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Grassroots Fundraising

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Staff Discord**

**When Money
Isn't the Problem**

**Fundraising
in October**

**Report from
the Road**

**Getting Off
Direct Mail Lists**

Journal

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Dealing With Discord

by Kim Klein

Here are three real-life scenarios:

One: Margaret is hired as development director by a small research organization with two other full-time staff. At first all goes well. She is articulate and enthusiastic. Soon, however, she and the director develop an intense dislike for each other. Margaret feels that the director micro-manages and treats her like a secretary, piling work on her at will, and the director feels Margaret always has to have her own way. Margaret feels the director is too aggressive, and the director feels that Margaret thinks she is smarter than everyone else on staff. Before long, tension is the ruling atmosphere of the office. Margaret begins to let her work slide. She has a hard time being enthusiastic and board members and major donors begin to complain about her attitude. For her part, the director confesses to a close friend that she wishes Margaret would quit and wants to figure out a way to get rid of her.

Two: An advocacy organization with a full-time executive director and a part-time office manager decides to create a development director position. To fill it, they hire a bright young person named Sam who has no experience but boundless energy and enthusiasm. This is Sam's first job, and the board feels that the director can show him the ropes and train him; they keep their expectations of him fairly low for the first six months. Sam reads voraciously, attends workshops, and quickly develops his own ideas of what should be done. The direc-

tor feels threatened. Her past fundraising efforts did not go well (which was the impetus for creating this job) and she feels that Sam is trying to show her up and humiliate her. Later, she decides Sam is trying to take over her position. Sam raises money and exceeds the board's expectations of him, but he begins to talk with anyone who will listen, including foundation staff and individual donors, about how difficult it is to work with the director. The director responds by being more and more defensive and critical of Sam's work.

Three: A service organization runs for five years quite successfully with two co-directors, Gail and Myrna, and three other staff. Gail is in charge of fundraising and public relations. Myrna supervises the delivery of the service, coordinates volunteers and does counselling with clients. Gail begins to feel that she is performing the functions of an executive director and that Myrna is really in charge of program and ought to be called the program director. She is also tired of funders asking, "Who is the executive director?" She discusses this briefly with Myrna who agrees that it might be easier for Gail if she were called the executive director. Gail talks with the chair of the board, who calls together their personnel committee. They agree with Gail (and, they think, with Myrna) to change the titles, including giving Gail supervisory authority over Myrna. Salaries remain the same and work division remains the same. The chair of the personnel committee calls Myrna to tell her of this

change. Myrna is furious that she was not included in the discussion and feels that she has been demoted. The volunteers take her side and the office degenerates into constant bickering and resentment. Little work gets done.

In each of these three organizations, fundraising is very quickly affected. In Margaret's case, donors become aware of her flagged enthusiasm and won't work with her. In Sam's case, as more and more people learn about the conflict between Sam and the director they begin to take sides. Rumors start that the organization is in a crisis. In Myrna's organization, as the volunteers she supervises become angry about her situation, the clients get poorer service. The board spends many hours discussing what happened rather than proceeding with fundraising or program matters.

Heading Them off at the Pass

You will probably recognize variations of these situations in your own organization. This kind of staff discord is one of the most difficult problems to solve because no one is directly at fault and, as the situation worsens, it becomes less and less clear what to do. Later in the article, I will tell you how these situations were resolved, but for now I would like to offer a set of guidelines to help prevent situations like these from occurring.

1) Every organization's personnel policies should include *terms of probation* for each new staffperson. Most organizations have a two-tiered probation period, beginning with an initial 30-day period, and followed by one for three months. During the 30-day interval, the new employee can leave or be asked to leave without cause. This provision, if taken seriously, allows personality conflicts to be spotted early and dealt with. The conflict between Margaret and her director began in the first two weeks of Margaret's employment and was well established by the third week. At day 29, Margaret, the director and perhaps a member of the board personnel committee should have had a frank conversation about whether they could work together, and if so, how. If they felt that they couldn't, and the director did not have a history of personality conflicts, then Margaret might have been asked to leave, or decided to leave on her own. Few people (I have never met one) go through their whole life without finding someone they dislike intensely for no real reason. When the dislike is mutual, these individuals usually try to avoid each other. It is asking more than is fair to supervise someone whom you dislike, and who dislikes you. In an organization with many staff, it might not affect much of the organization, but with fewer than ten staffpeople, most everyone will be drawn in, and all their work will be affected. Your funders do not pay you not to get along, and it is an abuse of public money to spend a lot of time in interpersonal conflict. The 30-day clause can protect an organization if

it is seen as a way to prevent problems that are not specific to the work.

