

# HOW TO BUILD A GOOD SMALL NGO

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## SECTION E: BUILDING ON GOOD PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE

This Section consists of parts of the Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 7 & 11.  
The original numbering is left in place so that extracts can be traced back.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Definition of NGOs:

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) asks for the following in an NGO, that it is non-profit; non-commercial; non-government; legally registered; and subscribing to universal humanitarian values and practices. However, legal registration may pose problems where the government is hostile. It can, for example, block external funding.

Other International agencies look for additional characteristics. Perhaps the most important are that the NGO has capacity – meaning that it knows how to make a plan and has the resources to carry it out – and that it is ready to be held accountable for its actions.

Agencies may also look for:

- an established headquarters;
- a democratically adopted constitution;
- separation of policy-makers and executive: this means that there is one group of people who decide on the policy of the NGO (e.g. a Board) and a different group of people doing the work – the employees or the Executive. The third group involved are the people who benefit from the NGO – the beneficiaries – and the policy-makers should represent

these beneficiaries. They should also have some real control over the way the employees approach their job. (See Chapter 8).

- that the NGO has existed for at least two years;
- that it is not politically partisan;
- that it does not use or advocate violence;
- that it is funded mainly by individual members – although in poor countries this is often impossible.

We are not saying that each NGO should do all of the above. An NGO can take different forms.

Think about what is really important:

- Many of the factors listed above are about behaving as a formal organisation. Small NGOs may do fine without much formal shape.
- Some countries make legal registration unnecessarily difficult, or attach political strings.
- It is possible to have various interpretations of many of these terms, such as “universal humanitarian values”.

So good NGOs may end up looking very different from each other.

**The definition we wish to use in this manual is that an NGO should aim to be non-profit, non-commercial and non-government. It should subscribe to universal humanitarian values and practices. It should have capacity, and be ready to be held accountable for its actions.**

But the bottom line is this:

A lot of NGOs do, on the whole, more good than bad.

A number of others are clearly lining the pockets of the boss or helping one group grind down another – doing more bad than good.

And a third group has so little capacity, so few staff with any conviction, that they are completely ineffective.

In which group, in ten years time, will you have placed your own NGO?

## **THE BEGINNING STAGES OF AN NGO**

### **1.1 First Steps**

For all of you starting up an NGO, hoping to be successful, you need three things;

- The first is passion
- The second is a group of people who share this passion, and the vision to match
- The third is a good relationship with the people you want to help – the beneficiaries.

In most countries, NGOs start in two ways: one is where there is a group that has no voice but needs to find one. A few people in this group – perhaps the parents of children with disabilities –

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start to meet, decide to organise themselves in order to get more resources for their children and for their family. This is the classic bottom-up beginning. Another way is that a group of people with education or status decide to adopt a cause, decide that they will help, for example, older people with cancer or village groups who are planting trees.

The difference between these two groups is that, with the parents of disabled children and other bottom-up groups, the prime or original beneficiaries of the NGO are themselves and their families. This ensures that the beneficiaries are treated well. With the second group there is an “Us”, the people who are doing good, and the “Them”, the people being done good to. Whether this second group of NGOs will build well depends on whether they move the beneficiaries from outside to inside, making them part of the “Us”. This has to happen very quickly, otherwise the central relationship sets hard and can be poisonous – Do-Gooders helping Objects of Charity

There is usually a period of informality, when the group beginning the enterprise treat each other more or less as equals and everyone does everything, from sweeping the floor to deciding on policy. This is the period which you may remember later as the best time, when your passion was strongest, the feeling of working together for a common cause.

Very quickly, though the number of people gets bigger, jobs start to require specialisation. Outside organisations push you towards a proper office, a computer, towards legal registration, the creation of a board. Everyone starts to get a salary.

So now the main actors are: the workers; the beneficiaries; the board; and the individual or small group who keeps it all going. These last may be workers or the boss, may be a board member who was previously a beneficiary. But they are key – the person or people who keeps the engine running, who provides the energy and drive. If you are that person or one of those people, then as the NGO gets bigger and has different jobs within it, one of your big tasks is to make all the workers feel that they belong in the NGO and that the NGO belongs to them. You need to create a sense of ownership, among the beneficiaries and also among the workers.

