GUIDES FOR YOUTH NGOs

INTRODUCTION

The project "**Sustainability in NGOs**" was created after the observation that many environmental NGOs struggle with day-to-day work, administrative tasks and maintaining the quality of their work and activities.

YEE addressed these issues with this project. We created a space where our members and other interested youth organisations could expand their knowledge on various topics connected with organisational management: strategic planning, working with people, project management, organising environmentally-friendly projects.

The main aim of the project was to explore the concept of sustainability in youth NGOs in order to improve the quality of work of youth organisations.

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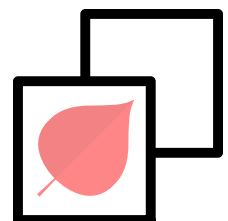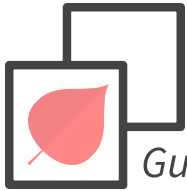
Guides for youth NGOs

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, bring others along." African proverb

WHAT IS STRATEGIC PLANNING?

Strategic planning is a tool for organisation development and a systematic process that helps an organisation identify the direction where to go.

Many youth organisations create plans for their work, but what makes a plan a **strategic plan**? A strategic plan has a **direction, long and short-term goals and a list of priorities** for at least the three coming years.

WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE A STRATEGIC PLAN?

One of the key factors to **achieve sustainability** in an organisation is having a strategic plan. An organisation is a living entity consisting of people who aim to reach a common goal. The organisation affects and is affected by the external environment. It is therefore essential to have a strategic plan in order to make sure that all the efforts of the people within the organisation are going in the **same direction**. This will help you to have a **greater impact** and to be **ready for the changes** in the environment. What other advantages can your organisation benefit from when having a strategic plan?

- Clear direction
- Shared vision
- Simplified decision-making
- Better communication

Clear direction

Youth organisations often suffer from high turnover rate with volunteers and employees coming and leaving regularly in an already fast changing environment. New people bring new ideas, which is very valuable, but at the same time it can result in a lack of direction and long-term goals in the organisation.

Strategic planning provides **direction and focus** to youth organisations. With a plan it is much easier to **identify the priorities** and people can then move from plan to action. There is still **space for new ideas** and initiatives, as long as they contribute to the achievement of the long-term goals.

Shared vision

Different people involved in a youth organisation have different understanding of it, the way it should function and the direction it should take. That is why it is important to have a strategic plan and to have the right people take part in the strategic planning process.

Strategic planning leads to **organisational alignment**, which means that everyone in the organisation is on the same page and will follow the same direction. Moreover, a strategic planning process shared with everyone involved in the organisation will contribute to **strengthening the existing values** of the organisation, to built a more harmonious and **stronger team** and to open a space for exchange of ideas.

Simplified decision-making

Management of a youth organisation and decision-making are much easier when you have a written strategic plan. **Priorities are easy to identify** and people **share and understand the decisions taken**.

Better communication

Having a strategic plan can help a youth organisation communicate its aim to potential funders, sponsors, partners and staff. They will gain a better understanding of the direction where your organisation is going and they will more likely support or join your activities.
In larger, international or umbrella youth organisations, strategic planning can also help with the communication with members, volunteers and employees. **Aims, objectives and decisions taken can be communicated much more easily** if they are endorsed by the strategic plan.

HOW SHOULD YOU CREATE YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN?

Before your organisation embarks on the strategic planning process there are many aspects you should **take into account**:

- Is everyone in the organisation open to this process?
- Is everyone in the organisation eager to commit and be involved in the process?
- Do you have the right people within the organisation to lead the process?
- Are you ready to invest enough time?
- Do you have resources available and are you willing to allocate them in this process?

Once you make sure that people, time and resources are on your side, it is time to start the strategic planning of your organisation. The amount of years covered by a strategic plan differ from organisation to organisation. The most common **timeframe** for planning is three to five years. We suggest the following eight basic parts or **steps** for your strategic planning process:

1. Mission - Why do you exist?

Your mission defines the **purpose** of your organisation. It should be a timeless declaration of your aspiration and focus. It should include what you seek to achieve and the way you aim to achieve it.

2. Vision - Where do you want to be in five years?

Your vision statement defines how your organisation will look like in five or more years. A vision is different from a mission. A mission is the cause, what you want to accomplish. The vision is the **effect**, what you pursue in order to fulfil your mission.

3. Values - What do you believe in?

The organisation values are the **guiding principles** that people within the organisation stand for and believe in. Your values should be the positive, passionate and distinctive core beliefs of the organisation.

4. SWOT - Where are you now?

A SWOT analysis will help you identify your current position by finding out what your **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats** are. This tool can help your organisation assess its internal functioning and external environment in order to determine which is the most appropriate strategy to reach your vision.

5. Long-term strategic objectives - What will you focus on?

Once you identify the potential strategic areas with the help of the SWOT analysis, you need to choose the ones you want to focus on. These will be your long-term strategic objectives, in other words, the **priorities** your organisation will focus on in the next three or five years time. These objectives should lead you to achieve your vision.