2) *Standards of professionalism* should be part of personnel policies and part of personnel and board training. Staff should be instructed early on that problems in the organization should not be discussed outside of it, except with close family and friends, and especially not with donors, volunteers, or clients. Most people are fascinated by gossip and conflict—if it is not their own. In all three scenarios, a lot of people were brought into the particular conflict by various players in it. Sam was probably the worst and his continuous complaining about the director did the most damage. An organization needs to have a specific process for employees to air their confusions or complaints. Since this is Sam's first job, he may not know the damage that can result from indiscriminate complaining. Part of his training needs to be in the area of professionalism. All new employees need to have a few people with whom they can "process" what's happening on their job. These people should, ideally, include the director, but since the director may be part of a new employee's problems, they need to have a few other people. Two or three members of the board can fill this function. When these rules are clear, and a staffperson disregards them, this is grounds for renewed probation if the probation periods have ended. If the problem does not stop, it is grounds for dismissal.

3) People need to be *sensitive to differences* in race, class, gender and age and how these differences may affect people's behavior. Margaret's feeling that her director was "too aggressive" (for example, she talks loudly on the phone, and doesn't hesitate to ask personal questions) and the director's feeling that Margaret thought she was smarter than everyone else (because she referred a few times to people she had met at her Ivy League college) are class- and culture-based perceptions. Sam's feelings and perceptions were often trivialized because of his youth. Board members would say about him, "Well, he is just a kid," instead of addressing his wide-ranging complaining for what it was. Even his clothing was the subject of discussion. "Wow—is that what kids are wearing now?" was a frequent question from the director. In these three scenarios race and sex did not play a role, but often they do. Diversifying staff should be a priority of every organization, and part of the priority must be to understand and anticipate the challenges that will naturally arise.

4) Problems need to be addressed *as soon as they arise*. "Let sleeping dogs lie," "Some things are best left unsaid," "It will work itself out," and related expressions are mottoes from the culture of denial. Few interpersonal problems "work themselves out"; in fact, most just get worse. As soon as it was clear that Myrna was upset by the decision of the board, the decision needed to be suspended, and Myrna, Gail and the personnel commit-

tee needed to talk. The beginning of this problem was a misunderstanding in which Gail felt she had Myrna's agreement. As it turned out, Myrna hadn't really thought through the implications of Gail's suggestion and had agreed in order to be polite. Since Myrna's agreement wasn't really wholehearted, one of the premises on which the decision was made was false, and the discussion needed to be reopened. It would have been easy to prevent the problem by having a member of the personnel committee call Myrna to ask her what she thought, or ideally by including her in the discussion. There were several errors of judgment made here, but they can all be rectified. In Margaret's case, she and the director needed to create a workplan with time-lines and tasks spelled out. This forces the director to be less spontaneous in assigning work, which was the root of Margaret's feeling like a secretary, and allows Margaret to document instances of micro-management.

Real Life Resolutions

Now, let's look at how these groups actually did resolve these problems. For one year, Margaret and her director spent a good deal of their time honing their hatred of each other. Some board members tried to mediate, the other staff would call for a truce, and for a few weeks there would be peace, but it would inevitably break down. The director took on more and more of Margaret's work and gave her little responsibility. Margaret was demoralized and began to become depressed. She did just enough work to get by, but read the paper and ate candy bars much of the day. At the end of the year, the director left for a better-paying job. A new director was hired with whom Margaret gets along well. Her work is improving, as is the atmosphere at the organization.

Both Margaret and the previous director have lost some of their self confidence and self esteem because of their long period of difficulty together. One hopes that in new work situations they can regain their lost momentum. But more important, the board and staff must now discuss how to prevent a similar situation from arising again.

The board of Sam's organization had never told the director that they thought she was not a good fundraiser. Acting on the principle of "Why hurt her feelings?" they had gone along and even helped create the pretense that fundraising was unsuccessful because the director was overburdened with other responsibilities. The board finally had a candid conversation with the director, and told her she had to stop being so critical of Sam. He was, in fact, doing an excellent job and he was a nice complement to her skills. While she was hurt by this, she knew it was true. The board also told Sam he had to limit his complaints about the organization and two board mem-

bers (one of whom is close to his age) now check in with him weekly. While he and the director may never be close friends, they do work together well and have come to respect each other.

Gail and Myrna had the advantage of having been friends and having worked together relatively successfully for some time prior to the events that upset them. They involved a mediator who helped them understand their differences in style. Myrna had no idea that Gail had begun to harbor resentments about their work divisions. For her part, Gail felt she had to have a solution for every problem she faced and is learning that she can bring things up for discussion without having any solution in mind. Myrna has agreed to try to say, "I'll think about it" rather than "yes" when she doesn't mean "yes." They have gone back to being co-directors for the time being.

All three organizations suffered temporary losses in fundraising from the strife in their groups. Margaret was disliked by some of the organization's largest individual donors, but she is mending those fences. As she did less and less work, fewer new donors were attracted and several grant deadlines were missed, so income dropped during that fiscal year.

Sam's organization suffered the most. They already had a poor fundraising program before he started and funders and donors found it easy to believe the organization was in crisis. Several suspended their giving. Those funders who felt the organization was in a crisis have been visited and informed about the work of the organization, and income is picking up because Sam has now implemented an excellent fundraising program.

Insure Yourself

Interpersonal conflict is a fact of life. People in non-profits, particularly those working for social change, often feel that they should be able to get along with everyone who is committed to their cause. This is a silly and dangerous expectation.

