the environment and social and economic development. The Advisory Group for the Trust Fund for the Second Decade consists of members of the Permanent Forum’s Bureau.

Indigenous organizations or organizations working for indigenous peoples can apply for small grants from the Trust Fund. Guidelines to applicants for the Fund will be available when the call opens every year.

It is expected that the Fund will mainly be used for small grants projects with a budget for up to 10,000 US\$ covering one year's expenses.

2012 Call for Proposals

Applications for grants under the Small Grants Programme under the Second Decade will be accepted between 1 July 2011 and 1 September 2011. Applications are to be submitted to: indigenousfund@un.org during this time period.

The proposals will be assessed by the Bureau of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in December 2011 and successful applicants will receive notice thereafter. A list of organizations awarded grants will also be posted on this website.

Please note:

Use of SPFII application form is mandatory, and all information must be submitted as requested in the application form

Project must have a focus on indigenous peoples

Projects will be disregarded if the required information is not present

Additional information pertaining to the proposal will not be accepted beyond the deadline of submission

Applications submitted outside of this time period or to other email addresses will not be considered for funding

For more information, please visit this [link](#)

Call for Applications: USIP seeks applications for the 2011 Annual Grant Competition

The Annual Grant Competition:

- Supports innovative peacebuilding projects involving research, the identification of promising models and effective practices, the development of practitioner resources and tools, the development and delivery of education, training and dialogue programs, and the production of films, radio programs, and other media.

- Funds projects focused on preventing, managing, and resolving violent conflict and promoting post-conflict peacebuilding in settings outside the borders of the U.S. Awards support activities that apply across a broad range of relevant disciplines, skills, and approaches. USIP welcomes proposals of an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary nature.

Topic areas of interest to USIP include, but are not limited to:

- * Conflict analysis and prevention;
- * Mediation and conflict resolution;
- * Postconflict peace and stability operations;
- * Religion and peacemaking;
- * Women and girls in conflict and peacebuilding;
- * Rule of law and transitional justice;
- * Economies and conflict;
- * Social, psychological, and physical impacts of war and conflict;
- * Media and conflict.

Annual Grant Competition facts:

- * The Annual Grant Competition is extremely challenging and grows harder each year. In the 2010 cycle 512 applications were submitted. The number of grant awards has remained about the same 20-25 per year.
- * The awards generally range from \$50,000 to \$120,000.
- * The deadline is October 3, 2011.

For more information, please visit this [link](#)

Call for Applications: IHEU 2011 Grants Programme

The International Humanist and Ethical Union is pleased to announce it is now accepting applications for the IHEU-HIVOS Humanist Network and Development programme for 2011. A total of 75,000 Euros is available for grants, with Euro 10,000 per year as the maximum annual funding for any single project. The deadline for applications is September 1, 2011 (but there is an August 1 pre-qualification deadline for groups that are not IHEU member organizations). Detailed information on the programme and the grant application procedures, plus application forms, can be found below.

About the applicants

This grants programme is for Humanist organizations only. The following organizations can apply:

1. IHEU Member Organizations in developing countries according to the DAC list
2. organizations that have received grants under the IHEU/HIVOS programme in one of the last 10 years,
3. organizations pre-qualified by application.

Organizations that are not members of IHEU can apply for pre-qualification by sending in the pre-qualification application form (below). See more information on the criteria in the form.

Grant criteria

The project should achieve specified goals in one or more of the following areas: promoting Humanism, secularism, human rights or scientific method, or building competence and capacity of the organization itself.

Funding availability

Budgets in applications must be made in Euros and also indicate the equivalent in local currency. Projects should preferably be completed within the year of 2012. A total of Euros 75,000 is available in 2011, of which Euros 24,500 is already allocated for multiple-year projects funded in 2009 or 2010. The maximum funding for a single project is Euro 10,000 per year. However, IHEU encourages smaller proposals from new Humanist groups. The project should be partly funded by the Humanist organization applying for grant, and not be solely reliant upon external funding.

For more information, and a link to the *pre-qualification form*, please visit this [link](#)

Resource: What is Capacity Building?

- Nonprofit capacity building refers to activities that improve and enhance a nonprofit organization's ability to achieve its mission and sustain itself over time. Examples include: adopting new governance practices, identifying more efficient uses of technology, and building community partnerships¹
- Capacity building is both an *internal* and an *external* process that requires an organization to analyze and modify its internal and external practices.
- The purpose of capacity building is to maximize impact; this happens by setting standards and changing behaviors²

¹ National Council for Nonprofits

² Beryl Levinger, Monterey Institute of International Studies

- Capacity building enables an organization to be more responsive and adaptive to constantly changing external environments.
- Capacity building is not easy because it requires the big, scary thing called CHANGE. Therefore, an organization must create ways to overcome this barrier by, for example, involving important stakeholders in the change process; this way, they feel they are participating in it rather than just bearing the consequences.
- Although capacity building requires change, it does not necessarily involve creating something new; capacity building is often about using and improving what already exists and making it better.
- Organizational staff and community members can only collaborate to build capacity if the management prioritizes and invests in it.
- Every organization's capacity building needs are unique and, oftentimes, complex.