Why a Board? Not every organisation makes one. A Board becomes important when the workers start to be paid, and perhaps become more concerned with earning a living than with good service. A Board should have members who truly represent the beneficiaries and who listen to the workers, but they make policy away from the people doing the daily tasks. They ideally have no personal interest except the good of the beneficiaries. In practice, checks and balances should make sure they are acting appropriately.

### EXAMPLE: THE STORY OF HOW ONE NGO IN WEST AFRICA GOT STARTED

*Jean-Robert Mbane*

This is the story of our NGO so far, though I will say that it is only recently that we claim to be an NGO. We have been working with older people for about 4 years. Everything came out of the pity we had, seeing older people suffering. We started in our main village by paying regular visits to them, discussion about their concerns, the heyday of their life; after that we brought them the food they liked which could not be found in our village. We brought them cloths against the cold, we brought them medicine and helped them to read the directions for the medicines they got.

We were encouraged in these activities by some other people who came to help by giving food ( rice, oil), cloths and other useful things. We were six founder members. Then we started work with young people who was not able to complete their higher studies and who had settled in the village;

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then, more and more, our action spread to the neighbouring villages. It is only recently that we learned that other organisations around the world had the same interests as us and saw the necessity and the use of legalising our NGO.

Now we face the problem of having different views of what we should be doing. Some among us think we need to build community houses for older people. Others, including myself, think that we should keep older people in their own houses and assist them there.

### **EXERCISE:**

**Is this NGO top-down or bottom-up?**

**What is its relationship with its beneficiaries?**

**What are the three most important steps it should take next?**

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

1. If you are clear about your goals, values and ethos; if you are clear about the field in which you are building your specialism; if you know what approach you are taking, whether advocacy or implementation, and if you find ways of making a recognisable name profile;
2. If you build a relationship with your beneficiary group which has good will and respect on both sides;
3. If you adopt a single objective, because then it is easier to achieve it;
4. If you live in a country with a strong civil society. This means that there are enough NGOs and Associations to form a mass big enough to be listened to, a mass existing between government and people. An example of a country with a strong civil society is Senegal;
5. If you build up your professional capacity and build partnerships with other groups.

### **Here is a formula to follow:**

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

A good example of where you need to be professional is in your handling of money. If you do the job properly you will also show yourself to be transparent -anyone can see how you are spending the money – and accountable – if money goes missing then it will be noticed and someone will have to take the blame. *See Chapter 10.1;*

6. If your NGO builds structures and ways of acting which are transparent, accountable and democratic. *See Chapter 8;*
7. If you develop a clear and sensible policy on gender. If no thought is given, then women will be under-represented in the group which makes decisions, and the needs of both sexes among the beneficiaries will not be thought through.

## GETTING THE PRINCIPLES RIGHT

Every NGO will do better if the workers have agreed on its vision, strategies, principles etcetera. It may take a period of discussion, during which each individual and group has a chance to argue and brainstorm. The way in which vision, mission and strategies flow one from the other and then lead to projects is very clear in the following example:

### EXAMPLE: FINDING A VISION, A MISSION, STRATEGIES AND GOALS FOR CISS, OUR NGO

*By Mrs. Peres Odera*

Community Initiatives Support Services (CISS) is an organisation registered in the republic of Kenya as a development agency. It operates in Western Kenya. It was started by a group of professionals and practitioners in community health and development in 1979.

1. OUR VISION: CISS operations are based on the organisation's vision, which is **“a healthy and just society”**. To reach such a society, there are many things that could be done. Within CISS, we narrowed it down so as to identify...
2. OUR MISSION: **“to build and strengthen sustainable individual family, institutional and community initiatives for health and development through partnership at all levels”**. To do this we had to find...
3. STRATEGIES. These are broad-based and limited in number. CISS formulated two such strategies, one of which is **“organisational development and management”**.
4. GOALS had to be found within each strategy. One of the goals, closest to the strategy given above, is **“to promote sustainable organisational and resource development”**.
5. PROJECTS then have to be planned and carried out to attain these goals. One such project has been **The Organisation Capacity Building Project**: which **reviewed the vision, mission and goals of the organisation with the board members, associates and staff of CISS and mapped out the responsibilities of each group, within a time-frame of 3 months** The strategy used for the review was training and experience-sharing. (Clearly, other projects would use other strategies).

