Organizational Issues
for (Women) NGO's

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12a Content and Comments

The main partners of Admira have been autonomous women's organizations since the beginning of the programme (1994). They have played an important role in getting the issues of (war) rape and violence against women on several agendas. These organizations are often pioneers in the development of new initiatives for women and bring gender inequalities to the national awareness. Now, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) are developing in a rapid pace. The expanded sphere of NGO's is a feature of post war developments in the countries of former Yugoslavia. They are no longer regarded as a threat to the state but rather as organizations that, parallel to the governmental organizations, are able to make a significant and recognized contribution to society. This positive approach presents a great opportunity for their development and the impact in the regions they operate in.

Women's organizations are prominently active in this expanded sphere of NGO's and voluntary civil organizations. They represent an important factor in the reconstruction of post war society and substantially contribute to the transition towards a more democratic and gender just society.

We believe that in the interest of survivors of sexual and domestic violence, it is important to have strong women's (health) organizations. In order to support their development and to help them increase their capacity for effectively providing the necessary services to their clients, Admira has from the start provided them with organizational advise. As opposed to professional training, which we offer to all our partner organizations, this service is exclusively for women's organizations.

This module deals with organizational issues for NGO's and consists of two parts. In the first part some basic organizational issues - which we offered as part of our training programmes to women's health organizations in the countries of former Yugoslavia - are brought together: the analysis of an organization, the phases of growth, basic organizational requirements and issues of leadership development. The second part deals with conflict management.

12b Objectives

To learn how to make an analysis of organizational issues related to growth and leadership in a (women's) NGO and to formulate steps to move forward. More specifically this means:

- to understand the developments and growth stages of a (women's) NGO.
- to know the basic organizational requirements that are necessary to grow as an NGO.
- to clarify different leadership roles.
- to develop skills for conflict resolution.

12c Suggested Training Schedule

Part one: Organizational Issues
for (Women's) Organizations	in minutes
12.1 Exercise: Expectations	60
12.2 Presentation: Analysis and Understanding of Organizations	45
12.3 Exercise: Analysis of Present Situation	75
12.4 Presentation: Development and Steps of Growth of Organizations	30
12.5 Presentation: Basic Organizational Requirements	30
12.6 Exercise: Leadership Roles (1)	20
12.7 Presentation: Theory on Different Leadership Roles	30
12.8 Exercise: Leadership Roles (2)	40
12.9 Exercise: Follow-up	50

Part two: Conflict Management
12.10 Conflict Management, Introduction
12.11 When Do We Need to Interfere in a Conflict
12.12 Dealing With a Conflict One Step at a Time
12.13 Analysing a Conflict: How?
12.14 Kinds of Solutions
12.15 Strategic Conflict Intervention
12.16 Summary of a Conflict Resolution

12d Ideas and Suggestions for Trainers

1. To reflect on your personal situation as an NGO can often be a hard and scary matter. Although reflection should be a normal check up to be done from time to time, it is often a conflict or a situation of tension that calls for reflection. The most important thing for a trainer is therefore to create safety:
   - by working in small groups before you start a plenary discussion;
   - by offering theory and examples from other NGO's so that the process that this particular organization goes through at this moment can be appreciated for what it is: a 'normal', albeit, sometimes painful step in their growth;
   - by reformulating negative expressions and criticisms into positive ideas, agreements and intentions for the future.

2. For the trainer one of the most important moments is actually the intake of the organization with its representatives and their actual questions and underlying expectations of this training session. The intake should result in a more or less clear picture for you as a trainer. It should be clear whether you are dealing with a 'normal' organizational advise or whether it is a situation of conflict. The training should be designed according to that outcome.

3. For a 'normal' organizational advise turn to part one of this module. If it turns out that the work and communication within the organization is seriously hampered by internal tensions, conflict management is required. It may be necessary to apply conflict resolution. If so go to part two of this module for a model of conflict resolution.

12e Training Material

- Overhead and sheets
- Handouts
- Flipchart and markers

12 Content of the Module on Organizational Issues for (Women) NGO's

Part one

12.1   Exercise: Expectations (60 min)

Objective: To give every participant the opportunity to express her expectations and worries and to create a safe climate to work together during the training.

Method: Discussion in pairs and plenary discussion.

Material: Markers and flipchart.