Like insurance policies, personnel policies don't exist for times when everything is harmonious and everyone is content, but for times of conflict or difficulties. When problems arise that could not have been foreseen, an organization must face them immediately. Personality problems are closer to being solved when they are acknowledged.

There should be an organizational commitment to creating a pleasant work environment where each person feels appreciated and part of the work. But more than that, in a nonprofit, it is critical to keep in mind that outsiders are paying you to do your work. They trust you to do it well and to spend their money wisely. It is a betrayal of the trust of your donors, of your clients, and of your mission not to address staff problems and to let staff discord hamper the ability to get the work done. ■

Fundraising in October

by Kim Klein

October is my favorite month to raise money. It comes ahead of the Thanksgiving/Hanukah/Christmas/Kwanzaa holiday madness when charities working with the hungry and homeless raise much of the money they will need for the rest of the year. (These big family and eating holidays are times when people are most likely to give to hunger and homelessness.) It is just after the back-to-school, post-vacation, I-can't-believe-summer-is-over blues. For those in electoral politics there is still hope that a good person might win, and then might be able to make some changes. And in most parts of the country, the weather is still pleasant and people aren't having to wonder how they will afford their heating bills (cold places) or having to get ready for an onslaught of tourists (warm places) or gear up for mildew and fungus (rainy places).

Many organizations take advantage of the fundraising opportunities of October. However, in the past several years, I have watched groups pass up this wonderful month, like they pass up many other months, with some flawed reasoning about how this month is not so good for fundraising.

Reasons I have encountered for not raising money in October from the past six years include (but are certainly no limited to): an election year siphoning off money (1988, 1990, 1992); the stock market crash (1987), and for the following two years, fear of another crash; gearing up for the Gulf War (1991); the United Way scandal (1992); the earthquake in San Francisco (1989); Hurricane Andrew (1991); the Midwest flood (1993), and so on. Obviously all of these things are serious and some are heartbreaking. But none of them constitute a reason not to ask for money.

Reasons People Give

In 1991, a study commissioned by the Independent Sector found that 15% of a random sample of households gave money to charity for the first time

that year. Their motivations were as follows: Being asked personally by someone they knew well: 76%. Being asked by clergy to give: 58%. Reading or hearing a news story: 48%. As you can see, some people checked more than one reason, and for many people a person they knew well was also their clergy.

The study went on to say that asking for contributions is the best and simplest way to get results. Of the 76% of the sample that were asked to give in 1991, 85% did so. Among the 26% who were not asked to give, only 36% did so. People who are most likely to give include people who attend some kind of house of worship, those who want to make a significant change in society, those who earlier had belonged to a youth group, and those who have seen someone they admire helping others.

A shift is beginning to show in which organizations receive contributions, which is good news for social change organizations. The study said, "There has been some shift toward higher proportions of contributions to environment, human services, youth development, community development, human rights, civil rights and health, and some declines in the proportion of contributions going to such causes as arts, education, religion and international causes."

Sometimes we confuse reasons for not asking with reasons for not giving. Someone may say no to your request because she or he is giving all their money to an election candidate or issue or to the Red Cross for relief efforts. That is their business. Your job is to make it clear that your organization is serving an important function in the community and can only continue to do so with the help of donors, and you would like to include this person in the group of people that give money.

By now, you have probably realized that this is not an article about fundraising in October, as much as it is about asking for money right now, which happens to be October, and a good time to get started. So, what are you waiting for? ■



When Money Isn't the Problem

by Kim Klein

Most non-profit organizations need more money than they have. To increase their funds, they either seek new strategies for raising money, or they strive to upgrade their existing strategies. However, a significant number of non-profit organizations that think they need more money actually have any number of other problems that must be solved before their fundraising efforts can improve. In fact, these organizations sometimes have an effective fundraising program in place, but their other problems obscure its success.

Because most organizational problems affect money coming in and going out, people often blame their fundraising efforts for their shortage of money. But just as a fever can be a symptom of any number of illnesses, so lack of money may point to a deeper distress. Rarely is lack of fundraising effort the main problem in a faltering organization, and never is it the only problem.

In this article, we will use several short case studies to explore four of the most common organizational problems. In each case, the problem appeared to be a lack

Rarely is lack of fundraising effort the main problem.

of money and the solution appeared to be more or different fundraising. In fact, when the problem was properly identified, the solution was unrelated to fundraising. Here we present the solution to each problem chosen by the group in question. Other solutions were also possible, but you will see that the creativity applied in these instances generally resulted in positive solutions for all concerned.