### About the words used here...

Please note that different organisations use words a little differently. For example when some NGOs talk about the long-term, most encompassing point to aim at, they call it their "goal", not their "vision". In addition, words like "goals" are used at different points in this whole planning process. But this is not so important. What is vital is that every project has its place in a logical plan that the NGO workers know and have agreed to.

### Choosing good strategies and goals

It is very important that your NGO chooses good strategies. Another way of stating a strategy would be to say “The main thrust of our work will be...” so strategies are practical, and you will only be able to manage a few. Here are two examples:

- 1) “One strategy is to ensure that after five years, in this very poor community, each family will have one member who can earn money”.

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- 2) “As an environmental NGO, one of our strategies is to protect the existing trees and soil by building sustainable cooling fuel techniques into the community (e.g. by tree-planting, solar cookers, improved stoves, etc.)”.

We all know small NGOs with great commitment, who work hard but whose projects and activities are not part of any sensible strategy and are, in the end, a waste of time.

### EXAMPLE

An NGO in Asia was trying to help families on the edge of survival. Most of their energy went into providing a school. The children came out of the school able to read, but not equipped to earn an income. The families stayed poor. If the NGO had adopted the strategy “To ensure that one member of each family can earn a living” they might have made better progress.

### How to decide on good strategies, goals etc.

This manual talks on a number of occasions about ways to deal with serious issues. We suggest the use of SWOT exercises, (Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), when an organisation sets aside a few days, finds a good workshop leader and works alternatively all together and in smaller groups. Good strategies have to be based on a good understanding of all the actors, potentials, limitations, needs, problems, leadership structure, etc. The SWOT process is described in more detail at the beginning of Chapter 12. If the SWOT approach is used for identifying strategies, you might want to invite one or two outsiders with good analytical skills and a view of the role of an NGO. Senior people from another, successful NGO might be the right choice.

After brainstorming a number of possibilities, you need to narrow down and prioritise the few that are most important – and also identify the core problem which underlies everything else, perhaps landlessness, displacement, poverty.

Then comes the brainstorm on strategies – what would each achieve? Would they really meet the problem? Which strategies would build on the strengths of the NGO? If people want to concentrate on income generation, do you have people with experience, with an understanding of markets, profit margins, how money works? If the expertise of the NGO is running crèches and none of you can do simple sums, then to concentrate on income generation would be to build on your weaknesses, not your strengths.

### How your vision is built on principles

Part of this process of identifying goals, strategies etc. is recognising the principles held within the NGO, which most people subscribe to but do not normally discuss very much. Maybe your workers believe that all people deserve respect and a living wage, or that if you are born better off, you have to give something back. At the level of the NGO there may be a strong principle that its workings should always be transparent. Sometimes this principle is adopted as a strategy, and systematic action is taken to ensure it. Sometimes the principle is put on one side – “We will tackle transparency next year, after we have made progress with other strategies” – but it does not go away. Principles do not go away. Strategies, however, can be replaced when they have served their purpose.

Another principle might be friendliness towards the environment.

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Another, we would hope, is the principle of inclusivity – that all the people with a say in an NGO, whether bosses, cleaners or those who get help, should feel included and have a way to make their opinion heard. No one should be silenced because of their ethnic group, because they are disabled, too old, too poor or because they are a woman. Many NGOs have started to translate this principle into something real by looking at gender.

### **Including women and men: working out a gender policy**

What is gender? We are born, most of us, as one of the two sexes. But boy babies and girl babies get treated differently from the moment their umbilical cord is cut. We are taught how to be girls/women, boys/men. So gender roles are the social and economic roles that our culture gives us. They apply to both main genders, but women tend to be behind men in their situation (often poorer, less well-fed) and in their ability to get to resources. In most countries, for example, they find it much more difficult to get credit even though they have a better record of repayment.

#### **EXAMPLE: THE EFFECT OF HAVING A GENDER POLICY**

In 1998, there was a pause in the fighting in Sierra Leone. The planting season was only six weeks away and the big international agencies had to get seeds and tools to everybody, fast – to settled villages and to the displaced people in and around the villages. They worked through national NGOs who in turn worked through Village Heads. Those NGOs with no gender policy allowed the Village Heads to control who benefited, which meant that the 13% of displaced families headed by women got nothing. The NGOs with a gender policy knew how important it was to reach these families and made sure they were helped.