Steps:
1. After a short introductory circle in which all participants state their name and profession, the participants form pairs and discuss the following questions (15 minutes).
   Please think about this session:
   ▪ Suppose it is over what should have happened, what should have been reached, done, felt etc. to make it a successful session in your eyes.
   ▪ What will make you feel comfortable during the session?
   ▪ What is the worst thing that could happen during or around this session?
2. Plenary inventory by the trainer (25 minutes)
   Everybody answers the three questions. The trainer makes three different lists of answers on the flipchart (one list for every question).
   Most important is that people feel free to share their hopes and fears.
3. Synthesis (15 minutes)
   The trainer triggers an exchange of ideas on how the group with the trainer's help can avoid the worst case scenarios and contribute to their own comfort.
4. Explanation of the training programme by the trainer (5 minutes)

12.2   Presentation: The Analysis and Understanding of Organizations (45 min)

1. Organizations are like living organisms (Sheet 1)
We find it useful to compare organizations to living organisms, perhaps to living persons. This means that, in order to understand an organization, it is useful to:
▪   know something of its history (important moments, traumas)
▪   know about the context it exists in (situation in the country, position)
▪   know how it relates to other organizations, now and in the past
▪   know how it solves problems (difficulties, solutions)
▪   know about its image, and self-image
▪   know something about its 'habits' (ways of working).

An organization has (developed) its own personality. Changing an organization is possible, but requires a kind of energy that can alter habits, lifestyles or set psychological patterns.

There have always been valid reasons explaining why an organization has developed the way it has. Understanding and respecting those reasons is a good basis for working within or with an organization.

2. Ideology, external and internal goals (Sheet 2)
Organizations usually try to achieve something 'out there'. If, for instance, an organization offers a series of consciousness-raising activities, it is probably trying to offer opportunities to women to re-evaluate and perhaps change their lives. An underlying ideology will be concerned with reaching equality between women and men, or fighting exploitation of women.

The ideology, external and internal goals are sometimes clearly formulated, but need regular updating, because the world outside and inside the organization keeps changing.
The Ideology is the underlying system of beliefs or values, and the required direction of change. Feminism (in its different forms) is an example of an ideology.
The External goals are descriptions of what an organization would like to achieve 'out there' - in the long or possibly short term. These goals may be descriptive (improving the position of women in society) or defined in terms of 'products' (for example, 'this year we want to teach 5 feminist literature courses, each taking an x amount of time, or we want to put out a monthly feminist magazine and have x number of subscribers').
External goals bear a relationship to the underlying ideology. Every so often it is necessary to review that relationship.
The Internal goals concern the organization, and particularly the people in it. An internal goal of an organization may be to improve its internal communication, or to upgrade the know-how or professionalism of its people. Maybe a (new) computer system has to be introduced.
Internal goals are primarily aimed at being more effective with regard to external goals. The wish to develop a certain type of group dynamic, or to allow personal development is often related to external goals (ways of attracting and motivating the right kind of personnel). But at times, they may stand as goals in their own right (increasing job opportunities for women, the continuation of the organization, personal development).

Ideology and external goals can be fairly well articulated, and there is a range of ways to ensure that they are. Some organizations have a tradition of detailed ideological discussions. Other organizations have a more general ideological direction, and are more specific about their short- or long-term goals.
Internal goals are often more implicit. The 'official policy' and the realities of what goes on in an office often differ to a degree. Understanding the real motivation and direction of the organization is not always simple, for outsiders but also for the people working in the organization. This is because they become socialised, used to doing things in a certain way.

3. Organizational structure (Sheet 3)
In organizations the work, the levels of responsibilities, internal and external communications, decision-making processes, etc. are all structured. There are many ways to do this, and different aspects to be considered when structuring an

organization. Within an industrial context it may be efficient to put workers on a small repetitive task which they will learn to do at high speed and with maximum precision. However, there may be reasons with regard to job satisfaction (internal goals) which suggest the development of more all-round skilled workers, or job rotation. In a professional NGO, clearly, the latter will be more appropriate.

A range of considerations can play a role when deciding on matters of responsibility, co-ordination or control.

Questions to be considered:

- What kind of business is it (service, industry, professional)?
- What are the external goals/products (innovative, precision products)?
- What are the internal goals (workforce level and aims)?
- In what developmental phase is the organization (young, consolidated; still in the pioneer stage or moving to a professional stage)?
- What is acceptable within the organizational and national culture?

Questions of responsibility, hierarchy, leadership etc., in part depend on what people are 'used to' in their culture, or what they have learned to expect of particular organizations.