Resource: Approaches to Building Nonprofit Capacity

Source: *“Building Capacity in Nonprofit Organizations”* by Carol J Dev Vita and Cory Fleming

There is no easy formula for building organizational capacity or achieving favorable outcomes. Instead, the model presented below can serve as a guide in the development of intervention strategies.

Because the needs of nonprofit organizations and the conditions of the community environment often vary, approaches to capacity building must be customized and flexible. A one-size-fits-all model is likely to yield inappropriate or ineffectual results in many communities.

Because of the enormous differences in the number and types of nonprofit groups in a community and variations in their readiness to embrace change, we identified five steps that will enable organizations to strategically and systematically determine their capacity-building strategies.

1. Determine the basic needs and assets of the community. A first step in developing a capacity-building strategy is to learn about the basic needs and strengths of the community. This can be done through a variety of mechanisms—surveys, focus groups, town meetings, individual interviews, or community indicators. The purpose of this step is to obtain a variety of perspectives and learn from differing points of view. For example, community indicators that use existing information and data can be a cost- effective way to identify potential weaknesses or strengths in the

socioeconomic conditions of the community. They also provide benchmarks for monitoring change over time. On the other hand, discussions with local leaders and residents can help identify areas of concern and target specific needs. Perhaps more importantly, this process can generate local support for a capacity-building initiative.

2. Assess the number and types of nonprofit organizations in a community through mapping. Having determined the needs and strengths of a community, a next step is to measure the community-based resources that are potentially available to address local concerns. Mapping nonprofit organizations to determine both their prevalence and geographic distribution within a community provides a framework for identifying potential gaps in service or a spatial mismatch between needs and resources in local areas. For example, are nonprofit organizations geographically located in areas of high need, and are they accessible to residents who seek such services? Are the capacities of these organizations sufficient to meet the demand for service? In addition, mapping government agencies and for-profit businesses in the area can enhance the assessment of potential resources available to address local problems.

3. Identify the infrastructure that can be used to build nonprofit capacity. An environmental scan can be conducted to determine if there are networks or organizational structures that can expand the capacity of community-based organizations. For example, is there a regional association of nonprofits that can help nonprofit groups access information and resources? Are there management support organizations that can provide technical assistance for building organizational systems or technology skills? Are there potential partnerships with the business or public sectors that can facilitate capacity-building strategies? Determining the presence, scope, capacity, and quality of such groups can be helpful in targeting and leveraging resources. Attention should be given to the intermediary or support organizations that can foster capacity building throughout the sector.

4. Select appropriate capacity-building strategies. Because the needs of the sector vary, capacity-building efforts must determine the type of intervention that is most needed. For example, some groups may benefit from technical assistance, such as help with fundraising, accounting systems, outreach, or marketing activities. Others may require help in building networks and collaborations with other organizations in the local area or across the region. Tailoring the strategy to local needs and organizational readiness is likely to require some flexibility in the approach and expected outcomes.

5. Monitor and assess progress on a periodic basis. Building nonprofit capacity is not a short-term undertaking. As strategies are implemented and environmental conditions change, periodic assessments help guide the process. Mid-course corrections are likely as new conditions unfold and new needs arise. The process of ongoing feedback and adjustment can both strengthen the nonprofit community and promote wise use of foundation resources.

Like the changing ecosystem, capacity building is neither a one-time fix nor a permanent solution. As community needs and environments change over time, the need to revisit and redefine the question “capacity for what?” becomes a dynamic force. If done well, this repeated cycle promotes a healthy community environment in which to address current needs and prepare for future generations.

Resource: Basic Building Blocks of Organizational Capacity

Attached to this email, you will find the basic building blocks of nonprofit capacity; they are an attempt to simplify the capacity building process and are intended to be addressed simultaneously rather than in isolation. The building blocks require the organization to focus both internally and externally.³

McKinsey & Company. “Effective Capacity Building in Nonprofit Organizations.” (2001) 1-116.

Resource: Effective Capacity Building in Nonprofit Organizations

There is a lot of literature out there about capacity building, but here is a start if you are interested in learning more!

Please visit this [link](#) to read about Effective Capacity Building in Nonprofit Organizations, Why Capacity Building Matters, The Capacity Framework, Seven Elements of Nonprofit Capacity, and more.

As part of the Firelight Foundation’s Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides “Newsflashes” to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/newsflash.php>.

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newletter@firelightfoundation.org.