Here are the reasons why we say that an NGO should work out its own gender policy:

The *first reason* is that it will help you provide better services to beneficiaries (look at the example above). For a long time, certain groups have been getting less attention in development projects than others. Women have been sold short; so have different ethnic minorities, people with physical disabilities, the elderly. Meanwhile the groups with the highest profile and loudest voice get the most attention. A crude example is the crowd waiting for the bread handouts, a mass of young men elbowing the women to the back. But the women – leaving empty-handed as the bread runs out – look after, on average, five other people. If the distributors knew this, and acted on their knowledge, they would provide a more effective service.

So to some extent a gender policy is about knowing the people you are helping and the groups within the group. It is similar to doing a Vulnerable Group Analysis. It is a planning tool.

The *second reason* is that it is an issue of Capacity Building. Developing a gender policy will force you to look at how your own organisation has developed and whether your staff are representative of the groups you are helping. NGOs that are dominated by a higher class, or by one sex, NGOs where everyone is young and able-bodied, will probably not provide a sympathetic service for anyone different, especially not the other sex, the elderly, the most despised minorities.



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### EXERCISE:

**If tomorrow your NGO started a project for prostitutes, would everyone treat them as well as they would treat an old friend they went to school with, who is now in trouble? If not, why not? Where does kind-heartedness start and end?**

On a more practical level, most NGOs need women staff for certain tasks, like talking in confidence to female beneficiaries or providing Family Planning. But if they are only employed to do jobs decided on by male bosses alone, then the NGO is under-using their abilities and treating them with disrespect – and it probably disrespects its beneficiaries as well.

NGOs which want to change can organise staff training, demand a proven record of gender skills for certain posts etc.

A *third reason* is that many donors and bigger NGOs take the issue very seriously. They have a gender policy and will expect you to have one too. This is not true for all – UNHCR has a gender policy, Medecins sans Frontieres does not. Find out from your donors and partner NGOs where they stand and then look at their work.

A *fourth reason* is that gender is a matter of principle. If people get what they need then the service is fairer, more ethical. And we cannot know what they need unless we understand their situation. Analysing it from the perspective of gender is one way to understand, and a helpful way.

### EXAMPLE: HOW DEVELOPING GENDER AWARENESS IMPROVED SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY IN AFRICA:

By Amleset Tewodros, HelpAge International

HelpAge International works through local NGOs with older women and men, and to do a good job it needs gender awareness – an understanding of the situation of both women and men and how they are affected by social and psychological factors. With good understanding, the rights of both women and men can be equally supported.

On average, women in the developing world outlive men by 3-5 years, and by 2025, the numbers of women aged over 60 will have increased by 150 per cent. Longer lives mean that, compared with men, women have more chance of being widowed, of living without a partner. Older widows have few opportunities to marry again and often face loneliness, isolation and dependence on their children – this in societies where status is linked to having a husband. In HAI's experience, many older women continue to work into very old age. In addition to producing food or earning income themselves, they often take on domestic responsibilities to enable other family members to earn money. Care for the 'old old' still falls largely on female family members, often themselves ageing and in failing health; so does supporting the sick and disabled in both the immediate and the extended family

At the Africa Regional Development Centre of HelpAge International, we felt that we needed to do more to make our programmes gender-sensitive. So a consultancy firm was involved to guide our work. They started looking at the current programmes implemented by the organisation and whether they could be more gender-responsive. Various tools useful for mainstreaming gender were developed, for example tools for advocacy, for indicators and for programme monitoring. Then, a three day's workshop was carried out, to share these tools and increase the capacity of the staff to use them.



The workshop was an eye-opener for the staff. They saw the need to change beliefs and practices which marginalise women and the need to be more systematic and alert about ensuring that older women and men benefit more fairly from programmes.

## **WHAT BEST PRACTICE MEANS**

### **7.1 Best Practice for you?**

In each field of development, people have been working and gaining experience for centuries. Aspects of Best Practice depend on the situation; in the example given below of working with the physically disabled, the setting is South Africa. The economic situation is varied but more developed than in other countries, so standards are higher. Elsewhere, the only Practice possible may be helping the disabled just to keep alive. But whatever the economic level, helping the beneficiaries build self-respect and gain some power is both important and possible.