4. Organizational and national cultures (Sheet 4)

Certain kinds of jobs need and therefore lead to certain kinds of 'organizational habits', or particular ways of doing things. We can distinguish 'branch cultures', such as universities, restaurants, armies, civil service organizations, sales organizations, NGOs or feminist organizations. Organizations from the same branch often have certain things in common wherever they are in the world. We expect to find a strong hierarchy in the army, considerable professional freedom in a university and a strict bureaucratic system in state organizations. Not only the structures but also the unspoken or social habits within branch organizations are comparable, and differ from organizations from other branches.

When an organization develops a 'way in which we do things here', newcomers will partly be selected and partly be socialised to become 'part of the team' or, in other words, to take on the social habits of the organization. These organizational cultures are not only affected by the type of work, but also by the national culture. More and more research is done on differences (and similarities) in national cultures. A number of dimensions in which cultures differ have already been identified:

- Power distance (e.g. acceptable distance between boss and worker)
- Individuality (how collective or individualistic is a culture)
- Masculinity (how dominant or caring is a culture)
- Uncertainty avoidance (how acceptable are risk and differences)
- Long-term or short-term orientation (perseverance or quick results)

These dimensions are relevant because it turns out that certain national cultures tend to have a preference for certain types of organizational structures and cultures. Organizations can be structured more (or less) like pyramids, machines, markets or families. Such differences in organizational structures and cultures lead to very different views on what should be standardized in the organization (e.g. the skills, the workers, the work processes, the supervision/control system or the output of work).

Literature on organizational analysis, consultancy and management probably carries the cultural bias of the author. It is hard, perhaps even impossible, to be fully aware of such biases in yourself. Intercultural exchange allows you to deepen your awareness of cultural elements in your personal organizational 'taste'.

5. Feminist organizations (Sheet 5)
The importance of recognising differences in organizational and national cultures - and this also applies to feminist organizations or NGOs - is that it clarifies that there is no objective 'right way of organizing'. An organization is more or less successful in a certain social context. A leadership style is more or less effective for an organization in a certain phase of its development. The organizational structure and culture are more or less compatible with the ideology and external and internal goals of an organization. This leads to the conclusion that there is not one correct way to structure an organization. Also, attempts to improve or develop an organization can only be successful if at least three 'dynamic' lines are taken into account:

1. The organization's history and its future wishes and perspectives
2. The relationship between the organization's inner being and its outside social context
3. The internal dynamics between the top and the base of the organization, how do they work?

Changing an organization will be more successful if the 'personality' of the organization (within its context) is understood in the analysis, and if the proposed changes are within the range of possibilities of the organization, because they are based on strengths and successes, and not only focused on problems or weaknesses.

After a few years of performing, many (feminist) NGO's need to reconsider their activities and especially their internal organization because externally the context of their activities has often changed and internally people may have changed.

12.3 Exercise: Analysis of Present Situation (75 min)

Objective: To make an analysis of the present situation and to identify priorities to work on.

Method: Assignment in pairs and plenary discussion.

Material: Markers and flipchart.

Steps:
1. Assignment in pairs (15 minutes)
   Think about what goes well and what should be improved, both for the internal activities and atmosphere (inside) and for the performance of the organization externally (outside).

2. Plenary exchange (45 minutes)

Inventory of the issues that were identified by the pairs (trainer).

It is a golden rule that you start with the positive remarks. People often start with negative things and that doesn't create a good working spirit. Often people feel ambivalent about the organization. If you start with the positive points people feel recognised and respected and will be much less defensive on the critical points.

3. Overview, tentative priorities and analysis (15 minutes)

The trainer collects the issues on a flipchart and tries to get a clearer picture of priorities, hot issues etc. They can be grouped in terms of strategy, objectives, internal culture etc.

Later on when the trainer introduces the different stages of growth, this inventory can be used again.

12.4 Presentation: Development and Steps of Growth of an Organization (30 min)

In 12.2 a general introduction was presented. We will now discuss it more concrete and specific for the NGO at stake. We will start with the 'logic' developments an organization goes through (give out handout 1):

From the pioneer stage towards the professional stage

1. *Pioneer phase (the first years):*
▪ there is a clear ideal, one goal and one strategy,
▪ there is friendship, a set of common values and culture, a similar way of doing things,
▪ often, there is an initiator, informal leader of a strong personality,
▪ often, there is a sense of strong separation from the 'main stream' ('we are different') and pride in that,
▪ decision-making happens in the group, by consensus, without clear procedures, things get done based on individual wishes (and everybody can do everything) and not on qualification.

