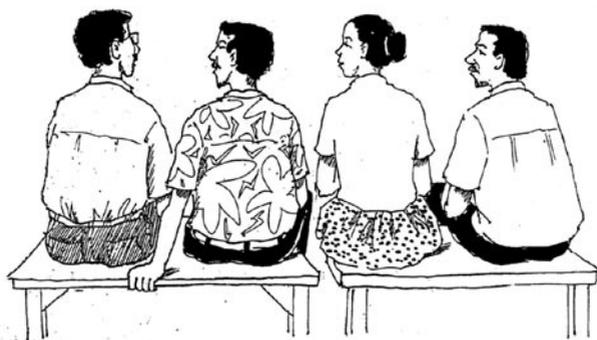


# Skills in Managing Organisations



## Governing and Managing Organisations

Guidelines for AKDN's work with CSOs  
No 2

A K D N

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AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

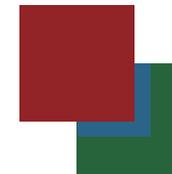
For more information about the AKDN Civil Society Programme, please see [http://www.akdn.org/civil\\_society.asp](http://www.akdn.org/civil_society.asp)

# Skills in Managing Organisations



*“Civil Society Institutions play an essential role in the provision of social services, the protection of the marginalised, and the delivery of development programmes”*

*His Highness the Aga Khan,  
Toronto 18 June 2004*



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## Why you may need these guidelines<sup>1</sup>

Some problems appear in organisations of all kinds. Here is a sample:

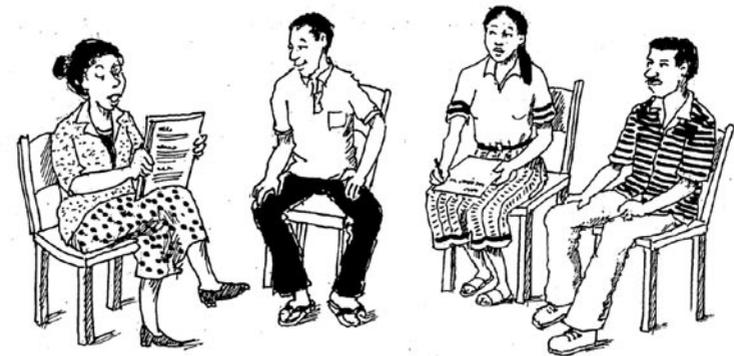
- Board members are unconfident and/or over-committed.
- Managers face the same difficulties.
- The organisation's ideals do not match its day to day reality.
- Meetings are badly planned, badly run and/or badly recorded.
- Decision-making and management structures are not clear.
- Unpaid staff and volunteers lack clear job descriptions and responsibilities.
- It is not clear how to deal with unsatisfactory work performance or behaviour.
- The organisation's haphazard administrative systems hinder rather than help its effective operation.
- Financial management or control procedures are inadequate.
- You find unwillingness to address any of these problems, or inadequate procedures to tackle them.
- The organisation works on technical issues, but does not take a stand on matters of principle, values and ethics.

*If any of these problems affect your organisation,  
these guidelines are for you!*

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from "Just About Managing", London Voluntary Service Council 2004

## Questions for your organisation

1. Do you have all the roles needed present in your organisation? What can you do if there are important gaps?
2. Are your meetings enjoyable and productive? If not, what are the parts that need improvement?
3. Is it clear in your meetings whether points are for information, discussion or decision?
4. Do people do, between meetings, what they say they will do?



## **A**ction points for your organisation

After working through this booklet you will be able to:

- act on knowledge which can be learned and skills that may be innate but can be developed,
- differentiate management roles that are ideas-oriented, people-centred or action-focused
- judge who in your organisation is a good or a bad manager.

You will also learn how to manage meetings. In the meantime, and even afterwards, you can:

1. Try rotating the Chair of a meeting.
2. Try rotating the minute-taking for your meetings.
3. Try rotating the organising of a meeting.



## **S**kills in managing organisations

It is useful to look at two basic groups of skills:

- a. basic knowledge which can be learned
- b. personal and interpersonal skills which may be innate or which can be developed

### Basic knowledge

A skilful manager has:

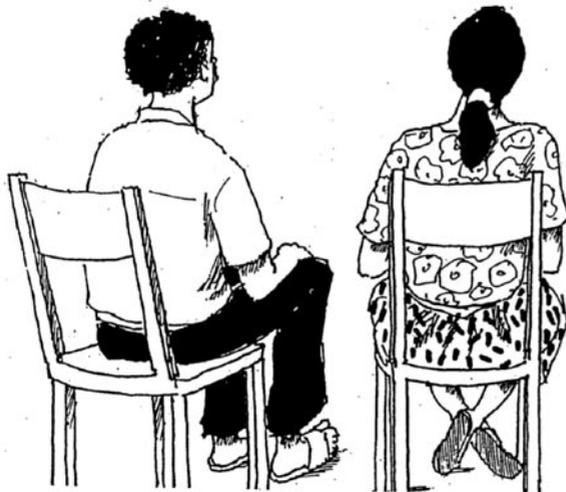
- Knowledge about the organisation – what it does, with or for whom it does it, why it does it, how it does it, its ethos and values
- Knowledge about your field of work: the political, social and economic context, accepted standards and expectations, what others are doing and how this organisation fits into the larger picture
- Knowledge of managerial functions: long-, medium- and short-term planning, monitoring and evaluation, financial planning, record keeping, reporting and control, personnel management, premises management, time management

*Basic knowledge includes what others are doing and how this organisation fits into the larger picture*

## Personal and interpersonal skills

People learn personal and interpersonal skills from the moment they are born, though these differ according to the culture they belong to. Other skills can be developed through awareness and practice. They include:

- Communication skills – being able to organise and share information (both verbal and written)
- Ability and willingness to learn – listening skills, willingness to be challenged, time and inclination to learn, ability to develop new ways of doing things
- Sensitivity and flexibility: in relation to clients, users and members, to the people who are doing the work, to a wide variety of needs and situations, to changing needs and situations, to one's own needs and situation
- Leadership – trusting and having confidence in others, able to inspire confidence in the organisation and its work, in oneself and others.



## ine management roles

According to management guru R. Meredith Gelbin, there are nine roles that need to be filled in the management of any organisation. This does not mean nine different people, but nine roles which must be carried out, perhaps by one individual, maybe by a team. They are:

### Cerebral roles

- Innovator: someone who generates creative and unorthodox ideas and sees the organisation's work and problems in unconventional ways. The innovator is good at seeing new ways to solve problems.
- Monitor/Evaluator: provides a critical analysis of problems and situations and evaluates suggestions to help make balanced decisions.
- Specialist: an expert with a range of specialist knowledge about the team's work.

 *The innovator is good at seeing new ways to solve problems*

## People-oriented roles

- Co-ordinator: good at chairing discussions, clarifying goals, coordinating the work, delegating. The co-ordinator is balanced, focused, and disciplined, a good listener and judge.
- Teamworker: mild and cooperative, emphasizes good communication and personal relations, supports individuals personally and in their work.
- Resource Investigator: an enthusiastic outward-looking extrovert who keeps in touch with other teams or organisations and brings in new ideas, contacts and resources from outside.

## Action-oriented roles

- Shaper: a dynamic leader who shapes, through drive and passion, the way in which the team effort is applied. The shaper gets and keeps things moving and is good at finding a way round obstacles.
- Implementer: a disciplined organiser and administrator who turns ideas into practical tasks, plans, schedules, and procedures.
- Finisher: a conscientious person who maintains a sense of urgency, and makes sure that tasks are carried out completely and on time.

Your organisation needs to think through which of these roles are presently carried out, which are absent, and if you can try to develop those roles that you need.



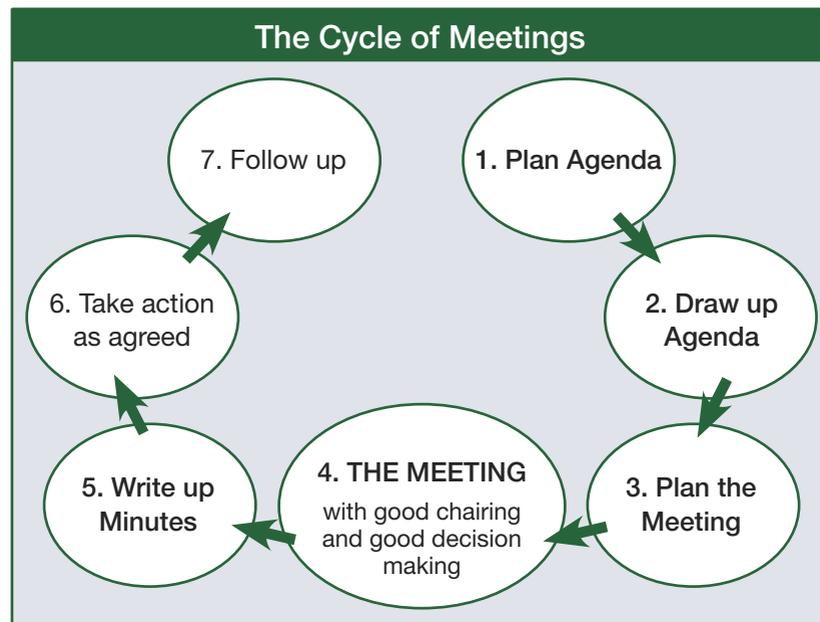
Good Managers	Bad Managers
Help individuals and groups identify goals and priorities, and develop action plans.	Abdicate responsibility, are indecisive, unreliable, uninformed.
Consult, listen, learn, share.	Will not consult, listen, learn or share.
Take responsibility, make decisions, and get things done.	Take credit for the success of others.
Are firm without being rigid, understanding without being soft.	Undermine other people and stop people from getting on with their work.
Manage her/his own time and energy well, and delegate responsibility.	Make judgements about people on the basis of stereotypes and prejudices.
Trust people to get on with their work, give support without being intrusive.	Create an environment in which someone always has to be blamed when things go wrong.
Inspire confidence in themselves, in the management process, and in the organisation.	Generate lack of confidence in themselves, in management and in the organisation.
Give praise and appreciation when work is done well, help people learn and improve.	