6. Short-term objectives or goals - How will you achieve it?

The short-term objectives are the one-year goals that will contribute to achieve the long-term strategic objectives.
You can use the **SMART criteria** to set your short-term goals:
- **Specific** - Your goals should be concise and answer to the questions how, when, where and what you plan to achieve.
- **Measurable** - So you can track the progress and achievements.
- **Achievable** - Goals should be challenging but still remain possible to reach.
- **Relevant** - Make sure your goals are aligned with the priorities and long-term strategic objectives of your organisation.
- **Time-bound** - Your goals should include a time-frame in which they should be achieved.

7. Assessment of resources - What is it available?

Resources need to be assessed and allocated in order to achieve your objectives and goals.
What **financial resources, people, skills and expertise** are available in your organisation? Place your assets in a **budget** to ensure that your strategic plan is feasible.

8. Indicators - Monitor your progress

Monitoring and evaluation is a very important stage in your strategic plan. Make sure you set a **monitoring plan with indicators** to track the progress of your objectives and goals. Use the results of the monitoring to **make adjustments** in your objectives, strategies and activities if needed.

Remember that strategic planning is an ongoing process that does not finish once you have your written document. Your organisation will need to implement it, evaluate it and review it systematically.

BY MERCEDES FIORAVANTI

REFERENCES:

Nancy D. Olsen - Elements of a Strategic Plan

Rick James - How to do Strategic Planning

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Guides for youth NGOs

SUSTAINABLE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

All organisations strive to create meaningful, useful projects with wide impact. However, we know well that sometimes our efforts do not seem to work and we struggle to keep everybody involved and motivated. Applying sustainable principles in project management can help making our projects more successful.

Sustainable project management can be understood in **two ways**:

- Using sustainable, ecological practices in projects – so called "green project management" and trying to minimise the impact of the project on environment;
- Making projects and their results long-lasting, trying to make impact sustainable.

Ecological tips for projects can be found in the guide *"Sustainable principles"* so here we want to focus on the second understanding of the term. Below you can find some ideas on how to **manage your projects in order to support the creation of sustainable outcomes**. Sometimes it is enough to redesign and enrich a bit your project management practices. It is important to remember about sustainability in each phase of the project-cycle but especially while planning and evaluating.

PLANNING

Choose who will manage your project

It is really crucial to choose well the team who will coordinate the project. You should select people who have **various skills** to complement each other, who like to work together and are **motivated**. It is also important to establish clear structures of communication and responsibility – to define the roles of each member.

Choose people for your team who will be good in taking specific roles and responsibilities. How many people you will have in your team and which tasks they will have depends a lot on your project. But it is proved that teams are the most successful when they have members taking these concrete roles:

Manager
The main person responsible, the coordinator who takes responsibility and risks for the whole team; should be very reliable and committed.

Visionary
Someone who provides various ideas for the project, for improvements and problem-solving.
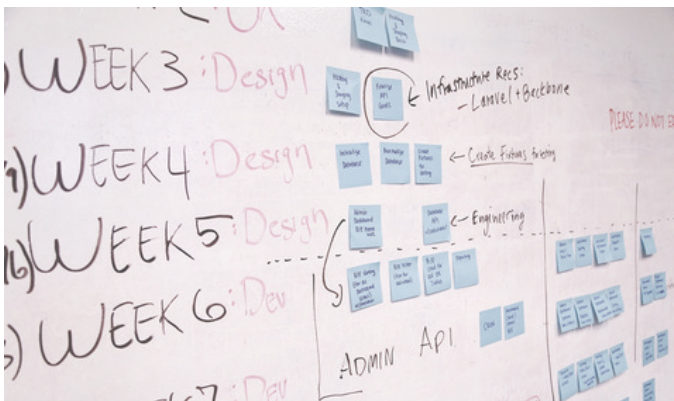
Researcher
Someone who will collect information needed for the project, who will research and gather useful information, check sources and later report it to the whole team.

Monitor
A person with analytical skills, who will check how the project is developing, who should collect news and information about progress of the project, who makes sure that everything is going to work.

Supporter
A person with empathy and with good communication skills. As this person is good at working with people, s/he can do networking, support and motivate others and also help to solve conflicts.

Plan stages of implementation

Develop a timeline for your project and identify the milestones. Create action plans with concrete steps and deadlines and divide roles.

Establish project management process

To make the project successful it is important to create some kind of structure and planning. Decide within your team on the way you will work, take time to discuss your working style and expectations from the project. Plan which tools you will use, how often you will meet and report, how you will communicate. You can choose the most convenient tools for you, such as Google Drive – shared documents, Doodle – to plan meetings, Asana – task and project manager, Trello – project manager in form of post-it notes, Azendoo – a project management tool, etc.

Think about needed resources

Not only budget planning is important for running the project smoothly. Keep in mind also other resources such as people, skills, materials, time, etc. Make sure that you have enough resources for each stage.

Value partnerships

A partner is anyone who helps to make a project happen. It is important that every partner organisation has a clear role. Partnerships can help to give wider impact to the project, to support, to give bigger visibility.

Info box

To make your project more sustainable, remember about the rule of 4 E:

ENCOURAGE – motivate people that are involved in the project

ENGAGE – find and connect with people who will support your project

ENABLE – provide necessary trainings, skills, documents to make results more sustainable

EXEMPLIFY – celebrate successes, show a positive example

TARGET GROUPS

In our projects we usually plan to reach wide aims but we forget to analyse whom we should focus on in order to reach our goals. It is important for your project to identify target group(s), work with them and adapt your activities and messages to them and their needs.