2. *Growing in size, projects, ideas (after some years):*
▪ more (and sometimes different) goals and strategies are discovered,
▪ new people arrive, with different ideas and different ways of doing things,
▪ more people with leadership qualities emerge or arrive,
▪ extended co-operation with other groups/organizations becomes possible,
▪ sometimes more means (money, space, time) become available,
▪ different groups/projects emerge, other ways of decision-making are adapted.

3. *The need for clarity in goals, strategies, organizational systems:*
▪ a reconsideration of goals, strategies and policies is necessary,
▪ the central values and culture of the organization need attention/care/direction,
▪ clarity about division of responsibilities/leadership is needed,
▪ relationships with outside organizations need to be defined (strategies!!),
▪ decisions about the division of money, time, space etc. are necessary,
▪ systems of communication, running meetings, decision making, organization

of the work, ways of planning and evaluation work etc. are called for,
- the time has come for a discussion about the quality of the work and learning capacity of the organization and the individuals within it.

4. The choice: what kind of organization do you want to be, and why?
- historical or cultural reasons
- matters to do with the kind of workers inside
- matters to do with the kind of work, the kind of products
- matters of size
- matters to do with the kind of external relations

NGO's often experience a critical phase with internal tension when they arrive somewhere between the pioneer and more professional stages because the internal organization and its performance does not match the expectations of the insiders and sometimes of the outsiders as well. Therefore this analysis - where are we - should be made.

12.5 Presentation: Basic Organizational Requirements (30 min)
To develop a shared idea on what is necessary for the future the following infor-mation should be shared *(give out handout 2):*

Basic organizational requirements
Organizations should be organized in a clear and simple way, which is transparent to everybody in the organization.
To reach this, a number of things are necessary:

1. A few clear 'systems':
- The aims, policy and projects are clear (reviewed yearly)
- The organization of work is clear (who, what, when?)
- There is an internal personnel policy (recruitment, training)
- There is clarity about finances (accounting, policy, report)
- There is a communication system (main streams, specifics)
- There is an evaluation system (of projects, internal processes)

2. Clear levels of responsibility:
- The person that is responsible for a certain job:
- should have/get sufficient authority to decide things
- should be accountable (evaluated) regularly

3. A clear decision-making structure
- It is clear when and how general policy decisions are made
- It is clear who has (delegated) responsibility
- It is clear when/how evaluations/discussions are held
- It is clear when/how new decisions are made

4. Legitimate leadership, or co-ordination of tasks
- It is clear how responsibilities are delegated
- The level of authority is clear
- There are clear moments of evaluation of co-ordination/leadership

12.6 Exercise: Leadership Roles (1) (20 min)

Objective: To become aware of our ideas, assumptions, on 'good' leadership.

Method: Individual assignment and plenary discussion.

Material: Markers and flipchart.

Steps:
1. Individual assignment (5 minutes)
   Think of a person who, in your perception, was/is a leader that you really admire and think about what it is that makes you admire that person as a leader.
2. Plenary exchange (15 minutes)
   All participants are invited to share the name that came into their mind. The key question here is, why? Why did you pick this person? In other words, what are the features or the characteristics that make this person an admired leader? The answers are written on the flipchart.
   In one group many different names of famous people will come up (Ghandi, Havel, Tito), and often a teacher or a professor. The main characteristics often are: flexibility, open mind, good listener. At the same time strong attitudes, commitment to a cause, expertise and knowledge, consequent, stable and firm with clear goals, giving other people the opportunity to learn, to develop themselves, critical and supportive, honest and diplomatic, communicative. Actually, it all comes down to a kind of superwoman or man but translated into management terms it means: a leader has the competence to give shape to different aspects of leadership as described in the next paragraph.

12.7 Presentation: Theory on Different Leadership Roles (30 min)

Leadership - especially within feminist NGO's with a strong sense of being different from the hierarchic main stream - is a sensitive subject. Sometimes there are strong leaders that really command the organization but on paper everybody is equal. Then the discussion should be about whether or not a more formal and therefore more accountable leadership is necessary. Sometimes the NGO still is a real collective. Then the question should be if this collective leadership still matches the internal and external demands: in terms of quality and speed (collective decision making often takes time).