If your NGO looks seriously at what is considered Best Practice in its field, and after hard arguing decide that it is not right for your circumstances, then that is fair enough. But if you just ignore the whole body of experience and do what you want to do, you are looking after your own egos, not the well-being of your beneficiaries.

### **7.2 Is building an orphanage Good Practice or Bad?**

Traditionally in Africa, orphans were accommodated by the extended family. But in Europe people built orphanages. The characteristics of orphanages for the last two hundred years have been: • insufficient numbers of staff to meet the physical and psychological needs of the children; • a failure to teach the children how to relate to adults of both sexes, and in doing so learn how to be a woman or a man; • a failure to teach them how to build relationships of their own; • lack of planning of the children's' work futures. In Europe, girl babies are put into orphanages, grow up without relationships with boys and men, come out at sixteen, get pregnant . . . and put their girl baby back into the orphanage.

People seem to love building orphanages. The idea makes a nice mental picture – the saintly founders, surrounded by the loving children who are only alive because of them, all in a building that is a concrete proof of their benevolence. But this picture is about the egos of the builders, not what is best for children.

Today, AIDS has brought a large number of orphans. How should they be cared for? The money that can build an orphanage can also be spent on fostering the babies with their grannies and paying an allowance. If there are no grannies, aunts or big sisters, they can be fostered with non-related families. If land tenure is closed to outsiders, then older orphans will do better in towns, where they can be found a Master or Mistress and apprenticed to a trade, and ideally fostered with the Mistress's or Master's family.

### **7.3 Working out Best Principles and Practice**

#### **EXAMPLE: WORKING OUT BEST PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE FOR PROJECTS WITH OLDER PEOPLE IN AFRICA**

*By Amleset Tewodros*

We work for HelpAge International Africa Regional Development Centre, in Kenya. Our job is to provide support for national and local NGOs working with older people. Through their efforts we try to ensure that a number of best principles and practice are reflected in project work. Here are some of them:

##### **Checking our attitudes and those of other key people**

We try to ensure that everyone concerned sees older people as equal partners, not as objects of charity. Getting older is a natural process that affects us all. We should recognise that older women and men are an important part of society. They contribute, and their rights, needs and contributions need to be well understood. It is important to recognise that older men and women have a wealth of experience acquired over time.

*"I never believed these poor older people had anything to say. Now I have changed my mind and will always consult them",* Government officer, Ethiopia, after attending a needs assessment workshop with older people.

##### **Involving the elderly in NGO structures and in their planning processes**

Our partner NGOs are involving the elderly in their structures. Like other NGOs they share powers, rights, and accountability by having strong Boards (more in Chapter 8) and older men and women are represented on these Boards. They can use their experiences and capacities in project designing, implementing and monitoring.

##### **Understanding their physical limitations but also their strengths**

As people advance in age, they may become weaker and more susceptible to illness. We have found that it is important to take this into consideration while dealing with older people. We have to see each of them as an individual, to try to encourage participation, independence and dignified living – what we call active ageing. But we must not be overprotective. Older people have great strengths.

*You are never too old to learn. For me, it was like stepping from darkness into the light",* Mrs, Mchuru, 82 years, a literacy programme participant, Durban, South Africa.

### **7.4 Good Practice in the context of a country with some resources**

#### **EXAMPLE: WORKING WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

*By Gordon Freer*

MODE is a group of companies that is dedicated to finding socio-economic solutions for persons with disabilities – helping them find paying work. In many cases disabled people are seen as being a drain on families and on society. But paid work is economically empowering and can help reintegrate them into their society.

Previously there was a welfare mindset which ensured that the disabled remained dependent on grants and handouts – in a proverbial sense, people were given fish instead of being taught how to fish. One beneficiary said "What does it help if we can dress ourselves and operate our

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wheelchairs, but we are unable to find jobs to earn a living? We are a burden to our families and we have no dignity.”

Through the MODE methodology, inactive, dependent people with disabilities are transformed into active, productive citizens who contribute to the economy. MODE is a “best practice” model of teaching people with disability how to fish. Provided with opportunities and support, many people with disabilities have proved that they can start and run their own, viable small businesses.

