



Cyprus Civil Society Strengthening Programme Training Courses

Participants Guidebook
Social Marketing for NGOs
Marketing the cause – bringing about change

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1. Introduction:

What is social marketing?

Social marketing is a tool which CSOs can use. Social marketing can help to reduce organisational vulnerability, increase independence and sustainability, and help CSOs begin to build constituencies of support.

A definition of social marketing for CSOs is:

“Presenting your cause to target audiences in a way that generates a desired, measurable response in terms of support for that cause”

Why is social marketing useful?

Social marketing can help reduce the vulnerability of many CSOs, and increase sustainability.

- **Many CSOs are vulnerable.** They often rely on a small number of institutional funders, and have little or no popular support base within the societies in which they operate, beyond their beneficiaries.

Nelson Mandela, talking about South African CSOs, observed:

“We must also draw attention to the fact that many of our non governmental organisations are not in fact CSOs, both because they have no popular support base and the actuality that they rely on the domestic and foreign governments, rather than the people, for their material sustenance” 16 December 1997

- **Much work has been done on the sustainability of CSOs.** ‘Capacity building,’ or ‘institutional strengthening’ of CSOs is not a new concept, and huge resources have gone into it, - there has been significant investment.

Indeed, much of the capacity building work has had significant impact, particularly in a technical sense - of, for example, project delivery, management, planning, report writing, budgeting. This capacity building in technical skills has helped to build the capacity of CSOs to be more *effective* in the delivery of their programmes, and in *the management* of operations.

- **However, many CSOs are facing a problem:**

Although many CSOs are mature organisations, they often remain *organisationally insecure* because they are not rooted in civil society. They are not economically viable, nor financially independent.

For example, many CSOs remain dependent on a limited number of sources of support, - perhaps one institutional funder, who may contribute the majority of income. Often it is only a tiny proportion of support that comes from local sources.

Consequently, many CSOs are *vulnerable*, and subject to the vagaries of funding and policy change, and pressure.

- **CSOs are representatives of Civil Society.**

In today's world, there is agreement that responsibility for the development of society rests in three areas working together in partnership: the government, the corporate sector, and non-governmental organisations. However, the partnership is not equal. On the whole, *the CSO sector is weak in comparison the government and the corporate sector*. The CSO sector needs to be strengthened, therefore, and be enabled to play a full and equal role in the development of society.

Social marketing is a tool that can help CSOs build constituencies of popular support, raise funds and other resources and that can help strengthen the CSO sector as a whole.

2. What do CSOs have to do to use social marketing?

They have to:

market their cause

They have to develop the skills to:

- Identify and package the importance of the cause
- identify and package the uniqueness of the activities in which they are involved
- Identify and engage with clear target audiences
- Raise public awareness for their cause, and raise public concern
- Develop techniques for raising measurable public support for their cause

In other words:

Root their organisations in the wider societies in which they operate.

3. What goes into a social marketing strategy?

In developing a social marketing strategy, a CSO needs to answer a number of questions. The key questions are:

What is the context in which you are operating?

What is the unique contribution of your organisation in bringing about change, or delivering services?

What is your current income mix? How much is your current income, and where does it come from? What do you want it to be in 5 years time?

What are your three most important strategic marketing aims over the next 5 years?

What are your priority target audiences?

What are your priority marketing activities, that will enable you to achieve your strategic marketing aims?

Who are your main competitors?

What are the human, material and financial resources required to implement your marketing strategy

What will be the financial investment required, and what will be the return on that investment, and over what time frame?

A social marketing strategy does not have to be a long document. Indeed the shorter and clearer it is, the easier it is to read and understand.

The whole document should be perhaps 12-20 pages long.

4. Guide to developing a social marketing strategy

1. Describe briefly the background to your CSO:

- What are the strengths/weaknesses of the CSO sector in your country/region?
- Why were you founded, and when?
- How does your CSO fit into the sector in which you operate?
- Describe the recent history of your organisation, and the three most important challenges that now face you
- Why do you think that social marketing will help your organisation meet its current challenges?

2. Describe the uniqueness of your organisation:

When an CSO is seeking to raise its own resources, and in particular in building a constituency of public support, it has to be very clear in describing to potential supporters:

- What it is that you do
- Why it is important that you do it
- What it is about your organisation that makes you very good at doing it

These factors need to be communicated in a way that

- Demonstrates the real impact of the work of your organisation – *that you make a difference*
- Is free from jargon, and is easily understandable to people who are not development experts

Use the following format:

Our organisation exists in order to:

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.....

We bring special expertise in achieving this because:

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.....

We achieve our aims by:

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Check

That the paragraphs are short: they are accurate; they are clear; and that they are easily understandable.

3. What is your income mix? What do you want it to be?

Many CSOs are financially vulnerable. The majority of their income will come from a small number of institutional donors. Some may raise a proportion of income through other activities.