An exercise on leadership is a way to identify needs, ideas and prejudices around leadership (see exercise)

For a trainer the following different aspects of leadership are important to discuss *(give out handout 3)*:

A leader should:

facilitate:
- creating moments/conditions for information-exchange
- creating moments/procedures/opportunities for discussion and policy making

guard/control:
- that decisions are being taken
- that decisions are implemented
- that things/ projects are evaluated

stimulate/motivate:
- making sure that all people participate in discussion/decision making
- always wondering about what individuals/groups need to participate or to feel good in the organization

delegate:
- leaving as much as possible to the people involved: they decide how they want to reach their targets; this will prevent "learned incompetence" which the leader can create by overtaking or criticizing too much.

have decision power:
- for a certain period of time or in some areas, a designated leader can be granted some decision power, for instance to decide who should do that special course if the group can't make a choice (always accompanied with explanation and evaluation); or if one of the workers is not functioning properly and people avoid the discussion, a leader can have talks and take measures. Maybe certain tasks can be delegated differently if things do not improve, etc.

12.8 Exercise: Leadership Roles (2) (40 min)

Objective: To analyse the style of leadership in organization(s) of the participants.

Method: Individual assignment and plenary discussion.

Material: Markers and flipchart.

Steps:
1) The participants study the handouts on leadership roles and give their view on:
   - What is 'available' in their own organization?
   - What is necessary or lacks in this NGO?
2) A plenary discussion on the views of the participants. The results are written on flipchart.

12.9 Exercise: Follow-up (50 min)

Objective: To design a plan of action. All along the session priorities and alternatives have been formulated or areas of change have been identified. According to what is necessary and what the trainer can offer, a plan of action will be made.

Method:
- Working in subgroups and plenary discussion.
- The trainer has made an oversight of priorities/ideas/problems that have been mentioned during the session and now, together with the group or subgroups that work out a certain issue, a timetable and objectives are formulated.

Material: Markers and flipchart.

Steps:
1. The participants take the handouts on Stages of Growth and Basic Organizational Requirements and the trainer repeats what was discussed about these issues. (5 min)
2. A round of feedback: what do the participants recognise or what would they like to add? If the participants find it hard to speak up, it is possible to first have them discuss the questions with one other person in the group. Then make the inventory. (20 min)
The handout on Basic Organizational Requirements can also be used as follows: all individuals fill out the handout by giving a +, a +/-, or a -, behind the different issues mentioned. This also forms a quick scan of stronger and weaker points of an organization.
3. With both handouts the final step is to formulate priorities and how the organization (with the help of the trainer) can address them (30 minutes). The key object is that people in the organization get an idea of what is necessary to reach further growth and participation of people in the process.

Part two

12.10 Conflict Management (two or three days)
If the work and communication within an organization is seriously hampered by internal tensions it may be advisable to turn to conflict resolution.
The use of the conflict resolution model that is described here will take at least two or three days. It should be used in a flexible manner according to the actual situation and needs of the organization. Therefore, there is no given time table.

12.11 When Do We Need to Interfere in a Conflict
Tensions between people fluctuate, and are a part of normal life. The way that we experience, express and deal with tensions is probably greatly influenced by upbringing and cultural context. Certain people and certain cultures are more confrontational than others. Others show great patience - and remember things. Some have found ways of dealing with conflicts via indirect communication, involving third parties. Also, there are many different interpretations on when a situation is, or turns into a conflict.

People can be involved in conflicts in two ways:
1. A person can get into a conflict with a person or a group of people in their organization, or become entangled in a conflict with another organization.
2. Someone may be called upon to assist individual people, or groups of people within an organization to solve their difficulties, to bring their conflict to some sort of solution.

Every individual may choose whether and when to get involved with a conflict. A reason may be that work is suffering under unresolved tensions or conflicts. Or, people within the organization may be suffering and something needs to be done.
When someone does decide to take steps to solve a certain problem they need to be clear about their role. What is the issue at stake? Are they themselves a party to the conflict - or are they outside of the conflict. Are they able to clarify and help solve the problem, or to mediate or arbitrate between the conflicting parties?

12.12 Dealing With a Conflict One Step at a Time
As it usually takes time for conflicts to reach some kind of boiling point, often, it will take time to solve the conflict. Again, there are cultural and personality differences to take into account. Some people explode and simmer down again rapidly; others are more likely to build up tension in a slow and invisible manner.

