

Sustaining Nongovernmental Organizations

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Abstract: Until this century, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other nonprofit organizations were often regarded as adaptive mechanisms that spring into life as needed and vanish as quickly when conditions change. The Sustainability Movement brings a different perspective on the rapid growth of new NGOs, echoing a concern for maintaining organizational continuity. In this paper, we discuss the sustainability problems of NGOs or social sector organizations as they address local needs, using two case studies, one in Jamaica and the second, a composite case study of anthropology departments in small liberal arts colleges in the United States.

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1. Introduction

Over the last three decades, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or social sector organizations have increased substantially in number and scope and became increasingly transnational (Martens 2005). As vital components of many developing societies, these organizations undertake a wide range of social justice and humanitarian issues, filling gaps that governments have overlooked. Until this century, NGOs and other nonprofit organizations were often regarded as adaptive mechanisms that spring into life as needed and vanish as quickly when conditions change (Caulkins 1996). Replacing this functionalist theoretical framework, the Sustainability Movement brings a different perspective on the rapid growth of new NGOs, echoing a concern for maintaining organizational continuity that was already expressed in the business sector by such popular books as *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* (Collins and Porras 1997), *Good to Great* (Collins 2001), and the companion book for NGOs, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors* (Collins 2005). The Sustainability Movement, although characterized by many variations, has brought about a paradigm shift in thinking about organizational planning and change (Edwards 2005). Seven common themes of the sustainability revolution, according to Edwards (2005: 128), are the following:

1. Stewardship of natural resources,
2. Respect for limits of scarce resources,
3. Interdependence of environmental and social systems,
4. Economic restructuring, to benefit a wider range of persons,
5. Fair distribution, to minimize the disadvantages of the poor,
6. Long-term perspective, to minimize the dysfunctional of thinking only short term, and

7. Natural systems as a model.

In the discourse about NGOs' sustainability, the most important overarching topics concern four types of sustainability: strategic, funding, program, and personnel sustainability, which, together, incorporated most of Edward's themes. Less widely explored is theme number seven, natural systems as a model, which is the focus of the "organic" perspective of Wolfson et al. (2011). This is an "urgent but understudied topic," particularly in urban settings (McDonogh et al. 2011: 113). The natural systems model suggests that sustainability should be thought of not as the survival of particular organizations, but of the ideas and activities that they embody.

Jim Collins has focused on the life cycle of organizations within a rapidly changing ecosystem of organizations, including those that were once great (*How the Mighty Fall*; Collins 2009 and *Great by Choice*; Collins and Hansen 2011). Extending his "Good to Great" framework to the social sector, Collins (2005: 3) draws attention to five main issues of sustainability for organizations in this sector, noting that the issues must be framed differently for nonprofits than for businesses:

1. Defining "great". Calibrating success without business metrics
2. Level 5 leadership. Getting things done within a diffuse power structure
3. First who. Getting the right people on the bus within social sector constraints
4. The hedgehog concept. Rethinking the economic engine without a profit motive
5. Turning the flywheel. Building momentum by building the brand

Collins's framework constitutes a processual model for strategic planning or evaluation of organizations in the social sector, such as NGOs. We take each of these frameworks, the sustainability

paradigm, and the Good to Great perspective, in turn after dealing with some general characteristics of social sector organizations.

The Sustainability Paradigm

Varied in structure and function, NGOs operate as advocates or service providers and range from small community-based groups to large transnational organizations with name recognition and the ability to influence governments and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) such as the United Nations and the World Bank. Nevertheless, as not-for-profit entities, NGOs rely on grants and private donations as their primary source of funding. The tenuous nature of these types of funding places them at constant risk of discontinuing or reducing their programs or services. Although funding seems to be the greatest challenge for NGOs, equally serious are matters of the fit of the program with local needs, recruiting and maintaining leadership, strategic planning, and adapting to the social and political environment. In light of these vulnerabilities, NGOs and collaborating researchers need to consider sustainability as a crucial aspect of their organization planning and forecasting.