To make the project specific, it is important to **focus on one main target group** and its needs but to remember about other target groups and also involve them in the project. To make wider impact, it is not enough to address only one group of people. Make a **list of all people and groups that want to see a change** or "get" something from your project, **groups that you need to influence** to reach your aims (such as young people from the community, other members of the community, politicians, youth workers, etc. or participants of the training, people who read about the results/booklets, who watch the video or take part in the follow-up campaign, etc.). Your project, activities and messages you send should be adapted to these specific target groups. It is more sustainable to know what these groups aim at, what are their needs, what do they do, what are their habits. This way you can plan how your project could link and connect with them so that they will make more use of the results and spread them further. Always try to **adapt the message** and choose the best tool, way or method for the specific target group.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

In order to make the project's results more sustainable you should make a proper needs analysis before you start your activities. This way you will **find out if there is a need for your project** and plan what kind of activities you should create to make a real change. Think about a problem you want to solve, the big change you want to make – it will be your **aim**. Then plan **objectives** – smaller goals that will help you reach the aim. Probably one project will not solve the whole problem or fully fulfil the aim. So during the evaluation you should discuss how much you managed to reach the goal and what other steps are needed to complete it.

Needs analysis will also help you to answer the crucial question – why.

Why is my project needed? Why is it important?

To get to know the needs that your project should address you can use various tools:

- research – on Internet and in various publications;
- questionnaires – online or printed that you can ask people to fill in;
- interviews and meetings – organise meetings with people and ask them about their opinion and experience;
- observation – go to the places crucial for your project or where people meet and them write down your observations;
- check for results of similar projects.

Once you collect information and understand the needs, it is much easier to **identify the potential solutions**.
You can use such simple scheme to reflect on the needs with your project team.

Realities before the project

⌄
⌄

Possible activities

⌄
⌄

Realities after the project

EVALUATION

On the other end of the project-cycle there is an evaluation. We all know that evaluation is important to assess whether the planned activities took place, objectives were achieved and outcomes delivered. But what we do with the evaluation can help us to make our projects more sustainable and results more long-lasting.

Our **tips**:
- Make evaluation with various groups to get wide feedback – participants, target groups, project team, managing body of your organisation (board, presidium, etc.).
- Create an evaluation report – write results in the form of an useful report that will be used for future projects. Prepare sections such as challenging situations, used tools for planning, tips and recommendations, etc.
- Share and spread results of your projects so that other people and organisations could use it.
- Start every project with analysing results of previous projects. This will help you to improve your project management and avoid repeating the same problematic situations.

Try to think about your project not as one activity but an **ongoing bigger cycle**. Use experience from your project, make results a starting point for new activities, learn from your project and pass this experience further.

BY GOSIA ZUBOWICZ-THULL

REFERENCES:

UNEP - Running successful sustainable lifestyles projects

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SALTO-YOUTH - Catch the Target Group

LEARNING ORGANISATION

The development of young people is very often one of the main goals of many youth organisations. Therefore, we can say that it is natural to talk about learning in organisations: why it is important and how organisations can ensure that there are learning opportunities for their employees and volunteers.

Why is learning important for youth organisations? Organisations develop and improve their work through the personal development of their employees and volunteers and also by the internal transformation. When people gain new competences and become better at work, their **performance improves** and brings direct benefit to the organisation. It can also serve as a big **motivation for young people** – to learn something new and celebrate the achievements.

LEARNING ORGANISATION

This guide focuses on different ways to support learning in your organisation. Therefore, it is more than relevant to look at the model of a "learning organisation" and its main features.

We understand "learning organisation" as: "An organisation which **actively incorporates the experience and knowledge of its members** and partners through the development of practices, policies, procedures and systems in ways which continuously improve its ability to set and achieve goals, satisfy stakeholders, develop its practice, value and develop its people and achieve its mission with its constituency. (Aiken and Britton 1997)" (1).

The idea of a "learning organisation" was initially developed for business companies. Today, however, there are also a lot of materials on how NGOs can use this model.

(1) The Learning NGO, Bruce Britton, Occasional Papers Series No: 17 July 1998

EIGHT FUNCTION MODEL

The Eight Function Model is an important part of the concept of a "learning NGO". In order to learn effectively, the organisation should undertake the **eight key functions**:

- Creating a supportive culture
- Gathering internal experience
- Assessing external learning
- Communication systems
- Mechanisms for drawing conclusions
- Developing an organisational memory
- Integrating learning into strategy and policy
- Applying the learning

All of these functions are interconnected and form the basis for a self-assessment tool called "**The Learning NGO Questionnaire**". This questionnaire will allow your organisation to identify strengths and weaknesses and points for improvement. We invite you to read more about the Eight Function Model and the questionnaire in the publication by Bruce Britton "The Learning NGO":

www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Biblio_Renforcement/documents/Chapter-3/Chapter3_1/Chap3_1Doc2.pdf

What is learning?

According to the Oxford dictionary, it is "the acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience, or being taught" (2).
To support the learning of your colleagues, it can be helpful to know some theory about learning and the different learning styles.