Step a: Blowing off steam
Often when it becomes clear that 'something has to be done' the first thing needed is for everyone to tell their story, to express their side of things, to blow off steam. In this first step of conflict resolution the most important thing is that all the parties involved get their share of time, attention and empathy. By recounting what happened the first edge of pain and/or anger may be somewhat softened.

There are no guidelines on how much time this first step should take. Some people need a lot of time, need to release a lot of emotional tension before they can move on to step 2. Some are able to do this with all the players involved and present, others - depending on (individual) background - may find this too confronting to do 'in public' or to show their emotions at all.

Step b: Sharing all available information
The second step of conflict resolution is to share and compile the available information concerning the conflict in a rational manner. In part this will be information about 'what happened' - in chronological order. However, important information which is often more difficult to come by is how people perceived and interpreted the events that occurred. Nearly all conflicts are in part based on lack of information - about certain facts or events, and most certainly about the way others experienced certain events. Be aware of differences related to class, culture, gender and individual backgrounds that influence the way behaviour and events are experienced.

Step c: Analysing the (many) aspects of a conflict
The third step is to analyse the available 'data'. At this point it is possible to develop working theories about the backgrounds of the conflict, the underlying reasons and the relationship it bears to the organization or the people involved.

Step d: Finding feasible solutions
The final and fourth step is to use the analysis (step 3) in order to decide on certain solutions - to (hopefully) solve the conflict, or at least keep it at a certain level, or prevent the involved people or parties from flying off the handle again in the near future.

The need to analyse and to explicitly talk about a certain conflict is in itself imbedded in a cultural form. This means that the four steps discussed (blowing off steam, sharing information, analysing the conflict, and reaching feasible solutions) may represent, for instance, a very Dutch way of doing things. Not only the way conflicts emerge, but also how they are dealt with carry elements of culture and cultural differences. Some people for instance may find it easier to communicate through others. When dealing with a diverse, multi-cultural situation it is therefore wise to start out with a talk about what people have learned about how to behave during conflicts or how to deal with tensions.

12.13   Analysing a Conflict: How?
Analysing a conflict can be done in two rounds. In the first round you try to pinpoint the issue at stake - and to identify other issues which play a role in the background of the 'main' problem. In the second round it has to be decided what kind of conflict it is - because different kinds of conflict require different solutions.

a. Identifying the conflict issues.
Often a conflict does not stand on its own. There probably are background issues or problems, for instance, in the organization, or among the people. Also, there may be issues regarding the development of the organization and its goals

(people get into conflicts more easily when things are not going so well in the 'outside world).

Another issue is the way the conflict-partners behave in the conflict. Do they involve other people, appeal to authority, use 'dirty tactics'? What is and what is not acceptable, even in a conflict?

This way, it is possible to identify the immediate reasons underlying the conflict, but also the many more complex background issues involved. The advantage of analysing in this way, and depicting the most important issues involved, is that the solutions are likely to be more successful. Without a 'rich' analysis, chances are that one issue is dealt with, but the conflict will re-emerge in the near future as part of another issue. In that case it is not solved, but merely postponed.

b. Identifying the kind of conflict.
There are, roughly speaking, three types of conflict:
- Conflicts about limited means. There may be only so much money, or time, or power to go around. Who gets it? Or, in a meeting there may be more or less attention or respect for different people. Who gets more respect than whom?
- Conflicts about values. These are conflicts about what is right or best, and what is wrong. They involve moral issues, questions of belief and value systems, issues of religion or ideology, etc.
- Conflicts about identity. Although closely linked to values, conflicts about identity are more fundamental. They are conflicts stemming from the tension between the sexes, between ethnic groups, cultural or class backgrounds and/or people of different sexual orientation. Identity conflicts involve chosen roles (e.g. motherhood or not) as well as professional roles (e.g. doctors against nurses).

12.14 Different Solutions
Different conflicts require different solutions:
a. Conflicts about limited means may be solved by:
- creating more money, time, respect.....etc.,
- agreeing to a system of distribution (formulate criteria),
- 'fighting it out', and winning or losing (for instance, when competing for a job - may the best person 'win').

b. Conflicts about values may be solved by:
- convincing the other person,
- identifying common values, and approaching the problem from the basis of that agreement, consensus,
- agreeing to disagree - and (respectfully) living with the differences.

c. Conflicts about identity may be solved by:
NB: Conflicts about identity are the most painful sort. In essence one party is claiming that the other party 'is not good enough the way they are'. Between men and women an ongoing and very fundamental tension exists about 'the way we are'. Possible solutions (which take a lot of energy to reach) are:
- assimilation (adjusting to the dominant identity to be accepted),

- learning to live with the differences (understanding, acceptance),
- separation (in order to avoid the constant battles and pain).

