

The Mountain Fund Plan

Local NGO's are underrepresented on Global Giving. Take a look for yourself at the projects listed on Global Giving for Nepal and you'll discover a majority of them are from organizations based in the west.

Local NGO's need coaching and training in order to take advantage of the power of Global Giving. The first level training is basic corporate structure and governance such as the formulation of a clear mission and vision and strategic plan. The next level of training is understanding our culture and our world view. Few locally based NGO's who are doing the real footwork in the trenches of rural Nepal, where 85% of the population is, have any contact with westerners. They simply don't understand us, what excites and motivates us.

As many community based NGO's have no command of English, or marginal at best, they must rely on intermediary NGO's who are larger, based not in the villages but in the capital city of Kathmandu. To a disturbing degree it's the intermediary NGO's who are driving what the community needs, and not the community itself. By way of example, we've noticed a dramatic increase in the number of activities being funded that relate to global warming. Global warming is a current hot topic and funds are available for such projects so the funding, not the needs take precedence.

For example, 85% of Nepal is rural, subsistence farming. Most of the farmers are quite poor, living on less than a dollar a day and are they are functionally illiterate. Intermediary NGO's are obtaining funding, and then engaging community based NGO's to go out and deliver awareness trainings to these farmers. With no formal education the farmers have no context whatsoever to hold the idea of a warming planet, nor do they contribute to this problem, and they are unable to change anything they are doing as it would require taking risks that they are financially unable to take.

These rural farmers do have needs and they can tell you what they are. They need better irrigation systems, seed management, better techniques and tools to farm with a better understanding of the impacts of overuse of fertilizers (a growing problem in Nepal) and genetically modified seeds, another growing issue in Nepal. These are not what they are getting. The community based NGO is fully aware it is what they need and want, but the missions are being driven by organizations far removed from the constituents.

Global Giving is the perfect platform for the local NGO to being to gain control of the local agenda. It's not hard to use, English is a barrier, granted, but it's a straightforward platform that can provide a voice to the community NGO. That's what it was designed to do and does well. With some coaching, training and assistance community organizations can begin to tap the power of Global Giving and bring true, community driven issues to the donor market. That's our goal.

We propose to organize training seminars with the community based NGO's on mission, vision, strategic planning and how to propose a project that will be understood in the western context. Many of the NGO's we've worked with have no idea what motivates

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the donors, how to communicate a clear set of goals and objectives to them and present an opportunity to fund something real and community based. As they've depended for years on the Kathmandu NGO's to set the agenda for them, they are sorely lacking in what we would consider these basic skills. We will put trainers on the ground and hire some English speaking Nepali staff who will become future trainers to overcome these barriers that keep community projects from connecting with financial support.

This is a pilot project, it is in it's infancy and we can't tell you that we know exactly what the outcomes are going to be. If you are going to support us in this effort you need to be informed about that. It's a project with merit, it's a project that could significantly shift the balance of power to the local level and that's our "big picture" goal for it. We are clarifying what works each and every time we engage with a community based NGO and learning a lot as we go. We envision this initiative will probably go through an evolutionary process as we take the lessons learned, fine tune the process and go back to the field.

Thanks for your support.

Scott MacLennan
The Mountain Fund.