

Firelight Newsflash! 12 May 2010

Dear Friends,

We live in difficult times with most NGOs and CBOs trapped in the constant threat of a severe financial crisis. In addition to other informative articles and resources, below are 9 helpful tips for what your organization can do to avoid financial crises without having to use a consultant. And you don't even have to be an expert to do all this!

Sincerely,
Firelight Team

- (Article) 9 Ideas for Avoiding a Funding Crisis
- Manual: A Guide to Mine Action
- Factsheet: Women's Rights and Islam
- Guide: Ant-Corruption Plain Language Guide
- (Report) Zambian city of Kabwe is ranked the most toxic in Africa
- Handbook: Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations
- (Article) Marital Rape in Africa: The Right to Say No
- (Article) Most 'orphans' have living parent, says charity
- (Article) UNICEF- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene- Global event brings the urgent need for safe water into focus

9 ideas for avoiding a funding crisis!

You may only need about 2-3 hours per week over 3 months to develop all the ideas below and then to maintain it. Get a serious team together who believe in what you do and get them to work on these!

1. Retain your existing donors and get them to give more. Make sure that your current donors stay with you for as long as possible. Get them to commit more funds. Make sure that you maintain communication and build more donor trust, hence strengthening your existing relationships. And make sure your aims and objectives are realistic and achievable in order to show delivery and outcomes.
2. Make a list of your previous donors and investigate the possibility of recruiting them again. It takes less time and effort to re-start relationships with past donors than to find new ones. Ask yourself why the previous relationship or grant came to an end. Unless the donor changed complete focus, approach the donor for renewed funding. If they had concerns about your work, show them these were taken seriously and that you have addressed them. Sometimes donors are just waiting for you to contact them.
3. Cultivate your potential donors. Make a list of donors who know about you or that you know and who fall within your focus area. Find out who is the contact

person and set up a consultative meeting or at least an exchange of information about your organization. Draw up a funding enquiry where you highlight your funding needs. But most importantly, highlight your track record and show your accomplishments to date. Donors want to buy into success, not desperation for funds! And don't forget to take out all your regret letters. Remember, a regret letter is simply a delayed yes. You may be sitting on a gold mine!

4. Market yourself to unknown donors. You cannot create continuous interest in your organization without a clearly formulated communication and marketing strategy. Trapped in survival mode, many NGOs forget to raise visibility about their work in the form of newsletters (print and electronic), websites, blogs, articles in newspapers, brochures, etc. Remember, your work is about changing human lives and that you need to celebrate your successes! And don't hide your challenges. Let others know about it and tell them what you are doing about it.

5. Develop a cost containment strategy. Simply put, this is how to prevent waste! There are many NGOs who simply spend funding because it is in the budget and must be spent. But containing staff and consultant expenses, having staff and volunteers cut down electricity, telephone and transport expenses, and paper recycling can all help bring down an organization's costs.

6. Identify your service providers and negotiate discounts. Make a list of your service providers like banking, cleaning services, catering, insurance, auditing, etc. Set up meetings with them and educate them about your work. Ask them for discounts. Remember, if you don't ask you will never get!

7. Make a list of friends of the organization and get them to give on a monthly basis. You may know many individuals and business people who support your work but cannot get involved actively due to other commitments. You may also know past beneficiaries from years back that are now doing well for themselves. Get them to commit a monthly or annual donation. Start by making a list of at least 10 individuals and grow this list by at least another 10 every year. Ask for a specific donation but leave open the possibility of giving more than what you may request. Inspire them with your success stories! Make sure that you shared what is in it for the person or their business, e.g. a free newsletter, annual report, regular updates, access to training or facilities, referrals, access to information, space for advertising, etc. Remember, you are building a partnership. And partnerships always start with what you can share with the other party. Before you ask, be prepared to give first! It is a long-term endeavour to develop and maintain a network of "friends" of the organization. However, it has huge potential so consider the investment of time and resources you want to put into it.

8. Identify services e.g. workshops or consultancies, which you can offer at a fee to generate income. Many NGOs are experienced in their field of operation and

have people with enormous experience, but don't know how to package their "intellectual capital" and market it. Get someone with expertise to assist you. This will also market your organization. You can also charge for services or products you offer (like counseling, booklets, t-shirts, etc.) at a small fee that is affordable for most people. Develop a scaling system that segments people according to their ability to pay e.g. unemployed, professionals, students, etc. and charge fees accordingly.

9. Develop a sustainability fund to use for emergencies. Funding gaps and donors who change focus areas are a constant reality for all NGOs. Start building your sustainability fund (or reserve fund) by committing a small amount each month in a special account or doing a specific fundraising appeal to create the fund.

Remember, fundraising is not just about money raising. It is about mobilizing resources—anything that can help you to achieve your strategic objectives. When you only look for money then you are bound to miss other opportunities. Ask for material donations, draw on people's skills and experience, referrals, sources of valuable information, etc.

By strengthening your organization, you will not have to chase donors, supporters, and strategic partners. They will be chasing you!