The person must be highly motivated to improve his or her financial situation, through his or her own effort and not relying on hand-outs. It is also very important that the person has a reliable support network of friends and family. To achieve our aim, Mode uses a number of different tools including:

- Empowerment opportunities to the sector of society who are labelled as “disabled”. Motivated individuals with disabilities are prompted to discover their abilities.
- Vocational rehabilitation, which includes pre-vocational skills, work performance skills and problem-solving skills.
- Work placement / job creation / business placement in the formal as well as the informal sector.
- Environment-enabling solutions to overcome physical and social obstacles in the work place.

### 7.5 How you find out what is Best Practice in your field:

To find the best practice in your field:

- Find an experienced NGO in your field. Ask if you can visit and look at what they do.
- Read the literature. Pay a visit to the nearest town with a library. Look at the list of addresses, contacts and resources in *Annex Six* at the end of this manual and find what applies to your specialism. Follow it up. Try to find some useful sites on the Web.
- Find an experienced worker in your field, perhaps retired, and ask them to join the Board of your NGO.

## GETTING LEGAL STATUS

As part of the process of becoming accepted at international level, you will probably have to become registered, legal by the rules of your country. In each country there is a NGO umbrella organisation to which you will need to sign up. This step gives you access to information about other organisations and their activities, about current best practice in your field. It is usually a necessary step in getting funding by most international donors.

**EXAMPLE: A NGO in India becomes legal**

*by Professor Saraswati Swain*

Before I retired I was a full-time Professor in a Medical College. I was conducting a lot of studies with funding from the Indian Council of Medical Research, WHO, UNICEF etc. After retirement I wanted to continue and the only way financially to do that was to become a NGO. I sat with some of my likeminded friends to deliberate and formed an NGO called National Institute of Applied Human Research and Development (NIAHRD).

In order to be legal and get financing, three registrations were necessary:

- A registration under Indian Societies Registration Act.
- A registration with the Home Ministry under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act to receive and utilise grant-in-aids or contributions from outside the country.
- A registration with the Finance Ministry under section 12A of Income Tax Act to be a non-profit and non-taxed organisation.

Such registrations in India take a lot of time and involve filling in many forms After it was launched NIAHRD started to take up projects and studies on behalf of many national and international funding agencies and also successfully completed those projects. We were invited to many workshops and Seminars and became an active member of many networks.

**EXAMPLE: The South African NGO sector**

*by Khathatso Mokoetle*

**BACKGROUND**

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in South Africa have a unique history. In the apartheid years up until 1994, organisations that were more conservative and mainly run by whites were referred to as private welfare organisations. Most of them were easy to register as they functioned within the law. Most received good subsidies from government and acquired fundraising numbers.

In those years, the term NGO predominantly referred to charity organisations that addressed the problems of disadvantaged communities. Most of them were run by the progressives, served black communities and depended a lot on membership fees, bequests and overseas philanthropic financial support. The criteria set for registration made it difficult for NGOs to register. They were generally seen as anti-government in their criticism of apartheid laws and service delivery. Members were in and out for what they said or did in defiance of the government of the day. Requirements for registration included, among other things, submission of the organizational constitution, staff names and particulars to the registering office. As registered members, they had to make available whatever documents the state required. This made it easy for police to track down and arrest “trouble makers”. Given this context, progressive organisations preferred not to be legally registered. But local fundraising was illegal if the organisation did not have a fundraising number.

**AFTER THE NEW DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, POST 1994.**

With the new government, NGOs experienced survival difficulties. Private welfare organisations, most of which survived on government subsidies, lost benefits from the new government and had to close. Progressive organisations also faced survival difficulties; the overseas assistance received was now diverted to the new democratic government. This drastic change in the financial environment adversely affected lots of organisations, many of which had to close.

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### THE EVOLUTION OF THE NGO SECTOR

In the new democratic government, some old organisations died for reasons already given. New ones emerged for several reasons, the main reason being the increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS, with more and more HIV/AIDS organisations being formed. With historical perceptions equating non-government to anti-government in South Africa, the term NGO is gradually being replaced by the term NPO (Non-Profit Organisation).

### THE NON PROFIT ORGANISATIONS ACT, NO. 21 OF 1997

The Act was promulgated to make it easier for NGOs/NPOs to register. The procedures are easier and more user-friendly. Under this Act, charity/ non-profit-making organisations are now free to register either as Charitable Organisations or Section 21 Organisations. The private welfare organisations are also now registered under the two options.