



Need and Capacity Assessment

of Non-Governmental Organizations in Iran

Amsterdam, April 2014

An abstract graphic design consisting of several overlapping squares in shades of olive green, orange, and yellow. The squares are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement.

PEACE
DEMOCRACY
HUMAN RIGHTS

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Introduction

Non-Governmental Organizations have been present in Iranian socio-political life for three decades. Initially, despite all the restrictions and societal cul-de-sacs, these NGOs prospered, multiplied and were active in a variety of social settings. 1989 – 2003 was the great period for the establishment of NGOs in post-revolution Iran.

The transition period that followed coincided with the 2005 presidential election in Iran, which signaled the domination of a new political class in Iran. The most prominent characteristics of this new political class were its anti-democratic tendencies and its phobia towards civil-society. It considered civil society as a Trojan horse. As a result, this political class has tried to confine and suppress NGOs for the last eight years (2005-2013). These eight years are therefore known as the winter of NGOs in Iran.

The change of government following the 2013 presidential election affected the socio-political ambience in Iran to the extent that there again hope among socio-political forces. NGOs, too, are gradually emerging back onto the Iranian social stage.

The present study is the first quantitative and qualitative research conducted after the eight-year period of confinement and suppression. It focuses on the needs, challenges, capabilities, shortcomings and capacity of NGOs in Iran. This research was conducted between November 2013 and February 2014 by Volunteer Activists Institute.

Volunteer Activists Institute is a non-profit, non-governmental, non-political and independent institute, the primary aim of which is capacity building among activists and civil society organizations; facilitation of information exchange among civil society activists, and advocacy and expansion of democracy, human rights and peace building within Iranian society.

The present research has been conducted as part of the organizational mission of Volunteer Activists Institute. The findings of this project identify the training needs of NGOs in Iran, and the recommendations made are towards designing and compiling capacity building projects. Our institute aspires to assist activists and NGOs in Iran during this transition period, by implementing plans for efficient capacity building, so that they can respond to the needs of their stakeholders, and contribute to the development and democratization of Iranian society.

Executive Summary

The present report illustrates the results of a qualitative and quantitative research, conducted between November 2013 and February 2014, by Volunteer Activists Institute on the educational needs and capacity building of NGOs in Iran.

The purpose of this study is to illustrate the educational needs, current challenges and future struggles of NGOs in the context of Iranian society. The research comprises two main components. The first section focuses on the educational needs, challenges and struggles of these NGOs. The second section assesses the capacity and potential of these organizations in the following areas: organizational structure, management procedures, leadership and policy making strategies, human resources, financial management and mobilization of resources, systems and infrastructures, performance evaluation, monitoring strategies, and communication and external relations.

A broad cross-section of Iranian NGOs was examined in this study. These NGOs were selected according to the following parameters: experience, age, geographical distribution and field of activity. Multiple methods were used for data collection and analysis including a focused study group, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires.

The main findings of this study identify areas in which NGOs need support, the major challenges and problems they face, and the areas in which these NGOs need to build capacity.

Firstly, findings shed light on three major areas in which Iranian NGOs need support:

1. **Educational Needs:** In order to increase knowledge and skill based capabilities and improve capacities Iranian NGOs need short and long-term training. The findings of this research show that the most important fields in which Iranian NGOs are in need of training, are respectively: Advocacy skills, Fund-raising methods, Participatory management, Social marketing, Good Governance, Team building skills, information exchange, and using communication technologies for the advancement of Organizational activities.
2. **Systemic and Infrastructural Needs:** Research demonstrates that most NGOs engaged with promotional, developmental and societal change lack the minimum systems, management and infrastructure required i.e. office space and equipment. In order to achieve organizational and functional sustainability, these NGOs need the relevant financial and non-financial support.

Communication Needs, Access and Information Exchange: NGOs experience difficulties in connecting and exchanging information with each other as well as with other regional and international organizations. These problems are grounded in the skill gap among activists and NGOs, compounded by the socio-political conditions of Iranian society. In addition, many of the NGOs active in the fields of propagation, advancement and societal change cannot successfully connect with their stakeholders. The lack of necessary skills prevents them from successfully reaching out to their target groups. Skills that facilitate communication and ex-change of knowledge and experience with other domestic and international institutions are therefore crucial for these organizations.

The most critical challenges and problems that Iranian NGOs deal with were revealed during the study as:

- Lack of cooperation and contact with global civil society networks and international organizations
- Extreme shortage of financial resources
- Lack of efficient cooperative networks between these NGOs
- Dangerous socio-political conditions
- Lack of planning for capacity building for activists and NGOs within Iranian society
- The reasons behind these challenges can be categorized on three levels of individual (civil society activists), organizational and structural (the political, economic and socio-cultural conditions).
- The major areas of capacity building in the NGOs studied were discussed under the following six categories:

Governance in NGOs: Research revealed that more than half of Iranian NGOs do not have a mission statement, future perspectives and/or guidelines. Others that do have a mission statement have, at times a discrepancy between their mission statement and the needs of their stakeholders. In many cases, their policies and executive programs are different from those set in their mission statement. This is due, in part, to the tendency of Iranian NGOs to be more project than mission based.

Legal Base: Although most of the NGOs studied in this project did have a legal base, renewing their licenses is quite challenging because legal structures do not allow for a democratic process by which NGOs can acquire a legal base. Unfortunately there is not a proper understanding of the general assembly among NGOs, and membership in these organizations is a selective and controlled process. Most of these organizations –charity, rescue, promotional or developmental– are controlled by a few individuals with limited exchange and motion among them, although the mission statements of these NGOs do advocate a regular electoral process of the executive boards. Moreover, change in managerial positions in these NGOs is a very slow process, especially in those organizations focused on charitable work. This is compounded by extreme restrictions on the establishment and free activity of NGOs in Iran.

Management: There is an overlap between the roles of the executive board members and the administrative directors of the NGO. In most of these NGOs, job descriptions and areas of responsibility are not clearly defined in the statute of the organization. This leads to tension between the members. Many NGOs also lack appropriate methods for documenting pro-grams and presenting stakeholders with proper reports. However, it should be noted that NGOs established for ten or more years are much better in this respect, and that they have been able to properly document and report their programs and experiences to their stakeholders.

Human Resource Management: The research found that most NGOs lacked definition in human resource planning and policy, job descriptions, training programs for employees, instructions on administration and complaint response. A high percentage of employees of NGOs do not have a proper work contract and cannot enjoy the benefits of a fair employment policy. Moreover, most of the NGOs lack a solid base and documented strategy for dealing with volunteer forces, which makes attracting and keeping volunteers extremely difficult. However, more experienced NGOs (10 years or more) that have better financial re-sources and short-term, project-related employees now offer better conditions.

Financial Resources and Administration: Financial resources are scarce, and only those NGOs connected with government organizations and institutions enjoy access. Managing these resources and the related mobilizing strategies is extremely difficult. The majority of NGOs are prohibited from access to the available international resources. Even UN agencies only support those organizations that are recognized and supported by government institutions. Most NGOs have difficulty when it comes to managing and collecting financial re-sources, and few have proper financial strategies, reports and audits. Charity and rescue oriented NGOs have fewer problems when it comes to financial resources.