Problem Area One: Organization sets goals that are unrealistic

Example A: A sexual assault prevention project faced a \$14,000 shortfall in their community-based fund-

raising efforts. They described the reason for this deficit as always falling short of their fundraising goals. Their paid fundraising coordinator was disheartened, feeling that no amount of work made any difference. Their fundraising plans and past performance looked like this:

Source	1989 Actual Income	1990 Actual Income	1991 Goal	1991 Actual Income
Raffle	\$ 2,500	\$ 3,000	\$10,000	\$ 6,000
Membership	1,500	2,000	10,000	6,000 (so far)
Major Gifts	5,000	8,000	15,000	11,000 (so far)
Volunteer Canvass	3,000	3,500	8,000	
TOTAL	\$12,000	\$16,500	\$43,000	\$23,000

Real Problem:

The real problem is easy to see. Having showed steady financial growth for two years, the group decided to hire a fundraising staff person to increase their income even more significantly so that they could expand their program. They then set goals that required raising two or three times more than they ever had. The effect of the staff person was clear: Income in every category had gone up, and total income to date was nearly double that of the previous year. However, the goals that had been set were unrealistic. Once they realized that just needing the money for a more ambitious program was no reason to think they could raise it, they were able to adjust their goals.

Solution:

The group revised their goals downward and postponed the beginning of the new program until the following year. Far from feeling discouraged about their fundraising, they realized that their decision to hire a fundraiser was a good one, and that their efforts really were paying off.

Example B: A pro-choice group planned and organized an event to protest threats to a woman's right to choose. A demonstration would be followed by a small concert featuring a local bluegrass band. Admission to the concert was \$5. They hoped to attract 1,000 people, making their projected gross income \$5,000 and their net income about \$3,000. They planned to raise even more money by selling drinks and food at the concert. Because they were so caught up in the preparations for the demonstration, they decided not to advertise the concert widely, but to try to attract most of the demonstrators to the concert. The demonstration went well. About 2,000 people came, the press gave it good coverage, and there were no problems with police or bystanders. The concert, however, did not go as well. Though

the concert was mentioned several times during the day and fliers about it were distributed, only 500 people came. With sale of drinks and food, the concert netted about \$750, less than one-third of the hoped-for total. The problem was blamed on poor publicity.

Real Problem:

The real problem here is again an unrealistic goal. This organization, with only one part-time staff person, set itself up for failure by planning a major demonstration and a major fundraising event for the same day. They saw the demonstration and the concert as related events that would naturally flow into each other. In fact, this was not the case. Having spent their afternoon at a demonstration that ended at 5 p.m., most people were not going to turn around and go to a concert that began at 8 p.m.

Solution:

The solution here is for the group to identify what they want from their special events. When money is a primary goal, they must give the money-making event enough time for proper advertising and coordination.

When a good time for the demonstrators, plus publicity for the group is the primary goal, then the concert needs to be at the end of the demonstration. The demonstrators could march down Main Street, and rally at the City Park, then be entertained by the blue grass band, and then go home. Poor publicity for the concert was only the symptom of the problem.

Problem Area Two: Organization maintains incompetent or unqualified staff

Example A: An environmental organization needs an accountant. With money coming in from many sources, including foundation funding for several projects, they need someone who can keep careful track of both project funds and operating costs. The brother of a Board member needs a job and a change of pace. A car mechanic by training, he has recently been the manager of a gas station. No one on the hiring committee has accounting skills and, needing an accountant quickly, they decide not to do a full search, but to offer the Board member's brother the job. Reasoning that he can add and subtract and has small business experience, they foresee no problems.

During the annual audit, the organization learns that foundation money given for a special project has been used to pay operating costs. The cash flow generated by this grant has disguised the lack of money coming in from other sources. The project to be completed with this grant is now jeopardized.

The Board decides that they have slacked off in their fundraising efforts and resolves to make up this deficit.

Real Problem:

While the Board's decision to increase fundraising is certainly commendable, they will find themselves in this situation or worse until they deal with the fact that they have hired an unqualified person as their accountant. They either ignore or may not realize the serious legal problems that can arise from "commingling" funds. They risk alienating the foundation that funded the project and destroying their reputation by not finishing their work on time, or by news of this mistake leaking out.

Solution:

The accountant is happy in the job and everyone likes him. They choose to pay his way to attend night classes in accounting and to hire a consultant to set up the books and supervise him for a few months. Although these were extra expenditures for the group, they felt it was worthwhile to retain a basically good employee.

Example B: The Director of a group advocating for senior citizens in a small city has worked there for ten years. With three other people, she is one of the founders of the group. The organization is highly respected, and she is a dynamic and capable leader. Last year she developed a debilitating kidney disease that leaves her exhausted much of the time and has affected her short-term memory. This disease is progressive; eventually she will lose her kidney function and require dialysis. She has cut back from her more-than-full-time schedule to three-quarter time, but even so can usually only work three or four hours a day. Her memory loss has caused her to miss important meetings and some appointments with donors. She insists that she is fine, just tired, and that her missed meetings are the result of having too much on her mind. No one wants to talk honestly with her about her illness, so the other two staff members are trying to do the Director's job as well as their own. Everyone has a "wait and see" attitude. One Board member sums it up, "I suppose one of these days something serious is going to happen, but we will cross that bridge when we come to it." Meanwhile, fundraising efforts are beginning to fall off, as the Director's lack of energy makes it impossible for her to keep up with her real work.