Capacity building, a term which has become almost as commonly used as sustainability, has also become a “catchall” concept and difficult to define or implement (Low and Davenport 2002). McPhee and Bare (2000) define capacity building as an organization’s ability to fulfill its mission effectively. In addition, the term implies expansion of the scale or scope of an organization, program, or service within a supportive infrastructure. Sustainability, therefore, speaks of maintaining that capacity (scale and infrastructure) throughout the life of the organization. “Sustainability and scale are related, in that unsustainable services on any scale will fail to have a lasting impact” (Sarriot et al. 2004: 24). Low and Davenport (2002) also connect capacity building and sustainability by referring to the organization’s “sustained capacity.” Sustaining an organization’s capacity does not necessarily mean maintaining a fixed level of service or resources but rather refers to the ability to adapt to changes in the social, economic, and political environment while continuing to meet local needs.

In this paper, we discuss the sustainability problems of NGOs or social sector organizations as they address local needs, using two case studies, one in Jamaica and the second, a composite case study of anthropology departments in small liberal arts colleges in the United States. We begin by reviewing a case study of the sustainability challenges for the Combined Disabilities Association (CDA), a disability rights NGO established and operated by people with disabilities (PWDs) in Jamaica. Established in the early 1980s by Jamaicans with visual, physical, and

hearing impairments, the CDA was the first cross-disability group in Jamaica and the Caribbean. During the same period, PWDs in Canada founded Disabled Peoples International (DPI), an international umbrella group, and the CDA became a charter member.

Despite various setbacks, the CDA has experienced several accomplishments. Arguably, these relative successes rest in the organization’s ability to acquire and sustain cultural and social capital as described by Bourdieu (1986). Although complex concepts, noneconomic capitals (cultural and social) have become accepted as vital to the success of organizations. Cultural capital often includes human resources with expertise in areas such as program planning and evaluation. Social capital, which Bourdieu considers as the “aggregate of actual or potential resources,” often refers to access to social networks that not only links NGOs to a larger community in their field but also offers them credibility, visibility, and backing which is useful for funding purposes. Regardless of how NGOs define success, they rely on a range of cultural and social resources in order to carry out their mission.

From its inception, the CDA possessed strength in cultural capital “embodied” in its founders, some of whom were college educated, belonged to the upper middle class, and experienced in advocacy and grassroots organizing. For instance, prior to the formation of the CDA, some of these individuals had successes in advocating for the rights of people with visual and hearing impairment. Drawing on these resources, the CDA established a structure and leaders, many of whom continued their involvement with the organization in either a leadership or an advisory role. Affiliation with DPI has also afforded the CDA access to an international community of disability rights advocates and, most of all, access to the United Nations. Together, the CDA and DPI have been instrumental in promoting disability rights in Jamaica and the Caribbean.

The CDA’s strength in social capital not only rests in the alliance formed with DPI, from which it has gained invaluable support specifically in the area of professional development. Over the years, it has also developed relationships with local organizations such as the Jamaica Society for the Blind and the Jamaica Association for the Deaf, of which several of its members belong: The Abilities Foundation, which provides vocational education for PWDs, and Food for the Poor, which has provided the food items that the organization distributes. Furthermore, the CDA collaborates with the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD), the governmental agency designated to oversee the implementation of the national disability policy. As part of this alliance, the

JCPD provides the CDA with space in their Kingston office and employs several PWDs, many of whom are members of the organization.

The CDA's Struggle with Sustainability

The CDA emerged in 1980 as an informal group and in 1981, was launched as the first cross-disability group to advocate for Jamaica's wider disabled population. During its early years, the CDA benefited from funding through the United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP). However, as a local NGO, it currently receives a small subvention from the Jamaican Government and relies largely on grants and donations. The CDA has a 12-member governance board, which includes a chairperson who oversees its activities. Board members are elected by the general membership to include persons from four major disability groups: deaf/ hearing impaired, physically impaired, blind/visually impaired, and mentally or cognitively impaired. The CDA also has a staff of four, which includes a coordinator who oversees the organization's administrative functions. Following this overview of the history of CDA and its struggles, we turn to a discussion of the four major sustainability concerns: strategic, funding, program, and personnel.

The CDA's struggle with sustainability involves both concerns about funding as well as mission. As a disability rights NGO, the CDA advocates for the passage of legislations and policies in order to provide PWDs with access to the range of opportunities that are available to all Jamaicans. However, as the organization pursues its mission of advocacy, it encounters various social welfare needs among its members as well as the wider constituents of PWDs. The extent to which the CDA addresses these needs and the strategies it utilizes depend largely on its capacity (the availability of funds and other resources). During data collection with the CDA's members and staff, I discovered a "blurring of the lines" between advocacy and social service as the organization interspersed nonadvocacy activities into its advocacy agenda. Operating within a society that lacks a well-established social welfare system combined with overwhelming human needs, especially among persons with disabilities, the CDA sees this as the humane option.