Source: Adapted from Frank Julie's article
at: http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/resour/070208fj.asp?sector=resour&year=2007&range_start=31

Manual: A Guide to Mine Action

This manual is an overview of key aspects of mine action. It takes into account key developments of the last few years, particularly the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention 2009 Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World and the entry into force of Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The relevance of explosive remnants of war, both at the diplomatic and field-level, is reflected in the content of the Guide.

More at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/20332866/A-Guide-to-Mine-Action>.

Factsheet: Women's Rights and Islam

This factsheet demonstrates the potential of Islam as a positive resource for the promotion of women's rights and presents an exemplary project. At: <http://www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/gtz2009-en-gender-and-islam.pdf>.

Guide: Ant-Corruption Plain Language Guide

This guide provides standardized, easy-to-understand definitions for 45 key terms commonly used by the anti-corruption sector, from 'access to information' to 'whistle blowing'. Each term includes a practical example of its use and helpful links for further research. At:

http://www.transparency.org/content/download/45306/725785/file/TI_Plain_Language_Guide_280709.pdf.

Zambian city of Kabwe is ranked the most toxic in Africa

Zambia's second largest metropolis, Kabwe, was recently ranked Africa's most toxic city. There, mining and smelting operations have caused thousands to suffer from deadly lead poisoning. As Africa's largest producer of copper, Zambia depends heavily on the mining sector for revenue, investment and jobs. It is estimated that over three million of the country's eleven million people are directly impacted by mining. Yet, as is the case across much of the developing world, poor environmental laws, regulations and enforcement have left communities devastated by pollution from this extractive industry.

More at:

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=61521> and http://www.greengrants.org/pressreleases.php?news_id=293.

Handbook: Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations

Aimed at humanitarian assistance stakeholders working on the front lines of aid delivery, this handbook is a practical guide to help eliminate corruption in day-to-day operations and deliver more aid to those who need it most. The Handbook offers a catalogue of best practice tools for preventing and identifying corruption in humanitarian operations, including ways to track resources, confront extortion and detect aid diversion.

More at:

http://www.transparency.org/publications/publications/humanitarian_handbook_feb_2010.

Marital Rape in Africa: The Right to Say No

Sally Armstrong

From Saturday's Globe and Mail Published on Friday, Jun. 11, 2010 6:52PM

EDTLast updated on Saturday, Jun. 12, 2010 6:36PM EDT

A Canadian and international legal team pushes for new laws in three African countries where wives are often treated like property.

For the article, go here: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/africa-mideast/marital-rape-in-africa-the-right-to-say-no/article1601544/>

Most 'orphans' have living parent, says charity

At least four out of five children in orphanages around the world have a living parent, a leading charity says.

In a report, Save the Children says some institutions coerce or trick poor parents to give up their children. As a result, the report says, millions of children are put at risk through living in an institution, and face rape, trafficking and beatings. BBC reports on Save the Children's findings that resources should go into projects which support families so they can look after their children.

For the article, go here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8375579.stm>

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene- Global event brings the urgent need for safe water into focus

NEW YORK, USA, 22 March 2010 – Three quarters of the planet is covered by water, yet only about one per cent is available for human agricultural, manufacturing, community and personal use. This year's World Water Day theme – 'Clean Water for a Healthy World' – aims to raise awareness and spur action on improving water quality worldwide.

A global event on water quality took place today in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital, to mark the occasion. The event, organized by UN Water, brought together national and local government representatives, UN agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, scientists, local and international media, and the general public – including school children – to discuss policy options and initiate action to improve water quality around the world.

Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage

Unsafe drinking water, along with poor sanitation and hygiene, are the main contributors to an estimated 4 billion cases of diarrhoeal disease annually, causing more than 2.2 million deaths worldwide. Of these, some 1.5 million occur in children under five.

To prevent these unnecessary deaths, people are changing the way they think about water in their homes. Today, simple, cost-effective ways to prevent disease – known collectively as household water treatment and safe storage

techniques (HWTS) – are one key way to improve the lives of children and their families.

Even if water flows safe and clear from a local pump, dirty containers, dirty hands or unsanitary storage can contaminate it, leading to disease and even death. The Safe Drinking Water Project informs people about the dangers of unsafe water, and how they can protect themselves by treating their daily supply at home, with inexpensive products available in their local markets.

The chlorine-based purification products are inexpensive, easy to find and use, and dependable. In some countries, products are manufactured locally, both providing a livelihood for local people and sustaining local demand for additional HWTS products, such as ceramic and slow-sand filters, and solar disinfection.

Treating water at the household level has been shown to be one of the most effectual and cost-effective means of preventing waterborne disease in both everyday and emergency settings.

The Safe Drinking Water Project, and similar initiatives promoting household water treatment and safe storage, is of vital importance to help ensure that this water stays safe – from the well or pump to the drinking glass – resulting in healthy families and healthy societies.

A shared responsibility for common benefit

The Nairobi event called for collective action by all stakeholders, from individuals and local communities, to international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and civil society to tackle the challenges of water quality globally.

Various publications, flagship initiatives and outreach materials aimed at raising awareness on water quality were launched at the event, which provided a platform to discuss scientific findings, discuss policy and implementation, motivate key stakeholders, and raise awareness around the world about the stark reality that billions of people do not have access to a simple glass of safe water.

For the article, go here: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/index_53133.html

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 newsletter@firelightfoundation.org.