Real Problem:

Here is a classic problem that most often occurs with alcoholism—everyone, including the ill person, participates in denying the illness, hoping against hope that somehow it will all work out. This is a misplaced sense of kindness. There is, in fact, nothing kind about standing by and watching the organization this woman has been instrumental in building slowly fall apart because she can't continue to do her work. Further, Board members fail in their responsibility to act in the best interests of the organization by not dealing with the situation.

Solution:

Two of her closest friends and co-founders of the

group spent an afternoon with the Director and a therapist specializing in the needs of people with debilitating or terminal illnesses. The Director was able to admit that she feared she was indispensable, and also that she was having difficulty adjusting to her disease. In addition, she explained that she needs her salary to pay the increasing cost related to her illness, such as special food and a housecleaner.

A solution to all these problems was fairly simple. The Director qualifies for disability insurance and can cut back to half time without any loss of income. Another staff person will be promoted to half-time Director. The current Director will begin bringing other people to her meetings with funders and donors. It is imperative that this organization have more people doing fundraising so that the task does not fall solely on the Director. Chances are with this decrease in both work and worry, the Director will be able to stay with the organization as long as she wants.

In these two examples, and dozens of others, people are given or retained in jobs for reasons that have nothing to do with the job and that ignore the health of the organization. "He's in therapy," "Her relationship just broke up," "He's a single father," "Her mother has cancer" are not job qualifications. Obviously, social change groups want to be more humane than corporations or businesses seem to be. But giving people too much latitude is neither good for the organization nor kind to the person. These crises usually show up in lack of money. More money will only buy time and extend the crisis for more months.

Problem Area Three: Poor recordkeeping

Example A: A women's health organization has a mailing list of 1,000 names. To be on the mailing list, one pays organizational dues of \$20 per year. Every September, the volunteer fundraising committee sends out renewal letters to the entire list, then committee members take turns coming in to the office for the next twelve weeks to thank the donors and update the mailing list. No records are kept of the date or amount of the gift. Over the past three years, income from the membership list has dropped while the cost of maintaining the list has risen. The committee's solution is to recruit more paying members, and they plan to launch a large direct mail campaign.

Real Problem:

The volunteers who send the mailing and maintain the list have no agreed-upon system. Some volunteers sending thank you notes add everyone to the list without checking to see if they are already on it, creating duplicate listings. Only one volunteer checks the accuracy of

the addresses on the list. In two years, no name has been removed from the list because no one looks for lapsed members. The renewal sent in September goes to everyone, even if they just joined in August or July. Angry letters from donors are filed away in an envelope marked "To be answered."

Solution:

A consultant was hired to draw up a series of procedures for each volunteer to follow. Without experience in managing a mailing list, most had never realized their mistakes. The list is small enough that a computer is not needed at this point, and the group chooses not to go that route. Instead a second list is started noting the name and address of the donor and the date and size of their gift. Renewals are now sent out quarterly, which decreases the work in September and makes for a much higher renewal rate. All lapsed donors can now be recontacted and eventually removed from the list. In a list of 1,000 people, in fact only 390 were paid up; 200 were duplicate names; and more than 150 were wrong addresses. With a simple five-step procedure, any person wishing to volunteer can immediately be plugged into mailing list tasks. The savings in time means that the fundraising committee can now launch its direct mail campaign without compounding their problems.

Example B: A legal aid organization publishes three booklets on various aspects of legal rights. The books are

priced to realize a slight profit, and an excellent marketing strategy is implemented. The booklets sell much better than expected. In fact, the secretary cannot keep up with the orders. There is no system for keeping track of orders needing to be filled or those that have been filled. As she fills an order, the secretary simply throws away the order form. Checks are often not cashed for three or four months, and the wait for booklets becomes four weeks, then six weeks, and finally three months, resulting in a number of angry letters. The Director decides the sales are not worth the effort and suspends the marketing plan. "It will be easier to get the money from a foundation and give the books away for free," he says.

Real Problem:

Here the Director decides to abandon a successful fundraising strategy and community service because he doesn't know how to put proper recordkeeping procedures into place.

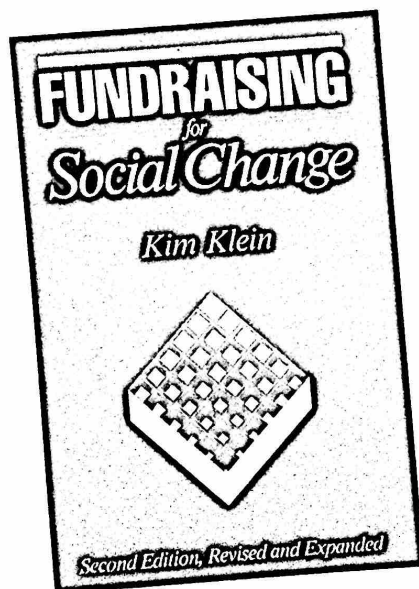
Solution:

A Board member who runs a retail store intervenes. She helps the secretary set up a system of inventory control, recording orders and coding checks for deposit. She suggests having mailing labels printed with the organization's return address, which saves the secretary hours of typing the return address on blank labels and gives a better look to the organization. A work-study student is employed three hours a week to fill orders.