One of the most famous theories about learning is **Kolb's experiential learning cycle**.
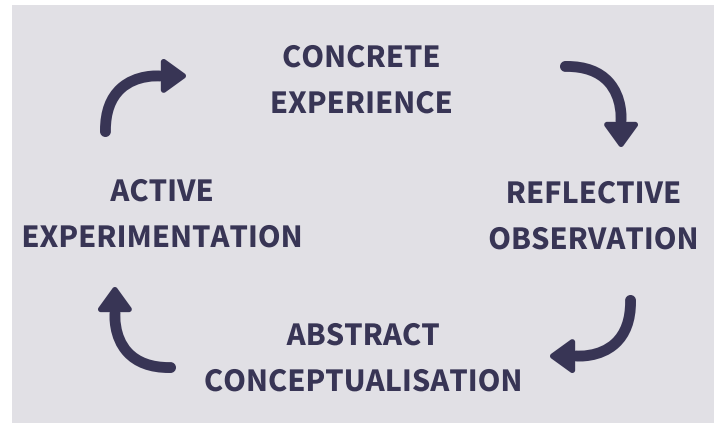
- **Concrete experience** – doing or experiencing something new or repeating existing experience.
- **Reflective observation** – reflecting on what has happened.
- **Abstract conceptualisation** – concluding from the experience and generalising.
- **Active experimentation** – applying the new knowledge or skill or planning a new experience.

Knowing the learning types of your colleagues and yourself can help you with creating different learning opportunities. There are tests designed to help identify the prevailing learning type – you can organise a session where all colleagues take the test and share the results with each other.

Honey and Mumford identified different **learning types** according to the Kolb's experiential learning circle:

- **Activist** – people who learn by doing, have an open-minded approach and are open to new experiences. These are the people who prefer

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to deal with problems by brainstorming, who like new challenges and experiences. But they are also bored with implementation and long-term work and look for new exciting experiences.

- **Reflector** – people who learn by observing and thinking about what happened. They prefer to take their time by observing situations from different perspectives. They also postpone reaching conclusions and are cautious.
- **Theorist** – people who like to understand theory behind actions, prefer to analyse, work with models, concepts and facts. They approach problems in a logical step-by-step way. They learn best in structured situations with clear purposes.
- **Pragmatist** – people who need to see how they can put learning into practice in the real world. They like to experiment, try out new ideas and methods to see if they work in practice. They like to make practical decisions and solve problems.

These are very short summaries of the learning types – you can research more about them and learn which activities support the learning of different types of people.

What else should we remember about when we want to support learning in our organisations? Employees and volunteers should develop or have certain **competences** in order to be able to learn effectively. Among such competences we can mention: general knowledge about how people learn; possessing communication skills; ability to work in teams and asking for help and input from colleagues; networking and facilitation skills. To help your colleagues with

their learning, you can organise training courses or workshops for developing competences.

ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

Why is it important for employees of NGOs to know about learning styles and theory of experiential learning? Few can argue that NGOs are working in a demanding environment which includes competition for **involvement of active young people, the recognition by local communities and funds**. It is necessary for youth organisations to be able to learn from their experience and come up with **innovative ideas** to be an active player in their communities. It is important for youth organisations to be flexible and able to **adapt to new circumstances** (for example, training on being a facilitator or developing active listening skills).

While everybody agrees that learning is important and is necessary for the development of both - individuals and organisations, not many know how to apply their knowledge of learning in the work of an NGO.

Many organisations also encounter the same problems: very often people leave the organisation without being able to share their knowledge and skills and new employees or volunteers have to repeat the same learning process which was done before. It is important for a youth organisation to have an "**organisational memory**" - knowledge and experience which are kept for future use. We can also talk about "**knowledge management**" in NGOs - ideas on how to organise and manage the knowledge and information of an organisation.

"Organisational learning" is the complex process which provides a purpose for the use of knowledge and **uses the collective and individual learning for the benefit of the organisation**.

How can your organisation ensure that there is space and resources for learning and collecting the knowledge to make it beneficial for your work? How can you incorporate learning in everyday work of the organisation? Let's look more closely at "organisational learning".

Reasons for organisational learning

Many NGOs base their work on learning, gaining experience and trying out new things. However, in the everyday work of office employees or volunteers learning does not always play an important part, especially when compared to other more "relevant" tasks. Learning and gaining knowledge should be acknowledged as an essential part of work of many youth organisations. However, very often this acknowledgement is encouraged in the official documents or annual meetings and not in practice. **Organisational learning should be part of the organisation's culture**. "An organisational culture supportive of learning is one that enables, encourages, values, rewards and uses the learning of its members both individually and collectively."(3)

Supportive leaders can play a decisive role in setting a system for organisational learning. Here are some of the ideas on **how leaders can support learning in NGOs**:

- Giving priority to learning;
- Communicating the strategic importance of organisational learning;
- Recognising learning as a beneficial use of time and resources;
- Showing examples by taking a learning approach to the organisation's strategic development.

In the learning culture learning is encouraged and seen as part of work responsibilities, not something that should be done in the free time. The employees and volunteers should receive adequate resources to be able to learn and their learning should be rewarded.

(3) Organisational Learning in NGOs: Creating the Motive, Means and Opportunity, by Bruce Britton

Here are some ideas on how you can organise learning in your organisation.