The CDA's approach to advocacy involves lobbying the Jamaican government to pass disability rights legislation that provide equality to PWDs and has had several accomplishments such as the passage of the National Disability Policy in 2000. In keeping with the United Nations Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities of PWDs, the Jamaican national policy provides a framework and guidelines for the treatment of PWDs. However, this policy lacks legal sanctions and therefore is not legally enforceable. Therefore, disability rights activists continue working

for the passage of a national disability law. Although they successfully drafted a moral document, it has been tabled in the Jamaican parliament for several years. If passed, this groundbreaking and comprehensive legislation would be the first of its kind in the Caribbean (JIS 2004) because it not only mandates equal rights but also provides legal sanctions if these rights are violated. In the absence of comprehensive legislation, local advocates continue their efforts to secure rights and benefits by other means. For example, there have been amendments to the national building code, modification to the National Traffic Act, changes in housing allocations, and revision to the income tax statutes as well as concessionary bus fares. Nevertheless, not all PWDs benefit from these. Income tax concessions and housing allocations, for example, only benefit those who are employed and concessionary bus fares are only available in the larger urban areas of Kingston, St. Andrew, and St. Catherine.

In keeping with its motto "Nothing about us without us," the CDA also encourages PWDs to participate in all matters concerning their welfare and development. Therefore, it seeks opportunities for representation at all relevant agencies and local boards. By developing this bridging social capital among organizations, the PWDs participate in a wider range of decision-making processes. As a result, CDA members have sat on various local and national committees dealing with topics such as transportation, accessibility, education, health, and employment. However, while the CDA successfully mobilized PWDs in Kingston, it has been less productive in the rural areas.

NGO/Social Sector Organizational Strategy

NGOs vary depending on structure (federative or centralist) and function or strategy (advocacy or service). Federative NGOs operate as umbrella organizations and have a loose international connection with their members (Martens 2005). National affiliates are diverse and autonomous with their own mission statements. Centralist NGOs, on the other hand, share common statutes, and national sections share the same name with ties to an international body. They are hierarchical with a unitary structure, a highly developed division of labor, and sometimes a greater level of resources (Martens 2005). Typically, NGOs may either be federative in composition with advocacy or social service functions, or centralist in composition with advocacy or social service functions. An NGO's strategic vision may impede or advance sustainability planning depending on the organization's ability to obtain buy-in from its stakeholders. Traditionally, most NGOs focused on service; however, in recent years, there has been a shift toward advocacy (Rugendyke 2007).

According to Rugendyke (2007), after several years of providing humanitarian aid and other social services, some of these organizations have come to believe that aid projects will never bring about lasting change because social institutions in the societies that they serve perpetuate social injustice. Disappointed with the impact of humanitarian aid on the developing societies, they seek to address what they consider as the source of social problems by shifting their focus to advocacy (Rugendyke 2007).

Strategy: Tensions between Strategies of Service and Advocacy. Advocacy NGOs campaign and lobby to change public opinion, social structures, policies, and practices that perpetuate injustice within societal institutions (Rugendyke 2007). Disability rights advocates in Jamaica, for example, consider people with impairments as disabled because of social and structural obstacles that hinder them from fully participating in society. Therefore, they lobby for passage of new legislation to mandate equality for PWDs. Service-focused NGOs are primarily concerned with providing practical aid to the needy. This incorporates a variety of activities such as building water supply or encouraging and establishing income generation projects. Some key areas of involvement include human rights, development assistance, environment, humanitarian aid, peace, and family issues (Boli and Thomas 1999: 42; Keck and Sikkink 1998: 11; Martens 2005: 3). NGOs often collaborate with organizations that share similar interests. In addition, their activities are mostly across international boundaries and typically exist in developing societies. Formal recognition is easier for service-focused NGOs than advocacy-focused ones who are usually more controversial.

Although it would appear that particular NGOs tend to focus on either advocacy or service, the recent trend toward advocacy suggests that NGOs are forging new paths. For example, in recent years, Oxfam International, with federative composition and a service function (Martens 2005: 33), has incorporated an advocacy component (Anderson 2007: 87). In addition, the CDA, federative in structure with a primary focus of advocacy, when faced with the needs of PWDs, chose to address them by collaborating with governmental agencies, the private sector, and other NGOs, and providing some services. These actions suggest that NGOs are organic and adaptive entities that interact with the social, economic, and political environments with importance for ways that may change their strategies.

