

#4 ACM3 Home Improvement: Capacity Building for Community Media

Explores the notion of viability, what it takes to thrive, by including capacity building and leadership development practices in your organizations planning.

Speakers: Daniel Schott, National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture, NAMAC
Tom Poole, PTV, Pittsburg PA,
Beverly Hacker, KDHX St., Louis, MO
Cynthia Carrion, MNN Youth Channel, NY.

Daniel Schott, National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture.

Consider what Capacity-Building mean? Growth of sustainability.

Capacity means the ability to accomplish, change, remodel, or act on something that is a necessity, but often invisible because it is part of the operations or architecture of an organization. Since nonprofits must focus so intently on the work that becomes their public face, they do not have an easy ability to re-engineer the infrastructure hidden below. Since 1999, NAMAC has offered modest capacity building grants -- much like capital infusions to either start or complete a much-needed home improvement project.

Coming up with simple but necessary business enhancing micro-projects that would support and help nourish the long term cultural practice of independent public media now being created by individual artists, local and ethnic communities

Capacity building is a process used to become a more effective organization. Whether your organization's needs are to develop advocacy skills, technical training or personal and professional development.

How to assess your organization.

Seven elements of nonprofit capacity are closely connected and organization needs to do some serious thinking about which element of capacity they want to build first.

1. Aspirations Nonprofits need to spend time and effort evaluating and articulating their aspirations (a combination of mission, vision, goals) ***Assess clarity, boldness and integration of mission, values and goals.***

2. Strategy represents the means for reaching the aspirations. Well-conceived strategies should build on a nonprofit's core competencies, allocate resources to priorities, and help delineate its unique point of differentiation. ***Assess overall strategy, goals/performance targets, program relevance and integration, program growth and replication, new program development, funding model.***

3. Organizational skills An important component of the value chain is the process through which organizations develop, implement, fund, and measure programs. ***Assess performance measurement, monitoring of landscape, strategic planning, financial planning/budgeting, operational planning, human resources planning, fundraising, revenue generation, partnerships and alliances development and nurturing, local community presence and involvement.***

4. Human Resources These resources are the collective capabilities, experiences, potential and commitment of the organization's board, management team, staff and volunteers. ***Assess staffing levels; board composition and commitment; board involvement and support, CEO/ED/Senior***

Management; passion and vision, impact orientation, people and organizational leadership and effectiveness.

5. Systems and Infrastructure Within the context of the capacity Framework, systems are the processes, both formal and informal, by which the organization functions. ***Assess planning systems, decision-making framework, financial operation, management, human resources management, physical and technological infrastructure.***

6. Organizational structure Clarifying roles and responsibilities, creating new work groups or spinning off existing ones, developing and working with a board – most of these activities are familiar to nonprofit managers. ***Assess board governance, organizational design, interfunctional coordination, individual job design.***

7. Culture The culture of an organization is what holds it together. An important reason why nonprofit employees are willing to accept relatively low pay and work so hard. There are two aspects; its core value, beliefs and behavioral norms, and its performance orientation, or “performance culture”.

Barriers to capacity building

- Too busy providing services to current customers/clients
- Dysfunctional funding environment, serving other peoples needs and motives.
- Incremental changes, following a trial and error process is the standard approach for growth and development. Like using on the job training for management.
- Focus on obvious problems and symptoms but overlook and fail to address serious underlying problems. Elephant in the room syndrome, when the stakeholders dance around the “real” problem.
- Culture of sacrifice as a non profit organization, when stressed we serve bottom-line needs
- Over focus on one or two operational areas. Not keeping holistic big picture in mind.

Need to maintain development in the human resource. Invest resources to strengthen the staff and you will strengthen the organization.

NAMAC offers a professional development fund where they reimburse 75% of costs.

They have a repository of strategic planning materials you can download from their website.

Tom Poole, PTV, Pittsburg PA,

Pittsburgh has 90,000 Sub HH in a population of 260,000. PTV has provided public access for 25 years.

Their center received a capacity building grant from NAMAC used that to help them explore moving their facility. They hired a consultant to conduct a feasibility study. Tom has attended other NAMAC events such as the Oregon Leadership retreat and peer circles and other networking.

PTV Sought grants to redirect their center to learn how to conduct fund development and to decide whether to relocate to a new building.

They conducted a Self review, feasibility study by fund raising development consultant They surveyed potential donors to survey their image, the identity of their organization, perceived strengths and whether their work was seen as important to the potential donors.

End results showed they could move but needed to first strengthen strategic areas. Changed their Board to become a fund-raising team. Literally added some Board members with expertise and financial resources. Refined the image of their station to one that donors would support.

Diversified programming and expanded their reach. Changed equipment to be able to add more programs. One outcome was that it keenly reminded them that they were nearing end of their franchise. That would need its own study program to be ready to address questions, do they exist without a franchise (and the funding, and do they want to (struggle to find a new way to thrive)?

Cynthia Carrion MNN Youth Channel.

Cynthia is the new director of the Youth Channel- Cynthia joined MNN's Youth Channel as its Outreach Coordinator in June 2004. In that role, she has co-organized various youth events including: "I Have a Voice" an LGBT Youth Media Conference and Youth Voice 2004. As an advocate for youth media, she has been involved in the NAMAC Youth Media Leadership Institute and participated in the peer network afterwards.

Studying issues such as how to develop a connection between who you serve and who has the funding. How to utilize process thinking with a collective voice.

Background: Youth Channel is a division of Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN) serving young people below the age of 25. It is an alternative to mass media-providing equal access to all young people, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation or social status. Established in 2000, MNN Youth Channel aims to give youth from all backgrounds, the opportunities to create community media, foster dialogue, and engage in social activism. The Youth Channel strives to build confidence, establish role models, inform, educate, and entertain. It empowers youth to create change within their communities and the world. The Youth Channel is run by adults and youth who want to make a difference.

Currently, YC programs 17 hours of youth-produced per week on MNN's channel 34, which reaches up to 9 million viewers. By nurturing free speech and diverse voices, Youth Channel hopes to empower young people to become active participants in creating media that will have lasting impacts on their communities.

Beverly Hacker St Louis Radio and TV

The mission of KDHX is to build community through media, with diverse and independent voices that enrich the perspectives of our audiences. Currently they offer radio and television. KDHX TV, The Double Helix Corporation's Community Access Television operation, has been providing Community and Public access to cable television in the City of St. Louis for more than 20 years. Just as programming on KDHX is produced and supported by a large base of volunteers and a small staff, so too is the programming on KDHX TV channel 21. In addition to locally produced programming, KDHX TV airs news and public affairs programs that offer information from a perspective that is typically underrepresented in the mainstream media. KDHX TV also operates Public Access channel 22, which allows virtually unrestricted access to residents of the City of St. Louis.

She has attended the MALI training. Participated in peer coaching circle, where four people, EDs of different types of art organizations, phone conferences regularly. Each person spoke about what issues they are concerned about. Sharing different concerns brought different point of views on the problem. Common pressure points as and ED. Boards, staff, volunteers, funding, etc. Functioned like a support group. Organized and led by NAMAC staff. Her center has moved from a sole ED leader to co-leadership form.

Web sites

<http://www.namac.org>

<http://www.pctv21.org/homepage.htm>

<http://www.kdhx.org/index.php>

<http://www.mnn.org/en/yc>

<http://www.youthchannel.org/>