Learning Before, During and After (LBDA) (4)

This method can help you use the existing knowledge of the organisation and identify new knowledge for organisational memory.

- **Learning Before** happens when the project team or other relevant people meet to share their knowledge and create a shared understanding on the specific topic or project before working on it. This process is called Peer Assist. More experienced employees or volunteers can also share their previous experience and knowledge with new people.
- **Learning During** helps to identify strengths and weaknesses during the project, which new knowledge can be used in the future and if there is a need for improvements. The team can organise the short meeting using the After Action Review system. During the meeting, the team should reply to 5 questions: "What was supposed to happen?", "What actually happened?", "Why was there a difference?", "What have we learned?", "What will we do about it?"
- **Learning After** happens at the end of the project and helps collect the new knowledge for organisational knowledge bank. One way to do it is to use the Lesson Learning process.

Communities of Practice

These are groups of employees and volunteers who have the same interests and tasks. Such groups can be very beneficial because they allow to **share know-how and experience**, share and develop good practices and improve competences of each member. Communities of Practice can create **space for supporting new and innovative ideas**. These groups can meet regularly face-to-face or work together on online shared documents.

Advice network maps

This is a great tool for support and help. You can create a **map of colleagues** which identifies and specifies their fields of knowledge, expertise and experience. Hence, if someone needs advice or help on specific topic, they will know who they should approach.

Case studies

This tool can give a reflective dimension to the work of the organisation. Select a situation or a project from your organisation's experience and **describe it as a story**. This story should include main issues and challenges which you had to face and how you dealt with them. At the end of the report you can **include key learning points**.

Transition of knowledge

In organisations with changing staff and volunteers the transition of knowledge is crucial for a sustainable organisation. Make sure that knowledge about **everyday work routines**, even to-do lists (or packing lists for an activity) are handed over to new people in the team. Here are some ideas on how you can do it:

- Let employees and volunteers reflect on what they have learned and what information they found useful and create a "**Welcome Pack**" for new team members, where they can find essential information about official documents, some "**how-to-guides**", an overview of other people's roles and tasks in the team. You can also add the Advice network map or Case studies (see above) into the "Welcome Pack".
- **Plan ahead** when staff changes and arrange a few days or weeks where the transition of work and tasks will take place.
- Let **former staff** members and volunteers **join the first meetings** and give advice and tips to new people.

These are just some of the ideas on how to incorporate learning in your organisation - we hope you will enjoy creating space for yourself and your colleagues to learn from and with each other.

Dialogue structures

Step by step you can establish more and more **structures that can simplify communication** and make your team members more satisfied at work. Here are some examples:

- Encourage short **coaching sessions**, where pairs meet up and coach each other (this helps with personal and professional development).
- Create short **questionnaires for feedback** and evaluation or needs analyses on a regular basis.
- Make appraisal or "**learning interviews**" especially after team members have been at a training, lecture, conference - to make sure that the knowledge is shared.
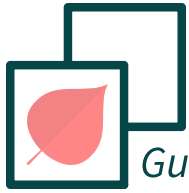
BY NATALIA LUCHKO

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Guides for youth NGOs
SUSTAINABLE PRINCIPLES

Environmental youth organisations work on topics of environmental protection and raising awareness about environmental issues. They unite young people who are passionate about protecting our planet and maintaining its resources. Therefore, it is especially important for such organisations to ensure that they stay true to their mission and values and **follow environmentally-friendly practices** in their work.

However, youth organisations focusing on other topics should also consider adopting environmental principles and setting the example for all young people to care about the environment and its resources. It is the responsibility of every organisation and company to ensure that they are not using more resources than necessary and that they aim to be as environmentally-friendly in their work as possible.

This guide will give you some ideas on how to establish and follow environmental principles in your organisation and some practical tips on staying environmentally-friendly.

SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The topic of environmental principles and environmentally-friendly practices is closely connected with the terms of "sustainability" and "sustainable development".

"**Sustainability**" can be defined as "the ability to continue a defined behavior indefinitely". (1)

"**Sustainable development**" is the process which aims to reach sustainability. The most famous definition of sustainable development is taken from the report "Our Common Future" by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (2)

(1) http://www.thwink.org/sustain/glossary/Sustainability.htm
(2) http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm

Sustainability is based on three pillars:

- "**Environmental sustainability** is the ability to maintain rates of renewable resource harvest, pollution creation, and non-renewable resource depletion that can be continued indefinitely.
- **Economic sustainability** is the ability to support a defined level of economic production indefinitely.
- **Social sustainability** is the ability of a social system, such as a country, to function at a defined level of social well being indefinitely." (3)

So, how can these pillars be connected to the work of your organisation? To promote sustainable lifestyle your organisation should also follow certain environmental principles.

Why is it important to have such principles?

- They help maintain the image of your organisation – taking accountability as an environmental organisation.
- They serve as a set of rules for your organisation's everyday management.
- They help your organisation to stay coherent and true to organisation's values.
- They serve as a guideline for the environmentally-friendly management of office and projects.

For a start, you can use the following **guiding principles:**

- Living and working with less - using secondhand materials, reusing, borrowing, etc.
- Reducing the consumption of resources: energy, water, chemicals, producing less waste.
- Using green alternatives.
- Encouraging and educating others.(4)

ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

Here are some practical tips on making your organisation even more environmentally-friendly.