Funding Sustainability

Discussions of sustainability often focus on funding, as the principal issue that NGOs face, to the detriment of other areas such as evaluation and assessment. Relying on donations, grants, and other

charitable sources places NGOs at the dictates of funders who determine the measure used to demonstrate effectiveness. Instead of a simple bottom-line indicator, the proportion that an organization spends on administration is used to determine effectiveness. The assumption is that “the more money that reaches beneficiaries, the more effective an NGO” (Walsh and Lenihan 2006: 414). Therefore, only a small percentage (15–20%) should be spent on administration which encompasses not just salaries but also professional development, technology, and professional services.

However, as we will see, Collins (2005: 4–5) cautions that this metric confuses inputs (funding) and outputs (greatness or organizational impact). This restriction limits the amount of funding that organizations can use for capacity-building purposes, such as leadership development and membership recruitment that may be important for the growth and effectiveness of the organization. If NGOs neglect capacity building, they will become vulnerable. Therefore, they need a strategy to address funding volatility and restrictiveness.

Smith (2009) suggests that NGOs explore the diverse funding (international donations, government grants and contracts, local philanthropy, and alternative income-generating activities). Furthermore, NGOs need to explore revenue streams related to corporate philanthropy and social entrepreneurship in order to achieve financial stability. Makoba (2002) links the substantial growth of NGOs in developing countries to an increase in international donors. NGOs have made great strides toward improving their long-term financial stability by developing relationships with local governments and local philanthropists, whose attention may be easier to capture than that of international philanthropists. However, “income-generating activities are usually an afterthought or a response to reduction of funding” (Smith 2009: 26). Just like the other components of capacity building, funding should be part of NGOs’ proactive long-term sustainability plan rather than a hasty reaction to income reduction.

Funding: New Revenue Sources. In 1983, the CDA established Diversified Economic Enterprises for Disabled Self-help (DEEDS) Industries specifically to address the high unemployment among its constituents and generate income for sustainability of the organization. Acquiring a facility formerly operated by the Salvation Army, DEEDS invested in manufacturing equipment and produced wooden novelties such as toys, clocks, bowls, boxes, and hot mats, and marketed them to specialty stores associated with the island’s tourist trade. Several years later, the facility closed because the administrators could not afford to buy the property that the company was

renting and a new location could not be found. DEEDS provided employment for approximately 70 persons, most of whom were PWDs. The CDA is committed to reestablishing DEEDS or a similar company to provide employment to PWDs and generate income to sustain the organization. Nevertheless, it has encountered difficulties in developing an alternative revenue stream.

Personnel Sustainability

Many organizations face a leadership crisis as their founder retires. Similarly, board and committees may not be able to replace themselves with participants of equal commitment or skills. As NGOs consider sustainability, they need to address cultural and geographic factors that may have an impact on their program and personnel development. For example, a number of Pacific NGOs believe that capacity building should have a “Pacific definition” and recruit more “domestic” or local volunteers. Furthermore, these groups believe that there is a misconception that volunteerism is a Western-derived value. However, Low and Davenport (2002) found that within Melanesian context, volunteering is not a new phenomenon. “It is just a Western word used to describe some of the ways in which people in rural areas have traditionally helped one another and have offered mutual support” (Low and Davenport 2002: 376).

In short, organizations need to draw on indigenous forms of social capital (Bourdieu 1986) to provide both the personnel for the operation of the organization and for connections to other complementary organizations. As Edwards (2005: 128) notes, sustainability is about a relationship between the present and the future and the short-term and the long-term. Just like in the environmental sciences, sustainability is an evolutionary process that requires that NGOs not only focus on building the capacity to address the needs of today but also sustaining capacity to meet future needs while adapting to social, political, and economical changes (Wolfson et al. 2011).