12.15 Strategic Conflict Intervention

If the time comes, a person needs to decide if and when to get involved in a conflict. After this, there has to be a strategy. Do they think there is anything they can do to prevent a conflict, by coming to certain agreements? Do they think the conflict can be contained by appealing to reason, by convincing all involved that things can really be solved, by making the issue manageable? In other words, can they calm everyone down, and bring the issues back to more reasonable proportions?

Or does it seem impossible. Maybe it is better to face and express the issue, to 'bring it to a head', to make sure the battle is fought once and for all? In this case try to clarify and attack the problems at a more fundamental level to reveal that there are more and bigger questions involved than people may have thought.

The right strategy is the one that works - that allows the (right) issue to be looked at and dealt with - and that allows the people involved to release stress, take steps to solve things - and get back to work.

A wrong strategy is one that allows the conflicts to go on simmering under the surface, until it explodes again at an unexpected moment. Or a strategy which involves such a battle, that it harms the people and/or the organization, sometimes quite dramatically.
Finally, many decisions will be correct or not within the given social and cultural context. In conflict resolution the right timing is of the utmost importance.

12.16 Summary of a Conflict Resolution

Deal with a conflict one step at a time:
a. Blowing off steam
b. Sharing information (and interpretations)
c. Analysing the many aspects of the conflict
d. Finding feasible solutions.

Analyse the different lines of conflict:
a. What are the immediate issues at stake in the conflict?
b. What are background issues influencing the present conflict (in terms of the people, the organization, the outside world).
c. What are the different types of conflict behaviour of the people involved?

Analyse the different types of conflict, which lead to different solutions:
a. Limited means
   - creating more money, time, respect.....etc.
   - agreeing to a system of distribution
   - 'fighting it out', winning or loosing

b. Conflict of values
- convincing the other person
- identifying common values, and approaching the problem from the basis of that agreement, consensus
- agreeing to disagree, and (respectfully) living with it

c. Identity conflicts
- assimilation (adjusting to the dominant identity to be accepted)
- learning to live with the differences (understanding, acceptance)
- separation (in order to avoid constant battles and pain)

Choose a strategy
a. Prevention (by early agreement to systems of sharing, common values, clear roles)
b. Avoiding escalation (calm people down, describe problems reasonably, find common ground)
c. Escalation (by showing tensions, describing issues as matters of principle)

12f Acknowledgements

12g To Continue...

Admira has created a toolkit as a self help instrument for NGO's to solve their organisational problems.

The aim is to make gained insights, in organisational development matters, accessible to as many women organisations as possible.

The OD-toolkit, which is available as a CD Rom and a program on internet, contains a description of frequently observed problems in NGO's. Ten problem area's are presented: atmosphere, output, turnover of personnel, goals, resilience, money, power, expertise, agreements and external relationships. By choosing one category you get the possibility to refine the description of your actual organisational problem on a deeper level. More than 200 specific problems are described in this way.

Having chosen a specific problem that represents as close as possible your most bothering actual problem, you will be guided through relevant related topics, solutions and background articles. The toolkit is developped by Lidwi de Groot and Tom Pauka of de Beuk, Bureau for Organizational Advice, together with a group of consultants for women NGO's in Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia

To use the toolkit visit: www.transact.nl

Sheets and Handouts

Module 12

Organizational Issues
for (Women) NGO's

Organizations are like living organisms

- know something of its history (important moments, traumas)

- know about its context (situation in the country, position)

- know how it relates to others, now and in the past

- know how it solves problems (difficulties, solutions)

- know about its image, and self-image

- know something about its 'habits' (ways of working).

Ideology: the underlying system of beliefs or values, and the required direction of change.

External goals: descriptions of what an organization would like to achieve 'out there' - in the long or possibly short term.

Internal goals: concern the organization, and particularly the people within it.

External goals are related to the underlying ideology. Every so often it is necessary to review that relationship.

Ideology and external goals are often fairly well articulated, internal goals can be more implicit.