# M

## anaging meetings

In many organisations there is at least one point on which everyone agrees: meetings are awful. They are a waste of time, do not achieve anything, start late and go on far too long, do not make decisions (or make decisions that are unmade at the next meeting). The list of complaints seems endless, and is remarkably consistent from organisation to organisation.

Meetings do not have to be awful. They can be useful, informative, challenging, and even exciting. But for this to happen they need careful planning and management.



### 1. Planning the agenda

An agenda can be drawn up any number of people: by the person who will be chairing the meeting, the secretary, the manager or anyone who has a clear idea of what the meeting is about. It does not matter who does it, so long as everyone knows whose responsibility it is, and how to get items onto the agenda

### 2. Drawing up the agenda

The person drawing up the agenda should go through the minutes of the previous meeting, and include any items that need to be carried forward or reviewed. Everyone should be asked in advance what they want covered.

### 3. Planning the meeting

If any papers need to be read before the meeting, they must be circulated in good time. If people need to bring anything with them to the meeting this should be clarified. The room and the arrangements need to be taken care of.

And finally, the agenda and invitation to the meeting need to be sent out in good time with the expected schedule clearly laid out.

### 4. The meeting: Chairing

At the start the Chair should:

- Welcome participants.
- Introduce visitors or newcomers, as appropriate.
- Ask for apologies for absence.
- Briefly explain the agenda, saying which items will need decisions, and which are for discussion or consultation.
- If appropriate, ask whether any other items should be included.
- Say when there will be a break, and when the meeting is due to finish.

A good Chair can use questions to keep a meeting moving in a focused way. There are several types:

- Questions asked to the whole group, to get information: “Does anyone have experience of this sort of problem?”
- Questions addressed to the whole group, to elicit possible solutions: “Does anyone have ideas about how we could deal with this?”
- Questions relayed to the whole group, referring to a point made or question asked by a member of the group: “That is a difficult question (or point). How would the rest of you deal with it?”
- Questions directed at a named individual “Ali, how did you handle this problem last time?”

A good chair must close a discussion when it is appropriate, or accept that the discussion needs more time, and arrange another time for completion.

If a decision has to be made about an item, the Chair must ensure that a decision is made, and discussion is not allowed to drift.

At the end of the meeting the Chair should summarise what has taken place, major decisions made and actions agreed, and ensure that everyone is clear about what they have to do, when and where the next meeting is scheduled, how to get items on the agenda.

## 5. Minutes

A minute is a record of what the meeting discussed and decided about a particular topic. It must include:

- Any decision reached by the meeting (including a decision not to take action or a decision at that time)
- Action required to implement the decision
- Who will take the action
- Any deadline or time limit for the action



## The background to these guidelines

The AKDN Civil Society Programme has produced a series of internal booklets to help those involved with AKDN agencies to acquire the skills they need to build and strengthen effective civil society organisations (CSOs).

There are basically four types of institutions for whom these booklets are intended:

1. *The Jamati Institutions: National Councils, ITREB, GRB, NCAB, and EPB*
2. *The Boards of the Service Companies – AKHS, AKES, AKPBS*
3. *Associations set up by the Service Companies or by other AKDN agencies to support the purposes of their programme – such as PTAs, school management committees, nurses associations, midwives associations, teachers associations, tenants associations*
4. *CSOs outside AKDN agencies which support their purposes*

All such organisations involve people who have committed themselves to improving the society in which they live by what they do and how they behave. Commitment and voluntarism may, however, not be enough for an effective organisation – specific organisational skills are needed as well. And these skills can be learnt.

The following booklets are also available in this series:

1. *Problems in Managing Organisations*
2. *Skills in Managing Organisations*
3. *Improving Management*
4. *The Board and its Functions*
5. *Organisational Structures and Systems*
6. *Managing People and their Work*
7. *Managing Finance*
8. *Building a More Civil Society*

Illustrations: Petra Rohr-Rouendaal, “Where there is no artist”, Practical Action Publishing, 2007



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