Program Performance: Research showed that in most cases there is a meaningful discrepancy between projects and mission statements. Many NGOs do not possess a clear mission statement and also lack appropriate need assessment, evaluation and continual monitoring mechanism for their plans and projects, as well as the proper analytical tools to estimate their stakeholders.

External Relations: Another critical challenge facing NGOs and activist groups in Iran is communication and external relations. Currently, there are no effective networks between NGOs inside Iran, as most of the existing participatory networks were destroyed in the last eight years and the few that remain exist only on paper. Relations between independent NGOs and government institutions are very limited, although municipalities and city councils, especially in Tehran, have been trying to increase and strengthen ties with NGOs in the recent years. The relationship between NGOs and the Iranian media is, at best, limited to advertising and NGOs do not have plans and strategies in place to improve this situation in or-der to effect societal change. Their connection to the private sector is limited and only those NGOs concerned with charity, hygiene and rescue efforts have any access.

Recommendations

As a result of this research project we propose the following strategies to meet the training needs and capacity building of NGOs in Iran:

Environmental enabling:

Develop and expand local NGO activities using information technology to establish systems for enabling political, social, and cultural environments. This can be achieved by propagation and support programs that enhance culture building, civil society and acts of volunteering, as well as changing the attitude toward NGOs of policy makers, brokers, socio-political activists and Iranian intellectuals. Collaboration networks among NGOs in Iran should be expanded, and a societal discourse needs to be created among these NGOs and other parties in the social arena. For instance, the private sector and the government can also enhance mutual cooperation in the development process.

Facilitating access and exchange of information among NGOs by establishing and reinforcing communication networks, and establishing a news network and database for the purposes of encouraging information exchange and collaboration among NGOs. This will also utilize information technology for the advancement of organizational goals.

Capacity building strategies should be appropriately tailored to the conditions and needs of Iranian NGOs. Diversify the existing strategies by executing information-exchange projects between Iranian and international NGOs as well as by conducting mutual projects and workshops. This will help Iranian NGOs improve their knowledge, discover new talents, and benefit from international experience.

Assessment Methodology and Process

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in this project. Questionnaires were completed and in-person interviews conducted with NGO activists. A need and capacity assessment model was developed which served as a basis for data collection on NGOs in Iran.

Research Question

This study examines two main areas that focus on the need assessment and capacity assessment of NGOs in Iran:

- In which areas do Iranian NGOs need support? Which gaps need filling in order to develop sustainable NGOs? These questions are founded on the present challenges facing Iranian NGOs.
- Which areas need most attention so that Iranian NGOs can maximize their organizational capacity and improve their performance? What are the unique capacity building needs of these NGOs and how can they be addressed?

Desk Review and Developing Capacity Building Framework

The first phase in conducting this project was analyzing existing literature on Iranian NGOs. There is a little available on need and capacity assessment of Iranian NGOs between the 1997 and 2005. It is published by organizations such as Hamyaran Ghada, Noavaran Pars and Koneshgaran Davtaleb (Volunteer Activists)¹. In the last eight years, however, there has been no study conducted in this category. As a result, we attempted to design a theoretical framework for need and capacity assessment of Iranian NGOs based on existing literature and the experiences from other countries.

We designed a draft questionnaire² and a set of interview questions³ based on this theoretical framework. To ensure their suitability within the Iranian context, the questionnaire and the interview questions were shared with the project stakeholders, and following discussion, consequently finalized as the basis for the research project.

The theoretical framework of this project was based on the McKinsey model and adapted to the Iranian context. The major components of the framework are:

- **Aspiration:** The mission, standpoint and long-term goals of an organization which demonstrates the general perception of the organization regarding its tendency and goals
- **Strategies:** An interrelated series of activities and programs that fortifies long-term plans of an organization
- **Human Resources:** Collective capabilities, experiences, capacities and commitment of board of executives, management teams, organization members and volunteers
- **Systems and Infrastructures:** Including decision-making, planning, administration, organizational management procedures, and technical and material components necessary for an organization to function
- **Organizational Structure:** A combination of leadership, organizational design, coordination between departments, and clear job description for individuals involved in managerial and legal structures of the organization

¹ See annex 1.

² See annex 2.

³ See annex 3.

- Culture: An interrelated web of values and functions, behavioral norms and most importantly goal orientation that defines an organization

Based on this theoretical framework (McKinsey), capacity building is defined as “the process by which individuals; groups; organizations; institutions; and societies increase their abilities to: (1) perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives; and (2) understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner.” Capacity Building is regarded in that case as “broader than organizational development, since it includes the overall system, the environment or context in which individuals, organizations and societies operate and interact”. This helps us identify two major goals:

- Fulfilling responsibilities, problem solving, and achieving organizational goals and values
- Understanding and encountering development needs in a wide range of fields and with a sustainable strategy

In this research, capacity building is viewed prior to organizational expansion and creates a space where individuals, organizations or societies can interact. Following this definition and the theoretical framework of this research, these criteria were chosen to assess Iranian NGOs:

- Organizational structure
- Management and leadership processes, and policy making strategies
- Human resources, financial resource management, mobilization of resources, systems and infrastructures
- Performance programs and monitoring techniques and assessment
- Communications and external relations with other NGOs, the government as well as the private sector, networking between NGOs and with stakeholders, media, social networks and donors

Assessment Parameters and Sampling Design

In order to specify the statistical population of this research project, we used available information from several databases, such as; NGOs, Iranian Ministry of the Interior, President's Office of Women and Family Affairs, and the network of charity organizations. A list of meaningful variables and parameters were thus compiled. Given the specific conditions in Iran, and with advice from experts and civil society activists, three variables were depicted to assess and design the sampling of NGOs:

Background and Experience: We divided NGOs to three categories:

- NGOs with less than 4 years of experience
- NGOs with less than 10 years of experience
- NGOs with more than 10 years of experience

Geographical Distribution: Another important parameter in the evaluation process was the geographical distribution of the NGOs, so that the sample would include NGOs from all parts of Iran. This would also demonstrate possible impact of geographical location on the needs of NGOs. Accordingly, NGOs were divided into five categories:

- Central: Tehran
- South: Fars Province

- North: Guilan Province
- East: Khorasan Razavi Province
- West: Azarbaijan Sharqi Province

Activity Field: NGOs were further divided into two categories:

- NGOs active in rescue efforts, hygiene and charitable work
- NGOs active in promotion and support, development and social change, such as the youth, women and environmental issues, and human rights.

Research Methods and Data Collection

- **Online group discussions**

As the first step into the project, a group of seven activists and representatives of active and independent Iranian NGOs were asked to participate in an online discussion session. The group was made up of four women and three men and the participants were chosen based on their knowledge and experience, field of activity, and gender distribution. Two of the participants were environmental and women's rights activists, three were managers from charity, health and hygiene and youth NGOs and two were university professors. In this preliminary session, they were asked to identify and assess the needs and the capacities of NGOs on different levels. They discussed the challenges facing NGOs, the training needs, managerial methods and leadership, financial resources, operation management, organizational communication such as media communications and communications with stakeholders, other NGOs, the government and the private sector.