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Fundraising for Social Change

BY KIM KLEIN



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Problem Area Four: Intolerable working conditions

Almost all low-budget organizations make do with less than adequate working space—conditions are often too crowded, too noisy, too dirty, too cold in the winter, too warm in the summer. But some make do with conditions that rival the garment industry of the 19th century or the living conditions of many migrant workers. Ironically, they will work in conditions they would protest vociferously if they found them among workers in other industries.

Example A: A tenants' rights organization with two staff people operated from a cabin-like shed in back of a block of stores. The cabin measured 9' x 12', was insulated and had no running water. (They used the bathroom of a nearby gas station.) Heat was provided by a woodstove in the center of the floor. Light came from one bare bulb and electricity was provided by a neighbor through a series of extension cords. In the winter, a staff person came in early, built a fire and went home for an hour while the office warmed up. The workers and the Board felt strongly that the organization should be located in the neighborhood it served and should not be fancier than the living conditions of many of the tenants. They proudly brought donors to the office to show that no extra money was spent on frills, and felt their limited success in raising money was due to the bias of the donors toward what they were trying to do.

Real Problem:

Here the problem is one of assumptions: The first assumption is that anything but near-squalor would call the organization's sincerity into question. The second is that donors are biased against them so their chances of raising big money are slim. A compounding problem is time lost in preparing the fire and in staff absenteeism for almost constant colds and flu through the winter. The organization was finally forced to face the problem when the fire department declared the electrical system inadequate and ordered the landlord to upgrade it, which he refused to do. This forced the organization to move.

Solution:

The organization moved to a small office in a neighborhood church. They pay little rent, as the pastor of the church is sympathetic to their goals. They have access to a photocopy machine and a conference room for meetings. They are warm in the winter and cool in the summer. At the same time, they have maintained their goal of staying in the neighborhood and not living better than the tenants they serve. They agreed to give up their assumption about the bias of prospective donors and to try that avenue again. It was pointed out to them that while many wealthy people are not sympathetic to their goals, those who agreed to visit them and wanted to learn more about their work were probably not of that crowd. Their

income from this source has significantly risen in the year they have been in the church. Those most supportive of the move: the tenants who are the leaders in the organization.

Example B: A child care center operated its program in a large barn. In the back of the barn a former horse stall served as the program's office. The barn had been converted into a wonderful, if slightly noisy, classroom. The horse stall, however, did not convert so easily into an office. The noise from the classroom was deafening for the administrator, so she normally came in late and worked well into the evening, after the children had gone home. Her office was overcrowded, and because it did not lock, she often found that children had been playing in it. Although she asked several times for an office away from the facility, the Board felt it was an unnecessary use of money and that all extra funds should go to the children. As time went on, funding deadlines were missed, letters did not go out on time, and a major block of funds from the state was almost lost because of failure to comply with reporting deadlines. The administrator complained of overwork and having no time to do fundraising. The Board proposed hiring someone part time to help her. This person would share her stall.

Real Problem:

This administrator may be overworked, but there is no way to know how much is due to her working conditions. She works mostly in the evening, which she resents because it has adversely affected her personal life. Because she often cannot be reached during normal business hours, she has frustrated and annoyed funders, government officials and donors. The problem finally came to a crisis when she came in one day around 4 p.m. to find the Annual Report, typed and ready for proofreading, covered with a rapidly melting chocolate bar.

Solution:

The Board agreed to take the money they were prepared to use for an assistant to rent an office space away from the facility. They and the administrator will now be able to see if she truly has too much work. This decision resulted from the Board realizing that the good of the children would best be served by making it possible for the administrator to do her job.

Summary

Groups often find it liberating to learn that their problem is not money-related and can be solved through means other than simply raising more funds. It is sobering to realize that when the problem is not related to money, no amount of money will solve it. All organizational problems must be examined from a variety of angles, both to analyze the problem accurately and to be sure that all solutions are being considered so the best one can be chosen. ■



KIM KLEIN: REPORT FROM THE ROAD

The title of this article is actually misleading, since my partner and I are now back in Brooklyn, after an extraordinary year abroad. Although you will read this in October, I am writing it in July. New York is suffering its worst heat wave in dozens of years, and I am sitting in a non-air-conditioned space, dripping with sweat as the mercury tops 100 degrees for the fourth day in a row. I am conscious that the grassroots activists in Asia that we met are sitting in very similar conditions and not thinking anything about it, since heat, humidity and no air conditioning are standard working conditions there.

From India (the subject of my last Report from the Road), we went to Israel, then ended our trip with two months in a gorgeous beach town in Spain. Israel was the most difficult country we visited in a number of ways. First, it felt like the most dangerous country we had been in. The military is a constant presence, with young men and women armed with machine guns everywhere you go. The soldiers never seem to be without their guns, so that even sitting in a coffee shop, one had to be careful not to trip over guns lying on the floor next to off-duty soldiers enjoying their lunch.