Organizational structure

Questions to be considered:

- What kind of business is it (service, industry, professional)?
- What are the external goals/products (innovative, precision products)?
- What are the internal goals (level of and aims concerning the workforce)?
- In what developmental phase is the organization (young, consolidated; still in the pioneer stage or moving to a professional stage)?
- What is acceptable within the organizational and national culture?

Questions of responsibility, hierarchy, leadership etc., in part depend on what people are 'used to' in their culture, or have learned to expect of particular organizations.

Organizational and national cultures

- Power distance (e.g. acceptable distance between boss and worker)

- Individuality (how collective or individualistic is a culture)

- Masculinity (how dominant or caring is a culture)

- Uncertainty avoidance (how acceptable are risk and differences)

- Long-term or short-term orientation (perseverance or quick results)

Attempts to improve or develop an organization can only be successful if full account is taken of at least three 'dynamic' lines:

1. The organization's history, its future wishes and perspectives
2. The relationship between the organization's inner being and its outside social context
3. The internal dynamics between the top and the base of the organization, how do they work?

From the pioneer stage towards the professional stage

1. Pioneer phase (the first years):
- here is a clear ideal, one goal and one strategy,
- there is friendship, a set of common values and culture, a similar way of doing things,
- often, there is an initiator, informal leader of a strong personality,
- often, there is a sense of strong separation from the 'main stream' ('we are different') and pride in that,
- decision-making happens in the group, by consensus, without clear procedures, things get done based on individual wishes (and everybody can do everything) and not on qualification.

2. Growing in size, projects, ideas (after some years):
- more (and sometimes different) goals and strategies are discovered,
- new people arrive, with different ideas and different ways of doing things,
- more people with leadership qualities emerge or arrive,
- extended co-operation with other groups/organizations becomes possible,
- sometimes more means (money, space, time) become available,
- different groups/projects emerge, other ways of decision-making are adapted.

3. The need for clarity in goals, strategies, organizational systems:
- a reconsideration of goals, strategies and policies is necessary,
- the central values and culture of the organization need attention/care/direction,
- clarity about division of responsibilities/leadership is needed,
- relationships with outside organizations need to be defined (strategies!!),
- decisions about the division of money, time, space etc. are necessary,
- systems of communication, running meetings, decision making, organization of the work, ways of planning and evaluation work etc. are called for,
- the time has come for a discussion about the quality of the work and learning capacity of the organization and the individuals within it.

4. The choice: what kind of organization do you want to be, and why?
- historical or cultural reasons
- matters to do with the kind of workers inside
- matters to do with the kind of work, the kind of products
- matters of size
- matters to do with the kind of external relations

Basic organizational requirements

Organizations should be organized in clear and simple way, which is transparent to everybody in the organization.
To reach this, a number of things are necessary:

1. *A few clear 'systems':*
   - The aims, policy and projects are clear (reviewed yearly)
   - The organization of work is clear (who, what, when?)
   - There is an internal personnel policy (recruitment, training)
   - There is clarity about finances (accounting, policy, report)
   - There is a communication system (main streams, specifics)
   - There is an evaluation system (of projects, internal processes)

2. *Clear levels of responsibility:*
   - The person that is responsible for a certain job:
   - should have/get sufficient authority to decide things
   - should be accountable (evaluated) regularly

3. *A clear decision-making structure*
   - It is clear when and how general policy decisions are made
   - It is clear who has (delegated) responsibility
   - It is clear when/how evaluations/discussions are held
   - It is clear when/how new decisions are made

4. *Legitimate leadership, or co-ordination of tasks*
   - It is clear how responsibilities are delegated
   - The level of authority is clear
   - There are clear moments of evaluation of co-ordination/leadership

A leader should:

facilitate:
- creating moments/conditions for information-exchange
- creating moments/procedures/opportunities for discussion and policy making

guard/control:
- that decisions are being taken
- that decisions are implemented
- that things/ projects are evaluated

stimulate/motivate:
- making sure that all people participate in discussion/decision making
- always wondering about what individuals/groups need to participate or to feel good in the organization

delegate:
- leaving as much as possible to the people involved: they decide how they want to reach their targets; this will prevent "learned incompetence" which the leader can create by overtaking or criticizing too much.

have decision power:
- for a certain period of time or in some areas, a designated leader can be granted some decision power, for instance to decide who should do that special course if the group can't make a choice (always accompanied with explanation and evaluation); or if one of the workers is not functioning properly and people avoid the discussion, a leader can have talks and take measures. Maybe certain tasks can be delegated differently if things do not improve, etc.