- **Questionnaire**

To have a better understanding of the needs and capacities of Iranian NGOs, we picked 100 organizations based on their background, field of work and geographical distribution. These consisted of 40 organizations for the Central category, and 15 organizations from each of the other four categories. We then sent the questionnaire to each of these NGOs via email. Unfortunately, only twelve NGOs responded. So we sent interviewers to the rest of NGOs to conduct the survey in person. Like this, we eventually had 60% participation by the dead-line.

- **Semi-Structured Interviews**

We also conducted semi-structured interviews with 17 experts and civil society activists to enrich our understanding of the needs and capacities of Iranian NGOs. The participants, nine women and eight men, were selected on the grounds of their knowledge and experience, field of activity, gender and geographic distribution. Fifteen members of the group were managers and activists from charity, health and hygiene, women, promotional and youth NGOs. Two members were university professors. The interviews were conducted based on semi-structured questionnaires with open questions. This allowed the interviewees to freely talk about the current situation of their NGOs, the most important challenges, their impact on society, the most empowering reinforcements and limiting restrictions, and future plans and strategies.

Limitations and Constraints of the Assessment

In the process of the research on the Needs and Capacities of NGOs in Iran, we faced several restrictions that led to time-consuming and slow development:

- In spite of the change in the Iranian government in 2013, Iran remains a security-charged environment. NGOs and activists face a Hobbesian nightmare. As a result a number of these NGOs and activists refused to participate in the present research project.
- The lack of a reliable and comprehensive database on NGOs in Iran was extremely problematic. The few existing databases were incomplete and lacked the basic information required for the project. Moreover, some governmental organizations like the Ministry of Sports and Youth refused to share information.
- Another restriction that challenged the process of the project was the large number of NGOs that only exist on lists and inventories. Iranian officials speak of the existence of 17,000 NGOs in Iran. However, although there is no accurate data available, it is estimated that al-most 70% of these NGOs are not active and exist only on paper. These NGOs focus mostly on fields like the environment, women issues, and youth.
- Differentiating between independent non-governmental organizations, and semi-governmental NGOs, which are only superficially independent, also posed a problem. We estimate that half of the NGOs in Iran fall into the second category. In the last eight years, the Iranian government advocated the establishment of such seemingly independent NGOs in different fields of social and civil society, and has thus taken control of the field and made it very difficult for the authentic NGOs to operate. This has led to the marginalization of independent NGOs.
- Lack of transparency and accountability of some NGOs also proved challenging to the process of the present study. More often than not, statistics, strategies and decision-making procedures of Iranian NGOs are unavailable. As are their financial and operation reports. More-over, they are not accountable to their stakeholders. This lack of transparency may be the result, on one hand of the security-charged environment, or the inefficient management of NGOs in Iran, on the other.

However, it must be noted that the cooperation of a number of independent NGOs and activists was extremely helpful and effective in the process of the present project.

Data Analysis and Findings

Based on the outcomes of the present research, we identified the presence of a dominant political discourse advocating phobia of civil society and democracy during the 9th and 10th Presidential terms in Iran. This resulted in unprecedented restriction and suppression of NGOs. However, in these eight years (2005-2013), and in spite of ever-increasing threats, surprisingly these organizations have had several achievements:

1. **Sustainability:** Despite government policies of systematic elimination and marginalization, a number of NGOs that are active in fields such as environmental issues, women, health and hygiene inside Iran have successfully achieved organizational, operational and financial sustainability.
2. **Success Models and Best Practices:** Within two decades of activity, these NGOs have demonstrated successful models of efficiency, good management, clarity of mission and accountability to respective stakeholders in domains such as job creation, poverty elimination, environmental issues, charity and rescue missions. Operating in different parts of Iran, these organizations have been instrumental in improving living conditions and social participation.
3. **Advocating Democratic Discourse:** These NGOs have been vital in propagating democratic discourse and social behavior within Iranian society. They have established their NGOs based on democratic principles and have also expanded the concept of association between social-political forces. This shows that they have rightly realized the importance of simultaneous implementation of democratic strategies in their goals and method, and that without democratic methods and strategies, one cannot achieve democratic goals.
4. **Emergence of a New Generation of Civil Society Activists:** In the last eight years, as a result of suppressive policies of Iranian policy makers, a large number of civil society activists have either quit their cooperation with NGOs, have been imprisoned, or have left Iran and moved overseas. Nevertheless, a new generation of civil society activists has emerged characterized by youth, enthusiasm, courage and ambition.

The findings of this study can be classified in two categories. The first category includes the educational and training needs, challenges and important issues that NGOs in Iran face. The second category focuses on capacity assessment of these NGOs. Capacity assessment covers all aspects of NGOs within these parameters:

- Organizational structure
- Management, leadership and policy making strategies
- Human resources, financial resources, and mobilization of resources, systems and infrastructures
- Program performance and monitoring, and assessment techniques
- Communications and external relations

Part One

A. Educational and Training Needs

Based on the findings of this research project, the most important educational and training needs of activist and NGOs in Iran can be listed in the following order of importance⁴ :

- **Level 1:** A. Advocacy skills, B. Fundraising techniques, C. Participatory management, D. Good Governance, E. Team building skills, F. Social marketing, G. Use of communication technology for the advancement of organizational activities
- **Level 2:** A. Need assessment methods and program prioritization, B. Network and networking, C. Strategic planning, D. Communication skills, E. Monitoring and evaluation methods, F. Social auditing, i.e. evaluating program impacts and efficiency by stakeholders, G. Project development
- **Level 3:** A. Documenting projects and programs, B. Negotiation skills, C. Problem solving techniques, D. Project management, E. Data evaluation and processing, F. Budget planning and expense management

In addition to these training needs, most experts and activists believe that the NGO community in Iran has been extremely impoverished over the last eight years, and that there is a distinct lack of qualified trainers and facilitators. As a result, they believe, training instructors, facilitators and mentors must be the top priority of any educational plan. These experts also believe that the online training projects that have been in use in recent years, although effective to a certain extent, have five general shortcomings:

- The up to bottom design of these programs does not satisfy the needs of activists and NGOs.
- Due to the narrow band-width and slow internet speed in Iran, only a few civil society activists can profit from these online training programs.
- Most of these programs lack follow-up mentoring, which means the whole training is limited to the duration of a given online workshop or program. None of these online programs have been audited so far, which means we have no data on their level of efficiency and impact.
- Although some civil society activists regularly participate in these online programs, there is no evidence of the efficacy and impact of these programs within Iranian society or even within NGOs in Iran.
- In-person, direct training is much more effective than online training programs. Even in case of continuing these online programs, it is necessary that their content, design and participant distribution be revised and that a follow-up mentoring program be added to each package.

⁴ See annex 5.