Paper

- Re-use paper from both sides or save 'scrap' paper for using the clean side later.
- Avoid printing documents as much as possible.
- Buy recycled paper and in case it is not possible, paper from FSC certified sources.
- Find eco-friendly alternatives to usual paper - hemp paper, unbleached paper, etc.
- Use whiteboard at meetings and projector instead of flipchart paper.
- In case you have to use flipchart paper, use it from both sides.
- Use old posters for flipcharts.
- When printing documents, use smaller font to save space.
- You can also use environmentally-friendly fonts which save ink when printing.
- Unsubscribe from printed newsletters and magazines and get online subscriptions instead.
- When you prepare publications and booklets, think if you really need to print them or it is enough to have an online version.
- In case you need to print the publication, choose space and size smartly, so you don't use more paper than you need. Print only the necessary amount of copies - better to give them away than storing the publication for years.

(3) http://www.thwink.org/sustain/glossary/Sustainability.htm
(4) http://www.iynf.org/download/green_toolbox/GreenToolbox.pdf

ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

Energy

- In winter heat the building to maximum 21°C - start heating when people arrive and turn it off one hour before leaving the office.
- In summer, cool the building only when it is necessary, if there are people in the office and not lower than 24°C.
- Use curtains or blinds in summer to reduce the hot temperature.
- Insulate the office building to reduce the need for heating.
- Choose venues for your activities which use renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, geothermal energy, etc.
- Use as much natural light as possible during your activities.
- Use electrical appliances with energy efficiency: turn off computers from plugs when leaving the office, don't use screen savers and the brightest settings on the computers.
- Turn off lights in every room which is not used.
- Choose venues which have sensory lights.
- Use energy efficient light bulbs.

Water

- Make sure there are no leaks in any water appliances and equipment.
- While washing the dishes, use a water saving technique (for example first fill in the sink with wash water, wash the dishes and rinse them with water in a different bowl to avoid running water) or energy efficient dishwasher.
- Cool the drinking water in the fridge instead of running the tap to get cold water.
- Use drinkable tap water in your office and at your events instead of bottled water.
- Ask the participants to use the same cup or glass during the whole duration of the activity - so that the venue does not have to wash a lot of cups all the time.
- Install tap aerators to save water.
- Use environmentally-friendly or naturally based cleaning products: baking soda with vinegar, etc.

Food

- Go vegetarian or vegan! Provide only vegetarian meals at your events and encourage your colleagues to follow vegetarian diet (at least in the office).
- Buy organic and fair trade products for your office and activities: tea, coffee, etc.
- Prepare food for your activities from local, seasonal and organic products.
- Minimise food waste - invite the participants to take less food (if they cannot finish their portions), let the participants serve food for themselves.
- Store food carefully so it does not get spoiled fast.
- Ask the venue to recycle food or give leftovers to farm animals.
- Use catering services which provide environmentally-friendly services and follow ethical rules.

Promotional materials

- Before ordering new promotional materials, make a good research of your target group and decide if you really need to make these materials and if yes, decide on the amount which will be used and distributed fast.
- Choose environmentally-friendly and organic materials: recycled plastic, aluminium, organic cotton, bamboo, accredited wooden products.
- Choose recyclable materials and materials safe for health.
- Pay attention to the producer of the materials: order the merchandise from companies which provide fair and safe conditions to their workers.
- When sending your materials, avoid using air transport.
- Send promotional materials in big packages and to the right target group who will really use them.

Transport

- Develop a travel policy for your organisation and specify the rules of travel which have to be followed by employees, volunteers and participants.
- Develop a strict rule about flying - for example, it can be allowed to fly only if travelling by land takes more than 24 hours.
- Encourage your employees to use public transport, bicycle or walk to work.
- Oblige participants to offset their CO2 emission if they take plane to your projects.
- Inform participants about the most environmentally-friendly ways to reach the venue.
- Purchase products from local companies and organise one-time deliveries.

Waste management

- Use as little as possible and produce as little waste as possible.
- Re-use the materials and upcycle the old things.
- Recycle waste at your office and on all of projects: paper, plastic, aluminium, organic waste, glass.
- Explain the recycling system to the participants at each event.
- Install a composting system in your office.
- Invest in high-quality products which will last longer.
- Buy green electronics and take care of the equipment.
- Organise swap events.

Venue

- Find the venue which is easy to reach by public transport.
- Choose the venue which has the same values as your organisation.
- Support small organisations and farmers rather than staying at corporative venues.
- Choose the venue which provides vegetarian, organic food.
- In case the venue provides towels, make sure they are not changed every day.
- The venue should have adequate recycling facilities.
- The venue should have energy saving system and use renewable energy sources.

Financial management

- Choose ethical banking.
- Apply for grants and funding to ethical donors who are not involved in environmental degradation, child labour, unfair treatment of workers, etc.
- Use alternative funding: crowdfunding, social entrepreneurship, etc.

HOW TO FOLLOW ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES?

How can you make sure that your organisation is performing at your best and following environmental principles and sustainable practices? Here are some of tools which you might find useful:

- **Sustainability Policy**

You can form a working group consisting of several people who know the organisation well (for example board members, employees, active volunteers). This group can create a d**ocument with guiding rules** on how the NGO should organise the activities in the most environmental way. The policy can include points on accommodation, travel, use of water, energy, materials, waste, etc.