Personnel Expansion. As the CDA seeks to expand its capacity in the rural areas, it faces the challenges of recruiting new members and volunteers. This process is hampered by a lack of personnel to help recruit new members and potential leaders. In 1994, with funding from a Canadian development association, the CDA formally launched the Rural Development Program and has had some success in the Eastern and Western parishes. With this funding, the organization hired a field officer; however, funding ran out, and the CDA was unable to keep the position when it terminated the program. Although an official Rural Development Program is no longer functional, the CDA continues its outreach to rural residents with disabilities, hoping to establish additional groups

across Jamaica. The current strategy involves incorporating rural outreach with other funded projects by incorporating the needs of rural residents in all aspect of its planning. For example, in 2006, when the CDA conducted a disability census, in addition to collecting the necessary data, the CDA enrolled several new members. Furthermore, the organization received funding for and conducted training seminars on disaster preparedness throughout the island. Operating in eastern, western, northern, and southern regions, the CDA not only made these seminars accessible to rural residents but also recruited new members. However, it has not been successful at attracting new leaders. The stigma associated with disability in some communities prevents many persons with disability from participating in collective action. As Hahn (1985: 310) suggests, it is often difficult to get people to organize around an “aspect of their identity if they consider it as negatively stigmatized.” Furthermore, having a disability is not the only motivator for participation in collective action (Scotch 1988). In this case, the CDA often finds individuals who are seeking out the organization as source from which to receive assistance are not interested or equipped to step up in a leadership capacity. In short, the CDA has considerable difficulty in struggling with the sustainability imperative of identifying, training, and retaining leadership.

Programming for Sustainability

Education and sensitization programs are critical aspects to disability rights advocacy in Jamaica. The CDA utilizes these to combat negative attitudes and perceptions held by the society about disability. Unfortunately, PWDs sometimes hold these attitudes. Stemming from traditional and Creole ideas, many view disability as a curse or punishment caused by God or some supernatural source. Therefore, some people view these individuals as undeserving of equality and societal participation. Although these ideas are slowly disappearing, they have been deeply rooted in the society and are especially destructive when held by PWDs. Education is the major tool that the organization uses to counteract negative beliefs. Targeting public officials as well as the general citizenry, the CDA conducts seminars in various communities to sensitize Jamaicans to disability-related issues. According to the CDA chairperson, the organization designs these programs based on the collective experiences of its members. Some of these experiences include obstacles related to transportation, employment, and education, as they participate in various activities in their communities.

Programming: Rap Sessions. Rap sessions are monthly business meetings held by the CDA for its members. It provides an open forum to discuss the day-to-day challenges that PWDs experience, and an

opportunity for building social capital among the membership and bridging between the local organization and local businesses and governmental agencies (Caulkins 2004; Coleman 1988). The CDA's ultimate goal is that this will benefit the larger community of PWDs in Jamaica. It also provides opportunities to educate its members on a range of topics related to their lived experiences. This offers members a chance to voice their concerns in an informal setting. Over the years, topics have included problems related to the local bus transit, employment discrimination, and lack of vocational training opportunities for adults with disabilities. Typically, the CDA invites representatives from the relevant governmental authority or agencies to attend a monthly meeting. At these sessions, PWDs have the opportunity to interact with agency representatives by asking questions and getting answers to issues that they might have with a particular agency. During 2006, representatives from the Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC), National Insurance Scheme (NIS), and HEART Trust, a vocational training and certification agency that prepares individuals for employment, were three of the groups who attended the rap sessions.

Programming: Job Placement and Training.

With a large number of its members unemployed, the CDA attempts to assist with job placements and vocational training opportunities. Currently, there are arrangements with a few local companies to hire qualified PWDs as the CDA is able to refer to them. However, the CDA is concerned that many PWDs do not have the minimum qualifications for employment, which is a high school diploma and passing grade in three subjects in the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) or General Certificate Education (GCE), which are the minimum requirements to obtain entry-level positions in the private or public sector. Through collaboration with agencies such as HEART Trust and National Youth Service, the CDA provides vocational training opportunities to its members. These include computer classes that are in high demand but only offered on a small scale and available mostly in the larger urban areas. Even in areas where these classes are available, although participants receive a stipend, they do not have enough money to pay for the initial expenses associated with their training. Nevertheless, the CDA continues to pursue funding in order to expand these opportunities and offers participants a stipend to cover personal expenses. In struggling to create sustainable programming, with equitable distribution of resources, the CDA faces formidable challenges.

