Domestic Support Raising – the Concept

1. Global trends and changes

Non Profit Organisations and Non Government Organisations (NGOs) are challenged to become more proactive and innovative in resource mobilisation. To succeed, they need to understand their environment and present themselves clear and proud of their social impact, and well connected to those who can contribute to achieving it. Just like profit-oriented organisations, it rewards if they take a proactive and innovative attitude, identifying and collaborating with possible contributors as clients[1].

> **What are NGOs and Non Profit Organizations?**
> A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any Non-Profit Organization, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information. NGOs are usually organized around specific issues, such as human rights, environment or health[2].

The drivers are clear. Shrinking government and donor budgets and changing aid landscape are affecting NGOs world-wide. Resources are especially dropping for local NGOs who do not have the capacity to become direct partners of large donor organisations.

Increasingly, NGOs work hard to sustain their operations and achieve and show greater impact with their programs, meanwhile ensuring their organisational survival, with shrinking resources. Hence, developing innovative strategies to generate financial resource as well as non-financial support is a key challenge for local NGOs. For that reason NGOs strive to find alternative ways of generating domestic (in-country) support from their external environment in order to increase their influence, visibility and success, and sustain themselves. In spite of economic slow-down, many developing markets are still growing, and with them the local resources available to finance and support social initiatives

At the same time the increasing access to digital media and the use of communication technology change the environment local NGOs are operating in: there is an increasing potential and demand for greater organisational transparency and there are new opportunities and pathways to extend existing networks and strengthen relationships with different stakeholders. Building collaborative networks in-country becomes increasingly crucial and entails significant opportunities to achieve greater impact and at the same time ensure organisational sustainability. The services and actors that may be explored include financial and non-financial support from local governments, private sector, NGO networks, educational institutes, media as well as the general public.

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[1] The term **'social business'** has been coined and is sometimes used as a new name for NGOs, to emphasize that next to "doing good". Definition: A social business is a non-loss, Non-dividend Company designed to address a social objective within the highly regulated marketplace of today. It is distinct from a non-profit because the business should seek to generate a modest profit but this will be used to expand the company's reach, improve the product or service or in other ways to subsidize the social mission (*www.muhammadyunus.org)*

[2] http://www.ngo.org/ngoinfo/define.html

2. Challenges and opportunities for NGOs

The external arena for NGOs has become more complex. Due to reduced funding from governments and multilateral organizations, many organizations have to work hard to keep overhead low and find alternative income to sustain their operations. Last decades, thousands of new NGOs were established for the purpose of 'doing good' which has lead to increased competition. Increasingly the general public, but also government institutions and businesses want to know how their donations are spend, NGOs have to show greater impact of their programs and be more transparent about their activities and expenditures. The box below sums up the main challenges and opportunities for NGOs worldwide.

Challenges for NGOs	Opportunities for NGOs
• being resource-constrained by budget cuts by Overseas Development Aid (ODA) • being largely dependent on a single (usually foreign) funding source • facing competition from other NGOs: many organizations have become very innovative nowadays, so NGOs have continuously be innovative and adapt themselves to the market demands • limited capacity to communicate their work or mission (not visible) • limited understanding to attract the attention of large donors (complex procurement procedures) • strong ideology limits openness to collaborate with businesses, government, general public • limited human resources and time available to mobilize resources (staff perform a variety of functions: deliver quality programs, management and administrative tasks) • having limited access to larger knowledge networks to share and learn from successes, failures and lessons learned • Limited investment budget to diversify or invest in new technologies • lacking skills to work with new technologies • lacking expertise to show results (accountability): there is an increased demand to see clear and sustainable impacts of the organizations' work. Many NGOs fail to be transparent about their work, the results and expenses • International NGOs, facing budget cuts too, have to look for strategic new roles and find ways to ascertain, and partly justify, their physical presence in developing countries. This affects funding for local NGOs or increased competition	• donations from private individuals and philanthropists worldwide by far exceed official development assistance (ODA) • personally know their potential support base – their volunteers, local officials, local business leaders and other stakeholders • are in the position to foster a sense of ownership and pride among local communities and build trust towards their organization • are flexible to respond to changing circumstances and emerging issues • can make use of new technologies to connect with others (digital / social media opportunities) The increased inter-connectedness through digital media and changing communication behavior in society also creates openings to develop innovative approaches for strengthening relationships and outreach to different actors • increased amount of public donations (crowd funding) • Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and private sector initiatives: increased social responsibility and new laws made by a number of governments, motivates businesses to work with NGOs • requests for expertise of NGO from businesses, governments, media and other actors • triangular cooperation schemes (more actors) getting popular

3. DSR concept

The general objective of DSR is to achieve **organisational sustainability**.
Organisational sustainability, however, is not an end in itself, but is needed to fulfill the vision and mission of an organization. This means that each organization is continuously able to carry out its core activities.