B. Problems and Challenges of NGOs in Iran

Given the high risk factor in the Iranian context, activists and NGOs face a wide range of internal and field challenges. Details of the obstacles met by NGOs and activists, were recorded in the interviews and focused group discussions:

- Lack of theoretical knowledge and required skills for civil action
- Lack of enthusiasm on the part of activists toward Iranian societal problems, as well as among the public for civil activities
- Lack of unity and cooperation among NGOs and activists
- Increasing division and divergence among NGOs
- Lack of teamwork culture and crisis management in NGOs
- Expansion of GONGOs in place of NGOs and their dominance and control over the field of NGO activities
- Reconstruction of NGO platforms and networks that have been destroyed in the last eight years
- Ban on active NGOs in the last eight years and lack of capacity building programs among NGOs and activists
- Lack of strategy on the part of activists and NGOs to strengthen and empower civil society
- Distortion of the borders of civil action, and political and economic activities
- Domination of conservative attitudes among civil society activists and NGOs
- Prevalence of paranoia towards NGOs as espionage agents for the West
- Legal obstacles for establishing NGOs and lack of freedom for civil action
- Distrust on the part of Iranian intellectuals and thinkers toward advocacy and civil freedom
- Lack of programs that advocate volunteer culture and voluntary action
- Domination of a behemoth government over all civil spaces, and the absence of civil space for the activities of NGOs and civil society activists
- Lack of social investment and social trust among civil society activists
- Lack of transparency in government policies and plans toward civil society in spite of election campaign mottos

The aforementioned problems and challenges can be summarized and categorized in the following order of importance:

1. Lack of communication and collaboration with global civil society organizations and international institutions
2. Shortage of financial resources
3. Lack of efficient networks among NGOs inside Iran
4. Insecurity of the socio-political conditions and presence of a security-charged ambience inside Iran
5. Lack of a program for capacity building of NGOs and activists

These challenges and their effects have severely weakened the presence of NGOs and meant they cannot meet the demands of their stakeholders. The grounds for these challenges can again be divided into three groups:

1. **Individual** Many activists lack necessary communication training and other skills to help them plan and mobilize their resources. These activists are, in addition, not familiar with the principles of group work, networking, and problem solving strategies, which makes them vulnerable to the environmental threats and risks.
2. **Organizational** NGOs in Iran have been active for more than two decades now, and they have been instrumental in fields like health, hygiene and women's issues. However, they are still fragile and cannot build contact with international civil society organizations. Language is one obstacle in this process, but Iranian NGOs often fail to recognize the importance of being connected to international institutions. Many problems concerning mobilizing financial resources can be traced back to poor managerial methods. Furthermore, lack of training for group work and collaboration makes NGOs in Iran isolated islands that exist and function separately or, even worse, become engaged in competitive feuds among themselves.
3. **Structural** The political-economic and socio-cultural settings present another challenge for NGOs in Iran. The Behemoth nature of the Iranian government, which has occupied the civil society space, has created restrictive regulations, a lack of freedom to establish and run an NGO, a decrease in societal resources, and a discourses advocating phobia of civil society and democracy.

So we conclude that for the civil society in Iran to overcome these obstacles, it is vital to design a road map on which NGOs can advance and secure incremental but effective progress.

Part Two

Capacity Assessment

The elements of the capacity assessment framework were used to understand and build on the interviews and identify the following areas of capacity building. In this part, categories of capacity building were considered when reviewing and extracting quantitative and qualitative data from interview transcripts.

Governance Strategies

1. Mission and Vision Statement, and Guiding Principles

Efficient methods of governance are also an important challenge for NGOs in Iran. Most of these organizations lack proper governance strategies to deal with collaboration, transparency and accountability. Findings of the present research show that only 34% of these NGOs have a mission statement, and clear perspectives and guidelines. Moreover, some NGOs with less than eight years of experience have no formal structure. Although health, charity and rescue NGOs have a relatively stable structure, they too, suffer from lack of democratic and gender-egalitarian communication and relations. Where a mission statement exists, there is a meaningful gap between the statement perspectives and the reality. This is mostly due to the fact that these NGOs are more project-oriented than mission-oriented.

2. Legal Base

The law in Iran requires that all NGOs be licensed before they start any activities. These organizations must apply for a license to governmental organizations and get their license from the national bureau of business licenses. The issued license, however, is temporary and must be repeatedly renewed. Based on our findings, 90% of NGOs can secure the initial license, but renewing their license is normally a difficult and time-consuming process. At times they face a waiting period of several years in the hands of Ministry of Intelligence, Ministry of Domestic Affairs and the police, during which they are not allowed to be active. In Iran, there is a special police force for license checks, and these forces check and restrict the activities of the NGOs. This long, slow process of license renewal from ministries and government offices is yet another challenge for new NGOs in Iran.

Once the new license is issued, however, the next challenge emerges: governmental organizations and institutions, especially security forces, interfere in governance and policy making of the NGOs. It is needless to say that many of these NGOs do not have proper financial, administrative guidelines and efficient communications with their stakeholders regarding their advancement and activities.

3. General Assembly

Research findings also indicate that most NGOs choose their board of executives and set their policy making and planning through a general assembly. In 60% percent of the NGOs the general assembly also plays a vital role in strategy and policymaking processes, renewals and advocacy. 70% of these NGOs believe that their general assembly enjoys broad representation of age, gender and religion, and that the election of the board of executives is a fair. The experts interviewed for the present research project do not support this vision. They believe that decision-making is mostly done by the executive manager of the NGO and that the role of the general assembly is merely decorative.

4. Board of Executives

Executive boards play a key role in the planning and policymaking processes of NGOs, and its members must represent the stakeholders. Findings show that 79% of such board members represent the stakeholders, the target groups and their interests, and 90% of the survey participants believe that the role and responsibilities of the board of executives and the executive manager are clearly charted and defined. 75% of the participants are of the opinion that board members of NGOs are dedicated to policymaking, supervision and strategic leadership and that they play an essential role in lobbying, financial management, policymaking, public relations and fundraising for their respective NGOs. 66% of the interviewees are convinced that board members guarantee transparency on different levels by regularly assessing the activities of the executive manager, the projects and activities of the NGO and by reporting on these factors to the stakeholders. 79% of the participants believe that board members of NGOs assume responsibility for the decisions and strategies adopted by their organization, and are accountable to the stakeholders. Last but not least, 86% of the interviewees believe that board members are well informed about the finances and financial management of their NGO and that they frequently inspect the financial reports.

Unlike the above-mentioned interviewees, NGO experts believe that board members do not represent NGO stakeholders and their interests and that, more often than not, there is a meaningful gap between the interests of board members and the stakeholders. These experts believe the absence of cyclical change and relocation of board members of NGOs is a critical weakness. This weakness is most obvious in charity NGOs where members can, at times, sit on the board of executives for life. Furthermore, in some NGOs, board members over step their supervisory, policymaking role to interfere in the implementation and operational sphere of the NGO, causing tension between the board and the operational staff.

Management Processes

5. Organization Chart, Duties and Efficient Procedures

Having an organizational chart, and documented job descriptions and duties for all managers and employees is among the chief characteristics of a good NGO. 70% of the survey participants believe that their NGO has a clear chart available to all managers, members, employees and stakeholders, and that duties and job descriptions, as well as internal relations of different parts of the organization are transparent. 66% of the participants are convinced that the decision making processes are decentralized, that each member of their NGO is a representative of the NGO, and that their organization regularly, i.e. every six months, evaluates its activities and plans. 88% of the interviewees also believe that their NGO enjoys a cooperative strategy and that all members work with/within the team. However, this statement contrasts with the fact that most of these participants argue that one of the most important training needs of NGO activists is the improvement of teamwork skills. Re-search also uncovers the poor quality of teamwork in most Iranian NGOs. This is also confirmed by NGO experts in Iran who believe that lack of cooperative administration, as well as the tendency towards centralized decision making are the two biggest shortcomings of NGOs in Iran. Only 25% of survey participants are of the opinion that their organization has a policy to avoid conflicts of interest, and that this policy is strictly observed.