- It is important to reduce financial vulnerability
- It is important to widen the income mix

Here is a theoretical example of an CSO that in the year 2006 feels financially vulnerable, with 80% of its income from a single institutional donor, 19% from sales of services, and 1% from other local sources.

2006 \$57,000	2009 \$80,000
80% 1 donor	60% 3 donors
19% sale of services	25% sale of services
1% local	15% local

By 2009, they plan to increase their overall income by 40%, and to reduce their vulnerability by aiming for three institutional donors to produce 60% of their income, and to widen their income mix by increasing both sales of services and local contribution.

Use the format above to do your own income projection.

Check

Your forecasts are reasonable; that they are achievable.

4. Strategic marketing aims:

It is necessary to set strategic marketing aims for the next three to five years. First, however, it is helpful to state what the purpose of the marketing strategy is.

In terms of setting strategic marketing aims, it is usually a good idea to have only three of four major marketing aims. CSOs frequently have one that relates to income, one that may relate to numbers of donors or supporters, and one that may relate to perception of and awareness of the organisation.

An example of the purpose of the social marketing strategy might be:

The purpose of our social marketing strategy is to reduce our organisation's financial vulnerability, increase our sustainability, and build a constituency of public support in order to strengthen our position as a civil society organisation

An example of three strategic aims might be:

Strategic Aim 1

Widen our income mix by increasing the % of income from sales of services and local contributions from ...xx... to ...yy... over ...zz... years.

Strategic Aim 2

Increasing the number of donors/ supporters from ...xx... to ...yy...

Strategic Aim 3

Ensure that our organisation is known as the most effective CSO in its field of operation in the region.

Use this format:

The purpose of this social marketing strategy is:

.....

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We will achieve the purpose of the social marketing strategy by setting the following strategic marketing aims:

Strategic marketing aim 1:

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Strategic marketing aim 2:

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Strategic marketing aim 3:

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Check

The strategic aims are short; they are clear; there are not too many of them.

5. Establish priority target audiences:

For each strategic marketing aim, it is necessary to decide who your priority target audiences are going to be. In other words – who are you going to go to in order ask for support, or to get yourselves better known? It is a good idea to be as precise as you can be:

- To state “donors” is not good enough. Which donors, how many donors, where are they?
- To state “the corporate sector” is not good enough. Which types of corporates? Where are they?
- To state “the public” is not good enough. What kinds of people? Where are they?

It is a good idea to list the priority target audiences for each strategic aim separately.

Use this format:

Strategic Aim 1

Restate aim.

List target audiences

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.....

.....

Strategic Aim 2

Restate aim.

List target audiences

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Strategic Aim 3

Restate aim.

List target audiences

.....

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.....

Check

Your target audiences are specific enough.

6. Establish your main marketing activities:

Again, it is necessary to establish and describe your main marketing activities that will contribute to you achieving the social marketing aims that you have set down. In other words, state the things you are going to do that will make sure you reach your aims. It is best to list activities under each strategic aim. It is then easier to check that the activity you have listed is actually going to contribute to the achievement of that marketing aim.

Use this format:

Strategic Aim 1

Restate aim.

List priority marketing activities

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Strategic Aim 2

Restate aim.

List priority marketing activities

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Strategic Aim 3

Restate aim.

List priority marketing activities

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.....

Check

That the priority marketing activities will actually result in you achieving your marketing strategic aim.

7. List the competition:

It is helpful to list those other organisations that are working in similar areas to you, and who may be likely to go to the same sources of support as you will. It is a useful exercise to be clear yourselves about what makes your organisation different from the competition, and indeed also to be clear about which organisations are in fact quite similar to your own.

Use this format:

The following organisations are broadly our competitors:

.....

.....

.....

.....

The following organisations are particularly similar to ourselves, because:

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8. What are the human, material and financial resources required?

It is necessary to detail the resources that you will require in order to implement your marketing strategy.

Use this format:

<u>Human resources</u>	Staff, and roles	_____

	Volunteers, and roles	_____

	Consultancies (if required)	_____

<u>Material resources</u>	Equipment	_____

	Publicity materials	_____

	Other	_____

<u>Financial resources</u>	Staff costs	_____
	Volunteers costs	_____
	Equipment costs	_____
	Publicity costs	_____
	Other costs	_____

Check - That what you are going to ask for is reasonable; achievable; and manageable.

9. What will be the financial investment required, and what will be the return on that investment, and over what time frame?

It is helpful to draw up a chart for this. If your investment in social marketing is over a five year period then it might look like this:

Use this format:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<u>Costs</u>					
staff					
equipment					
publicity					
volunteers					
travel					
other					
contingency					
Total costs					

<u>Income</u>					
donors					
sale of services					
local contributions					
corporate					
other					
Total income					

Ratio of Income÷costs					
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Net contribution (income minus costs)					
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Check

That your ratio is measurable and improves over time; that your net contribution increases over time; that you are proposing a sensible investment that will show a clear return on investment.