Definition of DSR:
"In DSR your organisation aims to become more recognized, aims to deepen and widen relations with an existing and future network of domestic actors to be better able to mobilize all kinds of material and immaterial support (including voluntarism, moral support, political and policy support) in order to increase your support-base, influence and impact."

As NGOs face numerous challenges to continue to carry out their organisational work, the main objectives of DSR are outlined in the box below.

Main objectives of DSR
- Increasing legitimacy and support for organizational activities and goals from 'domestic' (national, non-donor) actors
- Decreasing the dependency on international donors
- Establishing new collaborations with the general public, private enterprises, governments, NGOs, media, universities)
- Developing multi-stakeholder initiatives to achieve advocacy objectives and create synergies in program implementation
- Overcoming fragmentation of civil society by building more strategic networks and partnerships
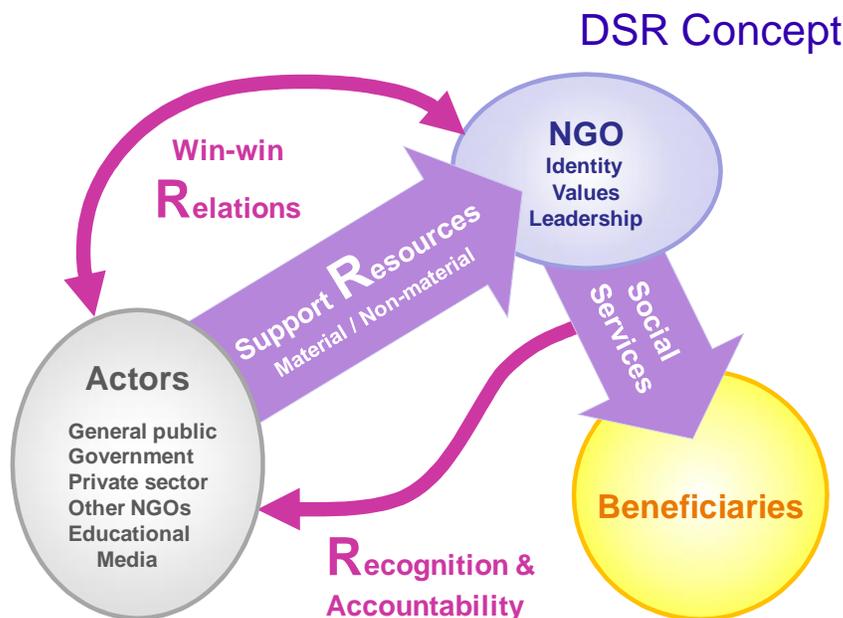- Improving public accountability and internal governance

DSR Concept

Figure 1. DSR concept

Domestic (in-country)

In DSR we look for in-country actors that can provide material and immaterial support to an organization. The following actors are identified, though they can be made more specific and adapted to a specific context:

- General public
- Domestic donors / philanthropies
- Government (national/ provincial/ local)
- Private Sector
- Other NGOs & networks
- Target group (communities, individuals)
- Education institutions (universities/ students)
- Media
- Respected personalities (religious leaders, civil society leaders, celebrities)

Support

NGOs aim to optimize support – this can be material and non-material resources. However, to mobilize support, organizations should continuously strengthen relations with other actors and improve their recognition.

> **Win-win Relations:** partnerships are needed to support the implementation of program activities, creating an enabling environment for programs. There are different kinds of relations that can be identified such as partnership, hierarchical, services, networking, financial, communication, and transformation of values, lobby and mediation.

> **Recognition & Accountability:** as organization you need to make yourself visible in the domestic arena and build trust among potential support partners. This can be done through various ways such as networking, marketing activities such as social media, organizing events or printing attractive materials about your organization. If an NGO becomes acknowledgement by other actors, it might create more opportunities for strengthening relations and getting support. Legitimacy is a strong part of 'recognition' (see pre-conditions for DSR).

> **Resources and support mobilized:** material (finances, products) and non-material (contributions from volunteers, enabling environment, moral support, political and policy support, time available from other actors, knowledge resources).

Raising

'Raising' relates to the activities of acquiring domestic support. It is meant to cover the identification and mobilization of all kinds of material and immaterial support, including voluntarism, moral support, political and policy support.