6. Knowledge, Planning and Reporting Management

Knowledge management and planning are two important success factors for NGOs, and reporting is an important tool in transparency and securing the trust of beneficiaries. 33% of survey participants believe that their organization collects and documents the acquired

knowledge from previous projects and make these available to the stakeholders in an online format, and that this knowledge is utilized in achieving organizational goals. 50% of participants believe that their organization bases its corrective policies and its performance on monitoring, evaluation, acquired knowledge, criticism and possible complaints. Only 33% are of the opinion that their NGO has regular contact with science institutions like universities, research institutes and online forums. 60% are convinced that meetings in their organization are regular and held on different organizational levels to exchange information and opinions and to regulate decision-making. With regard to legal, financial and political accountability, 58% of the interviewees believe that their NGO administrators, employees and members feel accountable to the NGO board of managers and stakeholders. Half of the participants also believe that it is the responsibility of an NGO to periodically (at least annually) inform the stakeholders and those engaged with the NGO. In spite of all the above, NGO experts believe that one of the major shortcomings of NGOs in Iran is a lack of efficient planning and knowledge management. This results in knowledge impoverishment and static routine follow-ups, which makes NGOs inefficient in the eyes of the stakeholders, and shrinks the domain of their social presence and influence.

Human Resources

7. Human Resource Management

Human resources are a vital aspect of the functionality of NGOs. In order for an NGO to fulfill its mission statement and perspectives, having sufficient human force is necessary. 41% of research participants are convinced that their NGO has a clear strategy in human resource management, training and development programs, as well as guidelines for handling and benefiting from their volunteer workforce and employees. 40% believe that their NGO has clear regulations for attracting and engaging employees, members and volunteers. 46% state that their NGO has proper guidelines for dealing with instances of abuse, sexual harassment and inappropriate sexist and racist speech or behavior. On the other hand, 65% are of the opinion that they do not document and report cases of sexual harassment and abuse of/by their employees and volunteers. Half of the participants say that each and every member and employee of their organization has a transparent, signed work contract, in which length of the contract, job description, responsibilities, and mutual alternatives are stated. 43% believe that ethical and behavioral values are transparent in their NGO and that all members as well as volunteers are aware of the related guidelines.

NGO experts, on the other hand, emphasize that the weakness and instability of NGOs in Iran is mostly due to the lack of efficient human resource management. This is because of the critical role that the management plays inside as well as outside of an NGO in establishing stable and successful relationships; communicating positive, empowering and encouraging messages to the members, employees and volunteer forces of the NGO. It is the task of the management to empower the human force of the NGO, so that each employee and volunteer assume responsibility for their work, and continually look for ways to build or improve societal opportunities for their personal improvement and for that of their NGO.

8. Employee Commitment and Satisfaction

According to the findings of the present research project, only 25% of the survey participants think that NGO employees are satisfied with their salaries, benefits and other services of their work. 43% state that employees are convinced of the administrative strategies and guidelines of their organization. 64% believe that employees are happy with NGO management and leadership. 45% think that employees are satisfied with their level of acquaintance with other

NGO members and teams. 43% state that employees are satisfied with equal learning and opportunities for empowerment and professional advancement in their NGO.

It is clear that working conditions NGOs, management and leadership are unsatisfactory. NGO experts also confirm this finding.

Financial Resources and Administration

9. Financial Management and Audits

Research findings indicate that 66% of participants believe that their organization observes financial and taxation regulations for NGOs, and annually reports to the respective authorities. 67%, however, state that the annual financial records of their NGO are not audited by an independent auditor. 48% believe that their NGO has compiled a fundraising plan, which helps regulate services, projects and plans accordingly. 61% of participants say that their NGO has the required equipment such as desks, chairs, phones, fax machines, computers, internet, etc. for executing needs and performing projects. 43% are of the opinion that their NGO has a guideline for budget planning, documenting income and expenditure. 59% of the participants state that financial resources are not transparent for the stakeholders and that not all members have access to financial data such as financial resources and records. 53% state that their NGO regularly (every three months, six months or year) publishes its financial reports. Experts underline the fact that lack of financial transparency is a key problem in many NGOs in Iran.

When asked, "Based on which of the following financial resources does your NGO plans its activities and projects?" participants mention government institutions 30%; UN agencies 18%; private sector 43%; sales and services 30%; membership fees 41%; volunteer contributions and donations 67%. Findings indicate that the largest part of NGO financial resources comes from donations and volunteer contributions.

Program Performance

10. Program Design and Planning

Research findings show that 78% of participants state that their NGO follows short-term, mid-term and long-term goals in its plans and projects. 58% believe that their organization's plans include evaluation criteria to measure achievement rates. 63% say that their project designs are based on specific timing and available financial and human resources. 46% are convinced that their NGO observes risk management in its project designs and includes strategies to deal with potential risks if they occur. 61% believe that their organization has a realistic work design regarding what should be done, the timing, the strategy, and required human resources for each designed project. 71% say that the planning process of their NGO, from design to execution, monitoring and evaluation are collaborative and include managers, employees, volunteers and key stakeholders. 80% of the participants also state that their NGO observes and maintains gender equality throughout its planning and execution processes. Experts, on the other hand, question the participatory and gender-equal nature of the NGOs, especially charity NGOs in Iran, and argue that very few NGOs observe participatory management and maintain gender equality in their programs and policies.

11. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Research findings show that 53% of research participants believe that their organization's projects are based on sufficient available funds. 65% of participants' state that the implementation processes of their NGO considers and guarantees the cooperation of target groups in decision-making. 63% agree that their organization can properly handle unforeseen circumstances, and react to them swiftly and appropriately. 51% are of the opinion that the monitoring and evaluation systems of their organization are based on efficiency criteria. 43% state that their organization develops monitoring systems that base its efficiency evaluation on women, men, minorities; the disabled, and other vulnerable social groups. 40% state that monitoring results are eventually analyzed, and shared with managers, employees and key stakeholders of the NGO, and are used in future planning to improve service quality.

Results Achieved

Research findings indicate that 58% of participants believe that project results of their organization are sustainable, 78% say that project results comply with the NGO goals and mission.

External Relations

12. Socio-Cultural Environment

The social, cultural and political settings have a significant impact on the stability or instability of NGOs in Iran, which means changes in the socio-political setting, can cause expansion or contraction in NGOs' presence. 55% of our participants state that their organization cannot identify the needs and key priorities of Iranian society, and cannot engage and influence societal processes. 44% are of the opinion that their NGO cannot identify the main beneficiaries in different situations. 56% believe that their organization is unable to make contact, and discuss with their major stakeholders aspects, such as policymaking, advocacy, need assessment, fundraising, and project design and execution. 54% state that their NGO has no specific plans for contacting and collaborating with other NGOs with a similar remit in order to benefit from mutual cooperation on short and long-term projects. 65% of these participants believe that their organization is willing to participate and cooperate with the government in matters of micro- and macro-policymaking. 81% think that their NGO is capable of having certain – and at times very limited – relationship with government institutions.