After the working group prepares the final draft of the policy, it should be shared with the main stakeholders of the organisation and then approved by the highest decision-making body of your organisation (for example General Assembly).

It is important to **develop the implementation plan** of the policy and keep the document updated and relevant to the objectives of the organisation.

- **Eco-mapping of the office**

Eco-mapping is a great tool to analyse and manage the environmental performance of the organisation. It is a **self-evaluation practical method** which involves all employees in the office. Eco-mapping allows to gather data about the current situation and **set priorities and identify points for improvement**. You can select one person from your office who will coordinate eco-mapping or hire an external expert who can arrange it. Besides the office, you can also organise eco-mapping of a venue of your next activity.

Main **steps** of eco-mapping:
- Create a map of your office.
- Create several copies of the map for different points: water, soil, air, odours, noise, dust, energy, waste, risks.
- Collect the information with your colleagues.
- Identify environmental problems and points for improvement.

You can check more detailed information here: www.eco-forces-bgtr.eu/documents/ecomapping/GUIDE_maps_emas-easy-en.pdf

- **Internal Audit**

Internal Audit is a tool to **review the work of the organisation** (for example the work of secretariat and board) and monitor if the organisation follows the environmental principles and sustainability policies.

Make a call for 2-3 people from your members who would like to audit the one-year work of the organisation. You need to prepare the documents for the audit: questionnaires about projects, office work, etc. People responsible for projects need to fill in the forms and answer questions about logistics, including use of materials, venue, travel, etc.
After the auditors review the forms, they can prepare a **report for the whole organisation**.

Internal Audit is a great way for your organisation to involve its own members in making sure that you follow environmental principles and stay true to your values.

- **Sustainability Committee**

Another similar way to monitor the environmental performance of the organisation is to set a Sustainability Committee. This can be a group of people who meet regularly to **assess the work of the organisation and identify points for improvement**. The committee can report at meetings of the board and secretariat.

These were some of the ideas from us on how to ensure that your organisation follows environmentally-friendly practices and sustainable principles - we hope that many youth organisations will take it as inspiration to come up with their own ideas.
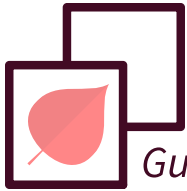
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Guides for youth NGOs

HUMAN RESOURCES

When the best leader's work is done the people say, "We did it ourselves". (Lao Tzu)

All youth organisations have one thing in common – they are comprised of people: employees, volunteers, participants of projects. The successful work of any organisation depends on people and very often work in an NGO requires a lot of motivation, dedication and sometimes some compromises. It is very inspiring to see what impact enthusiastic young people can make in an organisation. However, we all know the other side of this topic – especially in youth organisations, very often the demands are high, resources and time are limited, and people leave the organisation without realising their full potential or without sharing their knowledge and experience with their colleagues. In this guide we would like to focus on two important topics connected with "human resources management": **motivation and leadership**.

Let's find out how to increase the commitment and involvement of people and how it can contribute to the sustainability of your organisation.

HOW TO MOTIVATE PEOPLE

Motivation can be defined as a cause (a longing) for human actions. Depending on what is wanted to be done and how intensely and long-lasting this wish is.

There are **two types of motivation** (1):

- **intrinsic motivation** (people want to do something because they are really passionate about it and they feel joy while doing it);
- **extrinsic motivation** (generally: people do something to receive a reward or to avoid punishment).

(1) Deci, Edward L.; Ryan, Richard M. (1985): Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior. New York: Plenum.

It has always been debated whether extrinsic motivation hinders intrinsic motivation (for example when people only do "good things" because they get a reward for it – or imagine a child who only cleans the dinner table if they get a treat afterwards). But external factors, such as rules can also be accepted as useful and thus internalised, for example: "I don't want to be late for class (because otherwise it's more difficult to understand and follow)".

Moreover, people show higher and better performance in fields they feel self-confident and competent in, or when their work is recognised and appreciated by others – and they only invest in learning something new, when it is really relevant to them. For example: "I need to learn how a laptop or smartphone is used in order to communicate digitally with people around the world".

In the youth field, it is easy to create tasks that are relevant for young people, when you look at their developmental stage. According to Havighurst (2) so called "**developmental tasks**" are: to settle in a peer group, to think about job and career, to make plans for the future, to develop their own values. If your organisation meets these needs by creating nice and interesting meetings, friendship and team-building activities, gives them a reference for their CV or even helps them on the job market, young people will stay involved in your organisation because the work and time invested helps them to think about and shape their lives.

What to do if people are not motivated?

Find out more about their **needs and relevance**. Which topics are interesting to them, how do they spend their time? Try to build activities around it that meet their interests and provide a comfortable, welcoming and opening atmosphere (and then, they will join voluntarily). It is also important to communicate to them in "their" language. Tell them, what they need to hear, or think about the way to provide information for them in order to keep them more motivated. This will be explained in more detail in the next chapter (see below).

Another way is to set up a **reward system**:

- give them certificates for their CV,
- give them the opportunity to develop further (gain more self-confidence and competences),
- recognise their work and be thankful,
- openly celebrate successes and their competences.