Often when a paper published an incident between Palestinians and Israelis, an official of the Israeli government would strongly suggest that all Israelis get guns. Consequently, not only do soldiers have guns, but so do many citizens. We saw a young father on a biking outing with his 8-year-old son. He carried a machine gun in his bicycle basket. We saw a woman in a grocery store with groceries in one hand, holding a child with the other, with a machine gun strapped on her back. We saw dozens of people going about their workaday life carrying large guns. In short, thousands of frightened citizens walk around with loaded guns, encouraged by their government to use them if they feel in danger. Since danger is in the air (created in large part by the presence of so many guns), I would not have been surprised to be caught in some gun battle. Fortunately, that did not happen.

Second, the media seemed more distorted and inac-

curate than in other countries, possibly because we had a better sense of what we should have been reading than we could have in countries where we were less familiar with the historical and current political situation. Everything that is published has to be cleared by the Israeli government's censorship office. Writing by Palestinians tends to be reviewed particularly closely. Newspapers, on the other hand, seemed to print only the right-wing Israeli view of every situation. When a Palestinian killed an Israeli (as happened several times during the five weeks we were there), there was a lot of coverage. To find out how many Palestinians had been killed by Israelis (which also happens regularly) one had to read the Palestinian paper or notice a small article buried deep inside the Israeli paper. As might be expected, the Palestinian paper carries no news of Palestinians killing Israelis. Newspapers on each side present a view of an innocent population victimized by the other, and it is hard to sort out the truth.

Of course, even hundreds of years before there was the country of Israel the region was filled with such strife and violence that the land seems soaked in blood. It is hard to maintain hope that true peace could ever happen there.

We talked at length with a few people about the structure of non-governmental organizations in Israel (NGOs, as nonprofits are known worldwide). Like many socialist governments, the Israeli government has historically not favored the existence of private nonprofits, feeling that the role of the government is to take care of social problems, to provide education, health care, housing, and so on. So there are no tax incentives for giving money to nonprofits, and further, only nonprofits pay a "head" tax on each employee. This tax goes into the government coffers, but means that running a nonprofit is somewhat more expensive than running a for-profit business. The other reason that government has historically discouraged the formation and growth of nonprofits is because it wanted people to give money to the govern-

ment itself. Bequests are a very common form of giving in Israel, and many bequests go to the government, with 70% of them designated to be used for the Israeli Defence Force, as the armed services are called.

However, the Israeli government increasingly recognizes the important role nonprofits are playing in Israel, and its own economic inability to provide all the services that it might wish to provide. In many nonprofits Israelis and Palestinians are working together for human and civil rights and in areas such as domestic violence, early childhood education, and, to a more limited extent, health care. If the occupied territories are liberated and Palestine becomes a free country, nonprofits whose leadership has included Palestinians and Israelis, and those who work on behalf of Palestinian rights, will be instrumental in helping this transition be as smooth and non-violent as possible, and in working out the cooperative arrangements that will be necessary between two tiny countries who need each other economically.

One Last Group

We left Israel in April for Spain, where we headed for a small beach town called Sitges just south of Barcelona, where we were to meet friends of friends. We wanted time to cool out and do nothing before returning to work and real life in the United States. However, we couldn't resist seeking out just one organization, in this case the producers of a lesbian newsletter in Barcelona. Barcelona has an active women's movement as well as a large gay and lesbian community. It also has a large and excellent women's bookstore, a couple of women's bars, and this organization. The organization takes up three rooms of a large apartment; one of the rooms houses an impressive periodical library, with magazines and newsletters from all over the world. The rest of the apartment belongs to two women who take care of the library and are centrally involved in the collective that produces the newsletter. The apartment also has a guest room that is used by women from around the world who come to study or work in Barcelona for short periods of time. The primary focus of this center is on lesbian rights; it seeks to develop a lesbian community in Barcelona that will connect with lesbian communities in the rest of Spain and abroad.

To understand the situation for women in Spain, particularly lesbians, it is helpful to review some recent Spanish history. In 1939 the Fascists were victorious in the Spanish Civil War. From then until 1975, Spain was ruled by the dictator Francisco Franco. Franco was succeeded on his death by his hand-picked heir, Prince (now King) Juan Carlos. Franco had hoped for a continuation of his policies under a monarchy form of government, but Juan Carlos surprised many people by introducing democratic reforms, including elections. Spain is now

governed similarly to England. It has a parliament and a prime minister; King Juan Carlos serves as the head of state with limited but important power that he uses judiciously. Under Franco, homosexuality was illegal and punishable by prison sentence. Women were to be good Catholics, to marry and produce children. Nothing could be published without the approval of the government, and very little was approved. Gatherings of more than three people were illegal, except in church and a few other approved settings.

During and immediately after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Franco's forces killed literally hundreds of thousands of his opponents and sent thousands more fleeing into exile. It took many years for any organizing against him to form and the anti-fascist forces always had to be very careful.