All experts who were interviewed for this research agree that an important shortcoming of NGOs in Iran is their lack, or incongruity, of contact with their stakeholders, and that NGOs cannot meet the needs of their stakeholders. Experts believe that this shortcoming is the reason that NGOs do not have a broad societal base in Iran. These NGOs have never engaged in consequential dialogue with their stakeholders and in many cases do not consider their stakeholders in their agenda nor the decision-making processes and implementation of those decisions.

13. Relationship with the Media

Research findings indicate that 56% of participants believe that their NGO has a transparent relationship with other organizations in matters such as information exchange. 67% state that their organization has no plans to introduce, advocate or support itself in the media. 33% say that their NGO has an active website which is updated on a regular basis. Our findings also indicate that NGOs in Iran use social networking as follows: Facebook 52%, Twitter 8%, Google Plus 13%, YouTube 8%, Sound cloud 4% and other networks 15%.

Experts underline the lack of proper use of social networks in accessing and exchanging data as an important problem of NGOs in Iran. Most NGOs are not willing to share their data with others. Of the 17,000 NGOs in Iran, only 400 have a website. Many of these websites, however, are not active and have not been updated for several years. Neither is there a consistent information network among NGOs in Iran in order that civil society activists and donors can access the data they need.

14. Relationship with Donors

Findings of the present project indicate that 71% of participants state that their organization discusses its priorities, policies and guidelines with its donors, whether private sector or governmental. 20% of participants say that their organization receives more than 60% of its required finances from one source. 45% add that their organization adjusts its plans and projects with the interests of its donors and financial supporters. 67% state that their NGO has no access to government and/or UN agencies and that they rely on private sector funding. 33% state that their organization adheres to a strategy of connection with the private sector in order to be able to add variety and change guidelines. Experts also agree that having access to sufficient funding is a major challenge for NGOs in Iran. This is, on one hand, due to lack of necessary knowledge and skills for attracting funds, and, on the other, due to the socio-political context and restrictions present in Iranian society.

Recommendation

To adequately address the needs of NGOs in order to transform them into more effective organizations, two sets of recommendations are proposed. The first set of recommendations focuses on general strategies aimed toward capacity building and the training needs of NGOs in Iran. The second is targeted at providing specific solutions and detailed training topics that can meet the needs of NGO activists and volunteers in Iran. The second part elaborates on topics, target groups and implementation methods.

General Recommendations

Measures and Strategies:

1. Plans for enabling social, political and cultural settings as well as virtual fields to develop and expand NGO activities in Iran via:
 - Employing advocacy skills for building culture, advancing civil society and volunteer work culture, as well as changing attitudes, approaches and treatment of NGOs among policymakers, socio-political activists and Iranian intellectuals
 - Expanding societal discourse projects among NGOs and discourse between NGOs and other players in the new fields of power like the private sector and the government on collaboration and development processes
 - Establishing collaboration networks on regional and international levels among Iranian NGOs and global civil society networks, and facilitating presence and participation in international conferences
 - Developing models of prevalent dialogue on a general societal level, especially on the role of civil society and NGOs in improving and advancing Iranian society by collaborating with the media, and conducting seminars and workshops
 - Implementing corrective measures against regulations that restrict the establishment and work of NGOs, and creating proper conditions for activities of civil society activists
2. Facilitating access to and exchange of information among NGOs via:
 - Establishing and improving communication networks and collaboration among NGOs
 - Establishing a database of NGOs and insuring public access to data
 - Creating a center for information exchange on government institution plans and projects, UN agencies in Iran, and potential donors to NGOs
 - Creating a network for information exchange on national, regional and international conferences and seminars, as well as domestic and foreign training and fundraising opportunities
 - Creating a news network and a primary online database for NGOs
3. Instigate Capacity building projects, which engage a variety of methods that meet the needs of NGOs in Iran by:
 - Amending internal management systems in the areas of strategic planning, financial management, information systems and performance management
 - Improving external relations such as increasing cooperation among NGOs with the media, scientific and academic institutes, the government, the private sector and civil society; by employing tactics such as fundraising, attracting and engaging volunteer forces, adjusting needs and demands, defining a mission and social marketing

- Strengthening leadership and organization management such as improving the working skills of the personnel, the management, as well as defining tasks, capabilities and efficiency of managers and other members
 - Amending the internal structure of NGOs including management and supervision structures, representation, and adding diversity to the organization
4. To make these improvements we recommend:
- Creating mentoring and capacity building centers for strengthening NGOs
 - Conducting follow-up mentoring to meet the post-training needs of NGO activists
 - Creating information exchange projects between NGOs in Iran and the global network to improve knowledge and skills and participation levels on the side of Iranian NGOs (training tours)
 - Conducting continuous assessment programs to better understand the condition of the broad spectrum of NGOs
 - Creating a shared fund to finance NGOs
 - Providing technical and legal assistance to NGOs
 - Expanding the tools and literature needed by NGOs, and creating a virtual library
 - Conducting training of trainers (TOT) workshops to train a new generation of NGO trainers, facilitators and mentors
 - Creating a database of conducted training programs by NGOs inside and outside Iran, documenting them, and creating a link with other projects and programs of similar nature

Training Recommendations:

According to the research conducted into the needs, the capacity assessments, and the interviews conducted with experts, academics and activists, we recommend the following topics for short-term and long-term training programs:

Short term Training

Subject	Target Group	Methodology
Advocacy Skills	Board of executives, managers, staff and volunteers	Training workshops, online training, seminars and introducing successful experiences
Fundraising Methods	Board of executives, managers, staff and volunteers	Workshops
Participatory Management	Board of executives, managers, staff	Training workshops, online training, seminars and introducing successful experiences
Social Marketing	Board of executives, managers, staff	Workshops and online Training
Good Governance	Board of executives, managers, staff and volunteers	Training workshops, online training, seminars and introducing successful experiences
Team Building Skills	Board of executives, managers, staff and volunteers	Training workshops, online training, seminars and introducing successful experiences
IT Skills	Board of executives, managers, staff	Training workshops, online training, seminars and introducing successful experiences

Long term Training:

	Subject	Target Group	Methodology
Good Governance	Managing and organizing a good NGO	Board of executives, managers, staff and volunteers	Training workshops, online training, seminars and introducing successful experiences
	Productive organizational behavior (gender-equality, democratic relationships) and crisis management	Board of executives, managers, staff and volunteers	Training workshops, online training, seminars, educational articles and material, public talks
	Analysis techniques of stakeholders	Board of executives, managers and staff	Training workshops
	Situation analysis methods and being informed about NGO regulations and laws	Board of executives, managers, staff and members	Training workshops, online training, seminars, educational articles and material, public talks

	Subject	Target Group	Methodology
Management Processes	Participatory management	Board of executives, managers, staff and members	Training workshops, online training, seminars and introducing successful experiences
	Team building and group work skills	Board of executives, managers, staff and members	Training workshops, online training, and introducing successful experiences
	Conflict resolution	Board of executives, managers, staff and members	Training workshops
	Documenting projects and activities	Board of executives, managers, staff and members	Training workshops