However, if people are not motivated, there is not much you can do. Probably it is healthier and less time consuming if you start looking for people who really are motivated, instead of running after people who never show up because they simply do not see the relevance of joining your organisation.

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(2) Havighurst, Robert J. (1952): Developmental tasks and education. 2nd ed. New York: Longmans, Green.

LEADERSHIP

First of all, leadership can be defined as certain actions that cause other human beings (individuals or teams) to act, in order to achieve certain set aims and objectives.

Leadership is a complex concept because it includes **several interrelated levels**, and leaders and managers need to have an overview about them all:

1. the individual team member (employee, volunteer),
2. the teams and
3. the organisation or company.

The third level is the most abstract one. It includes aspects such as feasibility, external public relations, or the obligation to achieve certain goals (for example, these goals could be: creating and selling a product to a customer, adapting to changes on the market, etc.)

On these levels, resources have to be acquired, distributed fairly, certain aims and objectives need to be identified and, even more important, communicated to the individual workers. The effectiveness of communication equals the effectiveness of the whole organisation and good atmosphere. **Dialogue structures and means of communication increase motivation** and so performance and quality will increase, too.

Moreover, leadership bears a great responsibility. According to scientific studies, the **leadership style has consequences on health and well-being of employees and volunteers**. One core aspect of successful leadership is therefore team-building and making a group of individuals work as a team (or dissolving or rearranging teams). Additionally, different teams have to

cooperate and work together. This can be a challenge because these teams might differ in terms of habits, their "corporate identity", etc.

Furthermore, there are studies stating that not only employers, managers or team leaders have leadership skills - but that **all people have certain leadership skills**. This is interesting to know because mostly, only a few people in companies and organisations are given the responsibility and task to lead while the others should suppress their skills and just "follow". Hence, the potential of the followers is often not considered and can be seized more, if you know about it! Below you can find out more about your own type of leadership.

COMMUNICATING CHANGE

Especially when it comes to changes and restructuring, **human beings tend not to like change**, as it can be perceived as a threat. So, when you have to talk to employees or volunteers about change, make them understand it as a motivating challenge.

According to Higgins "**Regulatory focus theory**" there are **two types of workers** (with distinct motivational orientations, work strategies, aims and ways to deal with change):

- **promoters**
- **preventers**

However, the way people react depends on context and situation, so both types can co-exist in one person.

Promoters are focused on success and gain, strive for growth and need progress. They are good at developing new ideas. For them, it is important why a certain objective needs to be met. This person can be motivated by positive feedback about milestone-successes.

Preventers have a need for security and focus more on potential loss or failures. They are good at finding mistakes or weak points. For their understanding it is more important how certain objectives should be met and preventers can be motivated if a leader points out mistakes or aims that are not yet met.

Leaders should be aware of these two types and always try to create a regulatory fit (that means that the task, situation and individual/team match perfectly fine). It can also mean that the same "change" that has to be made needs to be communicated to the different types individually (in reflection groups or team-meetings).

Here you and your team can make a test about your Regulatory Focus yourself:
www.sjdm.org/dmidi/files/Higgins%20et%20al.%20%282001%29%20RFQ.doc

Here is another test that you can try out with your team – and reflect upon the results afterwards:
www.midss.org/sites/default/files/rfocus_induction.pdf

LEADERSHIP STYLES

There are many different leadership styles. When learning more about your style, strengths and weaknesses, you can become more aware about why you lead the way you lead, and why some things work and others do not. Knowledge about leadership styles (of yourself and of other people in your team) might help you to better understand their intentions and deeds.

For example, you can be focused either more on the **people** working in your organisation/company, or more focused on the **tasks**.

Another level is about **participation**: is it more a democratic or authoritarian style?

Furthermore, there are certain attributes like **social competences, empathy, support, cooperation**.

On the one hand, your style can be **consistent**, on the other hand, it can vary and be **flexible** according to each situation.

Mindful leadership

There is evidence from health sciences that mindfulness has positive effects on concentrated and focused work, increased performance, dealing with stress and recovering (faster) from illness. Mindfulness is the **ability to focus** and can be learned, for example, in sensory awareness seminars. It is done by **noticing and observing carefully without interpreting** or letting stereotypes or emotions limit perception (distinguish between what is information and what is judgement/evaluation). Mindfulness helps with **active listening** (and really being interested in the employees). Rather be a role model than a supervising/controlling authority.

Leadership Compass

Another way to connect your group and improve team work is to find out about the **team members' strengths**. You can do this by making an easy **self-assessment** with your team, for example, you can use the Leadership Compass. You can find the instructions and the assessment sheet here:
https://evans.uw.edu/sites/default/files/public/Leadership-compass-self-assessment.pdf
It is recommended to show the results to each other by standing in a room (in four corners) and discuss how you work confidently, share

examples and try to understand others and their styles. When forming teams for future projects, try out mixed or homogenous groups and make use of all the skills and styles.

We hope that we could provide you with useful tools and new knowledge about motivation and leadership, and thus enable you to communicate even more successfully with staff and volunteers in your organisation. Hopefully, you are now more motivated to discover new ways to work sustainably together!

BY ANJA WILKEN

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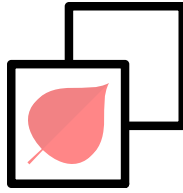
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