Programming: Food Distribution. Although on a small scale, and for a limited time, the CDA distributes food items to PWDs who are in need. However, this

has caused some controversy among members who see it as meeting a need and others see it as distracting the organization from fully focusing on its advocacy role. Food distribution provides several challenges for the CDA, such as the pickup, storage, and distribution of items. The CDA receives several items of groceries from an NGO located in Kingston. Then it is responsible for transporting these items from the donor's warehouse but does not have its own transportation. Therefore, staff members need to hire a truck to pick up the products. Next, food items are usually in 40-pound bags and need to be stored, but the CDA does not have its own storage facilities. Packaging and distributing food are tedious tasks that require the help of volunteers without which this falls on the office staff. Board members have been considering discontinuing food distribution. Although everyone agrees that people need these items, there are mixed feelings as to whether or not this service should continue. Those who believe that it should continue, including CDA staff that does most of the work, agree that this may be the only option that many PWDs have for getting their groceries. The CDA struggles to recruit volunteers in an impoverished population and to organize labor for important events such as food distribution.

Over its 30-year history, the CDA has used various strategies to mobilize PWDs. Although it advocates on behalf of these individuals, the CDA also empowers them to advocate for themselves. The organization's primary focus is advocacy; however, it has expanded its services to incorporate a range of nonadvocacy activities, including rural outreach, job training, an income generation project, and food distribution. Although the CDA does not have the resources to provide social services, the overwhelming economic needs among PWDs drive the organization's leadership to undertake such projects. These actions are controversial because some believe the CDA should not become "mired in social welfare." While the CDA discontinued some of these social services due to lack funding, some members strongly believe that the organization should restart them. With high unemployment among its members, the CDA offers as many services as possible, including food distribution, with the hope of changing the economic conditions of PWDs.

Day-to-day challenges make it difficult for NGOs to focus on building their capacity for sustainable services and neglect vital steps that place themselves at risk of failing in their goal of sustainability. Formidable threats to the organizational success can come from any of the four sustainability imperatives, or any combination of them. Funding is the most obvious imperative but many organizations also fail from poor strategic planning, such as expanding too

rapidly or through mission creep. Programming can decline in quality, particularly if the leadership or membership loses enthusiasm for the mission. The organizational sustainability framework is a promising paradigm for future applied anthropology and action research in social purpose organizations.

Process Perspective: Collins' Good To Great

As suggested earlier, Collins' (2005) framework draws attention to the differences between sustainability problems encountered by businesses and by NGOs and other social sector organizations. Drawing on data from both sectors, Collins proposes a framework of four stages that begins with (i) disciplined people, including leaders and staff; (ii) disciplined thought, which includes a "hedgehog," or tightly focused mission; (iii) disciplined action of creating a focused culture and momentum; and (iv) building the brand and further progress (Collins 2005: 8). Caulkins finds this perspective useful for guiding reviews of anthropology departments in small, nonprofit, private, undergraduate liberal arts colleges. The mission of such undergraduate colleges is usually very different than missions of private and public universities as well as for-profit universities. The case study used in the discussion of the Good to Great framework is a composite of anthropology departments in these colleges, rather than a particular department. Since departments prepare extensive documentation for these periodic reviews, which typically employ one or more outside consultants, the strategic direction(s) of each department is usually very explicit. As is required for a process perspective, the department under review has given very deep thought to what it has tried to accomplish, how it has coped with difficulties, and what challenges remain. Collins notes that the metrics for inputs and outputs for social sector organizations must be distinguished. Within the business world, some measure of profitability of the company, such as return on investment, is a useful measure of success. In the social sector, a type of "social return on investment" may be an important way to think about output metrics (Bornstein and Davis 2010: 64). Within the social sector, money is only an input; other metrics must be used for outputs (Collins 2005: 4–5).

Conclusion

The post-2008 economy appears to have undermined many of the traditional strategies of NGOs and the social sector. The usual sources of grants and donations have become more uncertain. The challenge of the sustainability revolution faces organizations with the need to focus on stewardship, the limits of growth, globalism and interdependence, new ways of acquiring resources, social justice, and a long-term

perspective. In particular, our two case studies suggest the importance of strategic planning and capacity building. Developing alternative revenue streams as part of the hedgehog may be particularly crucial for sustainability. Recognizing the possible synergies of interdependence with other organizations can be an important part of strategic planning. If each organization focuses on what it can do best, there may be opportunities for linking with organizations that have expertise in particular functions of NGOs, such as bookkeeping and governmental regulation. By creating synergistic alliances among organizations, the operations of the entire alliance can become more cost-effective. Similarly, programming and personnel functions may become more sustainable through such alliances. An applied anthropology of social sector organizations may help to accelerate the sustainability revolution and make organizations more focused on what they can do best and how they can work collaboratively with other organizations, promoting the general health of the social sector, as well as the success of individual organizations.

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