Human Resource and financial management	Subject	Target Group	Methodology
	Volunteerism; What is volunteerism and how to recruit, retain and motivate volunteers	Managers and staff	Training workshops
	Human resource management	Managers and staff	Training workshops
	Project design and management	Managers, and administration and financial staff	Training workshops
	Fundraising and financial management	Board of executives, managers, employees and volunteers	Training workshops and educational seminars
	Budget planning and expense management	Managers, and administration and financial staff	Training workshops

Program Performance	Subject	Target Group	Methodology
	Need assessment and priority making	Managers, administration and planning staff	Training workshops
	Strategic planning, and “Change theory” tools	Board of executives, managers and staff	Training workshops
	Proposal writing	Managers, administration and planning staff	Training workshops
	Monitoring and evaluation methods	Board of executives, managers, administration and planning staff	Training workshops
	Societal auditing	Managers, administration and planning staff	Training workshops

Communications	Subject	Target Group	Methodology
	Societal marketing	Board of executives, managers, staff and volunteers	Training workshops, online training, seminars, educational articles and material, public talks
	Media and social network communication skills	Board of executives, managers, staff and volunteers	Training workshops and compiling guideline pamphlets and books
	Networking and network building skills	Board of executives, managers and staff	Training workshops, seminars, articles and educational material, and introducing successful experiences
	Advocacy skills	Board of executives, managers, staff and volunteers	Training workshops, seminars, articles and educational material, and introducing successful experiences
	Communication skills	Board of executives, managers and staff	Training workshops, seminars, articles and educational material, and introducing successful experiences

Annexes

Annex 1:

Available literature on NGOs in Iran

1. Abbasgholi Zadeh, M., (2005) 'Challenges faced by WNGOs in Iran's Society', in Volunteer, Spring Issue, Iran CSOs Training and Research Centre, Tehran.
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3. Family Planning Association of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1998), Final Report Iranian NGOs Consultation Workshop Bushehr 26–27 February 1998, FPA Tehran.
4. Iran NGO Resource Centre (2002) Report on Kerman Conference: Relationship between People's Voluntary Organizations and the Government, November 24-25, Tehran.
5. Klaue, K., (2004) Needs assessment of Iranian NGOs active in drug demand reduction: an evaluation survey, unpublished report, UNODC, Tehran.
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8. Squire, C., Robinson, H., Caradec, S., (2000) Results of a Needs Assessment of NGOs in Tehran (unpublished), Noavaran, Tehran.
9. UNDP Tehran (2003) United Nations Common Country Assessment for the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran.
10. UNDP Tehran (2005) Women and Youth Empowerment: Optimizing the Role of Civil Society and Private Sector in Policy Development and Decision Making, Project Document for the Second Cluster Project Under the Approved Framework Governance Programme (Draft), Tehran.

Annex 2:

Training need assessment and capacity assessment questionnaire

Part One: Training Need Assessment

Challenges

- A. What is the biggest challenge your organization is facing? Please rate the following items between 1 and 5 (5 signifying a very serious challenge).

OK		Serious				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Administration and management					
2	Capacity building strategies					
3	Fundraising					
4	Legal issues					
5	Staff proper training					
6	Proper contact with other NGOs and associations					
7	Proper connection with government institutions					
8	Proper connection with global civil society networks and international institutions					
9	Proper connection with beneficiaries and the public					
10	Supporting volunteer forces					
11	Efficient leadership within the organization					
12	Socio-political environment					

- B. Name three biggest challenges that your organization is facing.

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...

Training Needs

A. In which of the following fields do you think you need short-term or long-term training?

Please rate the following items between 1 and 5 (5 signifying a serious need for training).

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Participatory management					
2	Fundraising					
3	Strategic planning					
4	Societal marketing					
5	Need assessment methods					
6	Evaluation and project monitoring methods					
7	Societal audits (Impact assessment by beneficiaries)					
8	Networking					
9	Data analysis					
10	Teamwork skills					
11	Communication skills					
12	Project management					
13	Project writing					
14	Negotiation skills					
15	Communication technology and its organizational use					
16	Project documentation					
17	Good governance					
18	Advocacy skills					
19	Conflict resolution and crisis management					
20	Budget planning and expense management					

B. Name the three most important training needs of your NGO.

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...

Part Two: Organizational Capacity Assessment

A. Structure, and Administration Methods

1. Mission Statement, Perspectives and Guidelines
 - a. Does your organization have a mission statement, perspective and guideline?
 - b. Do all members, staff and volunteers have access to the mission statement, perspective and guideline?
 - c. Do the statement and guideline affect policymaking and strategic plans of the organization?
2. Legal Base
 - a. Does your organization have a legal license?
 - b. Does your organization have transparent financial, administrative and communication (with beneficiaries) regulations?
 - c. Do the policies, programs and regulations help your organization achieve its goals and fulfill its mission statement?
3. General Assembly
 - a. Do members of your organization general assembly represent different social groups (with regard to gender equality, ethnicity and religion)?
 - b. Does the general assembly play a key role in policymaking, strategic planning and advocacy of your organization?
 - c. Do you believe that in your organization the election of board of executives is carried without any gender, religious and ethnic discrimination?
4. Board of Executives
 - a. Do the board of executives in your organization represent all beneficiaries (members and target groups) and consider their interests?
 - b. Do the board of executives and the managing director of your organization have clear roles and responsibilities defined for their posts?
 - c. Do the board of executives focus on policymaking, supervision and strategic leadership of the organization? Does it play a vital role in policymaking, fundraising, public relations, financial management and lobbying for your organization?
 - d. Does the board of executives reinforce organizational transparency by regularly evaluating the managing director, periodically assessing the programs and activities of the organization and reporting them to the beneficiaries?
 - e. Does the board assume responsibility for the decisions made at the organization? Is it accountable to the beneficiaries?
 - f. Is the board in charge and aware of the financial status of the organization? Does it regularly control accounts and financial records of the organization?

B. Management Processes

5. Organization Chart, Responsibilities and Efficiency
 - a. Does your organization have an organization chart available to all members, staff and beneficiaries? Are responsibilities and relationships inside the organization and on all levels defined in this chart?
 - b. Is decision-making a decentralized process in your organization? Does it represent all members of the organization?

- c. Does your organization regularly (for example every 6 months) evaluate its activities and programs?
 - d. Is management in your organization collaborative, which represents good teamwork?
6. Knowledge Management, Planning and Reports
- a. Does your organization document its accumulated knowledge as its capital? Are these documents accessible online and available to beneficiaries? Are they used in fulfilling your organizational mission?
 - b. Does your organization change and adjust its programs and services according to its performance assessment, progressive knowledge, or complaints and criticism?
 - c. Is your organization in contact with universities, research centers and online forums?
 - d. Do you hold regular meetings on different organizational levels, exchange ideas and information, and make decisions?
 - e. Do managers, staff and members feel accountable to the board of executives and beneficiaries in financial, legal and political matters?
 - f. Is your organization committed to submitting periodical reports (at least annually) to members and beneficiaries?