4.   Basic pre-conditions for Domestic Support Raising

4.1. CLASP principles

In order to increase influence and impact, it is key that an organisation can position itself. Every actor applies a set of principles – consciously or unconsciously – in order to define if they have to take the person or organisation seriously.

Using the principles of CLASP (see below the meaning of the acronym) will make you well prepared in most situations. CLASP must be part of your preparation when you prepare yourself for a lobby conversation, for media exposure or an expert meeting in the outside world. Opponents may tackle you on a weak point, so be prepared.

These principles can be abbreviated in the acronym CLASP, and stands for:

C   = Credibility
L   = Legitimacy
A   = Accountability
S   = Service - oriented
P   = Power base

Credibility is about trustworthiness of your organisation in other people's eyes and may relate to the information and data you use. You can increase your credibility by doing proper *fact finding and research on the issue.*

Legitimacy looks at how legitimate or representative you are in taking a certain position. It also looks at how you have involved the people on whose behalf you may claim to speak.[3] Governments and the commercial sector pay increasing attention to the legitimacy of lobbyists and campaigners. This also relates to respected leadership and having a strong membership base.

Accountability is the material proof that you are accountable as an organisation by demonstrating proof:
• your statements can be supported by data collection, fact sheets and research reports;
• your legitimacy can be proven by listing beneficiaries, constituencies and boards;
• involvement of beneficiaries can be proven by related activities;
• your financial data are sound and transparent;

Service oriented means "do as you promise" – it has to do with your attitude towards your political targets by delivering promised facts, details, information, reports, and answers to questions that are *relevant*, of *high quality, in time*. You deliver, and present them in powerful, easily digestible communications. Do not treat your targets as your enemies.

Power base means that you prove how strong you are, for example by showing how many people support you or how confident you are with regard to your topic. Helpful is to look at 4 levels of power (based on Ghandi's teachings):

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[3] In a recent IOB-evaluation by the Dutch Ministry Development Cooperation this is a strong recommendation

- power over – the superior hierarchical position you have in society, an organisation or in politics (most commonly referred to as the only power base)
- power to – your knowledge on the policy topic (increasingly shared conviction)
- power with – your beneficiaries and allies (together in joined and concerted action is stronger than doing things all by yourself)
- power within – your attitude, reliability and self-confidence (sincerity). Most leadership authors concur that in the long run honesty is the best policy, as it cannot be toppled by inconvenient discoveries

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Basic pre-conditions for Domestic Support Raising

1. **Legitimacy (downward accountability, transparency and building trust):**
   - clear vision/mission
   - organization profile (overview of key activities, thematic areas, number of staff, date of establishment, geographical area working in)
   - adequate organizational structures and human resources / expertise
   - data/documentation of achieved results such as annual reports and audits are put on the website
   - respected leadership
   - strong membership base

2. **Collaborative networks:**
   - being part of networks
   - not working in isolation

3. **Visibility in the domestic arena:**
   - name of organization is known among key stakeholders (community, government)
   - share marketing materials such as brochures, business cards
   - website in local language
   - be present at important meetings

4. **Enabling environment:**

   - this is the social, economic and political and policy context created by governments, official donors, larger society, religious authorities, private sector and other development actors that affect the ways NGOs may carry out their work. It is essentially the amount of space and freedom that NGOs have to do what they want to do.

4.2. Collaborative networks

In an increasingly complex environment, network relationships become more important than internal organisational structures alone. Organisations are no islands and are best understood when valued within their external context. Understanding of the dynamics on the institutional level provides support when dealing with multi-stakeholder processes. In most cases it is important for NGOs not to work in isolation but operate in alliances, networks or similar forms of collaboration. Yet efforts to manage (control) networks with tools for organisations and projects with hierarchical structures often fail.

In practice, the success of actors working together in networks for a common goal depends on the ability to manage – simultaneously – the content-based results, as well as the dynamics of the relationship between the actors. What is at stake in the dynamics between the partners is effectively feeding trust and enthusiasm.

4.3. Visibility in the domestic arena

To raise support NGOs should be known and recognised in their working area. Different actors, such as government and private sector should be informed about your existence and will take you more serious if your organisation is well-known.

4.4. Enabling environment

This is the social, economic and political and policy context created by governments, official donors, larger society, religious authorities, private sector and other development actors that affect the ways NGOs may carry out their work. It is essentially the amount of space and freedom that NGOs have to do what they want to do. In this sense, an "enabling environment" is an essential pre-condition for NGOs to be able to realise their full potential in society. As an NGO you have to realistically assess the environment and then fit into it, ultimately probably influencing its margins.