One of the women in this center is 47 years old and was very involved in anti-Franco work. She recalled that the attitudes of the anti-Franco forces toward women and gay people were almost as bad as those of the Fascists. Anti-Franco organizing was led by a broad spectrum of communist groups, who were filled with the spirit of sexual liberation—for heterosexuals. "Basi-

Getting Off Direct Mail Lists

More and more consumers are complaining about the volume of unsolicited mail they receive. This mail may have an adverse impact on their support for your organization. Some donors get so angry they throw away all direct mail whether it is from a group they like or not. Further, the Nonprofit Mailers Association estimates that up to 20% of direct mail is never delivered—a result of the volume of third class mail being processed.

You can help your donors get off mailing lists, reduce their volume of mail and, as a result, perhaps pay more attention to your mail. Tell them about The Direct Marketing Association's free service called "Mail Preference" which will remove a name from 80% of national direct mail advertisers' lists. So far, 1.9 million people have registered. A similar service, the Telephone Preference Service, withholds names from telephone marketing agencies. To date, 480,000 people have registered.

To request these services, write to:

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11 West 42nd St.
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Requests must include name, address and telephone number with area code. Because lists are compiled quarterly, "junk mail" and "junk calls" may continue for three to six months. Local organizations and businesses are not affected by this service. ■

cally," she said, "they were wanting to break completely with the Catholic Church and its rigid morality. However, the sexual revolution meant that at the end of a political meeting, a man would point to a woman and say, 'You come sleep with me tonight.' To refuse was thought not to be in the spirit of comradeship." Gay people were called "ideologically problematic" by the Communists, a step up, perhaps, from how they were regarded by the Fascists, but still forcing gay people to be closeted.

This woman was "purged" from the underground organization she was active in when someone told the leadership of her lesbianism. She went to another organization and said to the leaders, "I am a lesbian. I want to work here. If you want me, say so. If you don't, say so now." They said they did want her, but she would have to promise not to tell anyone else in the group about being gay. After many years of this secrecy, the stress was too much and she fled to Paris for several years.

This women's center raises money from among themselves and they work with a large group of volunteers, so they have very few costs beyond printing and postage. Being so grassroots, they had no knowledge of what, if any, legal structures are in place in Spain for nonprofits, or if gifts are tax deductible. I wondered if

they weren't nervous about getting in trouble with the government for not reporting their income and expenses, as we would have to do in the United States. However, they felt that the government had much bigger fish to fry, and in any event tends to take a hands-off attitude now, compensating for the repression of the Franco years.

A Larger Vision for the World

In thinking back over all the NGOs we visited and the cultural and political differences in each country, I am struck by how much small grassroots organizations have in common. On the one hand are the daily common stresses of not enough money, lack of access to money and knowledge about fundraising, too much to do, second-hand or old equipment, lack of visibility, and so on. On the other hand, there is tremendous camaraderie, dedication to the cause, a larger vision for the world, and the saving grace, a sense of humor. I still believe that our work is making the world a better place, but even when I have my doubts about the ability of the world to make progress, I know absolutely that our work keeps things from being worse than they are, and possibly is the only reason the world still exists at all. ■

NEWS ABOUT THE JOURNAL

by Kim Klein

"How did you keep the *Journal* going while you were away?" many people have asked in the last month since my return from a year-long trip around the world. Let me use the answer to that question as an opportunity to thank the people who took charge of the day-to-day activities of the *Journal* in my absence.

First, Robin Ferguson who served as General Manager, handling all inquiries, back orders, subscriptions, mailing lists, renewals, marketing bills, deposits, and any other details you can think of. She did a magnificent job with only limited time, and truly, the *Journal* would have been down the drain without her. Robin worked closely with long-time Editor-in-Chief, Nancy Adess, who expanded her role as editor to include manuscript solicitor and production coordinator. She made sure the *Journal* came out on time, with readable articles, free of typographical errors (well, almost!) and handled everything related to production, typesetting, printing and editing. She also works on the *Journal* part time, with the rest of her time consumed by her job as editor of The Nature Conservancy of California newsletter. Robin and Nancy coordinated their work across 3,000 miles and three time zones, because Robin works from Brooklyn,

and Nancy from Inverness, in northern California. It was a relief knowing that the two people who were taking primary responsibility for the *Journal* while I was gone were competent, committed and honest! I can't thank these two friends enough.

After living and working in New York City for the past three years I have returned to Berkeley, California and resumed my consulting and training practice full time. With this move, all the functions of the *Journal* are now located in the San Francisco Bay Area. I want to spend a great deal of time marketing the *Journal* and increasing its subscriber base. If you have a mailing list you would be willing to rent to the *Journal*, please write or call. If there are places where you think we should advertise, let me know. By having every aspect of the *Journal* in Berkeley, service to subscribers should be faster. As you can see from the masthead, we have a new phone number in Berkeley (510/704-8714), and by the next issue, we will have a FAX number. (Yes, we are moving into the '90s—and not a moment too soon!)

As always, we welcome your suggestions for articles, as up to half of our articles are in direct response to or inspired by questions readers have sent in. ■

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