C. Human Resources

7. Human Resource Guidelines
- a. Does your organization have a clear guideline when it comes to human resources, training and development programs, personnel regulations and policies?
 - b. Does your organization have definite criteria and regulations for attracting and employing members, staff and volunteers?
 - c. Does your organization have a clear guideline to tackle sexist and racist behavior and speech?
 - d. When an instance of sexual harassment or racist speech occurs, do the members report it in writing?
 - e. Do all members and employees of your organization have transparent, signed contract that specifies the duration of the contract, responsibilities and the scope of authority?
 - f. In order to familiarize the members with the ethical values and norms, does your organization hold regular (every six months, for instance) training programs?
 - g. Does your organization have a clear guideline when it comes to attracting and managing volunteer forces?
8. Personnel Satisfaction and Commitment
- a. Which of the following items are satisfactory for the staff of your organization?
 - Salary, benefits, other services
 - Guidelines and administration
 - Leadership
 - Staff and team recognition
 - Empowerment and equal opportunity
 - Training and career advancement opportunities
 - b. Is the staff of your organization highly motivated in their work?
 - c. Does your organization have a clear strategy to handle and respond to complaints by staff, volunteers and beneficiaries?

D. Financial Resource Management

9. Financial Management and Accounting

- a. Does your organization follow financial and taxation regulations for NGO? Do you annually submit your audits and records to authorities?
- b. Are the financial records of your organization annually checked by an independent auditor?
- c. Does your organization have a clear fundraising strategy, and design its services, projects and programs based on its financial capacities?
- d. Does your organization have the basic software and hardware equipment such as chairs, desks, phones, fax machines, computers, internet, etc. required for its performance and activities?
- e. Does your organization have a clear guideline for budget writing, income and expenditure records?
- f. Does your organization share its financial status with the beneficiaries? Can the staff and members freely access the financial data such as financial records and resources?
- g. Based on which of the following resources does your organization fund its activities?
 - Government institutions
 - UN agencies
 - Private sector
 - Service income and product sale
 - Membership fees
 - Donations
- h. Does your organization publish its internal and external financial records regularly, i.e. quarterly, biannually, or annually?

E. Program Performance

10. Program Performance and Planning

- a. Do your organization's programs and plans include the following?
 - Short-term, midterm and long-term goals
 - Progress assessment tools
 - Time schedule, human resources and finance
 - Risk assessment and risk management strategies
 - Realistic work plan: what needs to be done? How? When? Who will do it?
- b. Is planning a collaborative process in your organization, which includes managers, staff, volunteers and beneficiaries?
- c. Does your organization observe gender equality throughout its planning and execution processes?

11. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

- a. Does your organization have sufficient and available funds for executing its plans and programs?
- b. Does the implementation process of your organization observe target group participation on different levels?
- c. Does your organization have a clear strategy on how to deal with unforeseen circumstances and problems as they arise during the process of a project?

- d. Is the monitoring and assessment system of your organization based on efficiency criteria?
- e. Is the monitoring system of your organization based on project efficiency with regard to target groups, i.e. men, women, ethnic and religious minorities?
- f. Are the results of monitoring shared with managers, staff and beneficiaries? Are these results used in future planning and activities?

12. Results

- a. Are project results in your organization sustainable?
- b. Are these results in line with project goals?

F. External Relations

13. Socio-Cultural Setting

- a. Is your organization capable of identifying and impacting on key priorities and needs of the Iranian society?
- b. Is your organization capable of identifying major beneficiaries on different levels?
- c. Is your organization capable of approaching major beneficiaries to exchange information and ideas on policymaking, advocacy, need assessment, fundraising and planning issues?
- d. Does your organization have any specific plans and projects to cooperate on shared inter-ests with other NGOs in order to reach mutual goals on social networks?
- e. Is your organization interested in participating in governmental micro and macro-policymaking processes?
- f. Is your organization capable of communicating (even limited) with governmental institutions?

14. Communication with the Media and Private Sector

- a. In order to achieve transparency, does your organization share data with other NGOs?
- b. Does your organization have any specific plans to promote itself in the media?
- c. Does your organization have an active website which is regularly updated?
- d. Does your organization use any of the following platforms?
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Google Plus
 - YouTube
 - Sound cloud
 - Any other platforms?

15. Communication with Donors

- a. Does your organization regularly communicate with its funders – governmental or private – on priorities, policies and guidelines?
- b. Does your organization have a major funder that provides 60% or more of its budget?
- c. Does your organization adjust its programs and projects to the interests of its funders?
- d. Does your organization have access to government or UN agency funding?
- e. Does your organization take advantage of private sector funders to create diversity and review its guidelines?

Annex 3:

Survey topics with civil society activists and experts

- Evaluating current situation of civil society, especially NGOs in Iran
- Major challenges of activists and NGOs
- Evaluating NGO impact and social status within Iranian society
- Issues pertaining to driving and restraining forces
- Major shortcomings of NGOs in Iran
- Transition from weak to strong civil society based on past experiences
- Recommended strategies for empowering NGOs in Iran and capacity building
- NGO perspectives in Iran

Annex 4:

Geographical Distribution

Region		Questionnaires Sent	Questionnaires Received
1	Central: Tehran	40	24
2	South: Fars	15	12
3	North: Guilan	15	8
4	East: Khorasan Razavi	15	9
5	West: Azerbaijan	15	7
Total		100	60

A. Subject Distribution of NGOs

Subject		Questionnaires Sent	Questionnaires Received
1	The Disabled and Rehabilitation	6	5
2	Charity	15	7
3	Health and Hygiene	15	7
4	Children	10	6
5	Women	12	8
6	Environment	12	9
7	Rescue efforts	8	5
8	Youth	12	7
9	Advocacy	10	6
Total		100	60

B. Years of Experience of Participating NGOs

Subject		Questionnaires Sent	Questionnaires Received
1	NGOs with less than 4 years of experience	30	13
2	NGOs with less than 10 years of experience	40	25
3	NGOs with more than 10 years of experience	30	22
Total		100	60

Annex 5:

Training Needs of NGOs Based on priority

		Min. Training Need		Average		Max. Training Need	No answer
1	Advocacy	3%	8%	8%	12%	64%	5%
2	Fundraising	4%	8%	5%	17%	61%	5%
3	Collaborative Management	8%	3%	18%	8%	60%	3%
4	Good Governance	15%	2%	10%	12%	60%	1%
5	Teamwork Skills	8%	8%	7%	10%	60%	7%
6	Societal Marketing	5%	3%	8%	15%	60%	8%
7	Communication Technology	8%	10%	15%	10%	60%	7%
8	Need Assessment Methods	18%	5%	17%	10%	46%	4%
9	Networking	10%	8%	10%	15%	45%	12%
10	Strategic Planning	12%	13%	17%	10%	45%	3%
11	Communication Skills	12%	13%	17%	10%	45%	3%
12	Monitoring and Evaluation	12%	12%	15%	15%	42%	4%
13	Social Audit	3%	8%	18%	20%	42%	9%
14	Project Writing	15%	10%	13%	12%	40%	10%
15	Project Documentation	15%	15%	20%	20%	22%	8%
16	Negotiation Skills	17%	8%	17%	17%	20%	21%
17	Crisis Management	8%	18%	28%	8%	15%	22%
18	Project Management	13%	17%	24%	13%	13%	20%
19	Data Analysis	22%	12%	17%	18%	12%	19%
20	Budget Planning and Management	10%	20%	22%	15%	10%	24%

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