

Country	Resources to Share
Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and experience • Training facilities and services of specialists • Project design and implementation • Experience in capacity building with local groups • Volunteer mobilization • Training center facilities and resource personnel • Information dissemination • Documentation and translation services
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical expertise • Information dissemination • Case materials • Networking with national NGOs for sharing the experiences and exchanges of newsletters, reports and knowledge gathered from international fora
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources expertise

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The findings of the survey emphasize the context-specific nature of capacity-building and the reality that each organization functions in a local context. The ability of an organization to function effectively in that context provides clues about its capacity building requirements and challenges.

For example, Bangladesh and India NGOs consider fund-raising to be their number one capacity-building priority while in the case of Sri Lankan NGOs, it is program design and implementation. For Pakistan and Vietnamese NGOs, the top priority is leadership training, while for Cambodia, it is cross-sectoral collaboration.

Interestingly, the top priority of NGOs in the three ASEAN neighbor-countries of Malaysian, Indonesia and Philippines is planning and strategic management.

Despite these differences in priorities, however, Asian NGOs share a common aspiration in capacity building: this aspiration involves their common struggle to renew and redefine their identities and roles in the rapidly changing situations of their respective countries.

2. Ninety-five percent of NGO-respondents are involved in education, making this sector the single most important program, followed by community organizing (77%) and gender awareness (72%).

Surprisingly, however, only 18% of respondents cited the presence of staff skills in training as compared to development management services (41%) and extension and community-based strategies (41%).

Given the above, building of staff skills in training may represent a priority area for capacity building of Asian NGOs

3. More than 70% of respondent-NGOs operate at the national level, a clear indication of the increasing role of NGOs in advocacy and policy formulation.

For this reason, there is an urgent need for Asian NGOs to build their capacity for independent research, analysis of local trends and social reality and advocacy in order to strengthen their positions vis-a-vis government departments, donors, academe and other agencies and influence their policies and programs.

As articulated at the earlier South and East Asian consultations, NGOs need to deepen their understanding of: (a) environmental issues, including the management of watersheds and other natural resources; (b) human rights issues, which are urgent realities in both South and East Asian countries; and (c) Asian ethnic, minority and religious traditions and how these can be used to develop the capacities of organizations and leaders.

5. Some 54% of respondent-NGOs are working with children, making them the fourth most important sector. This current emphasis on children reflects the growing concern for the condition of street children, which has worsened over the years because of the hyper-urbanization of Asian cities.

Given the difficulties of working with street children, particularly in terms of generating lasting impact among the members of this target group, it may be important to conduct a study to identify “state-of-the-art”, viable capacity-building approaches being implemented by Asian NGOs working in this sector.

6. A similar recommendation is proposed for the indigenous peoples sector and sustainable agriculture programs.

Nearly half (49%) of respondent-NGOs are involved in work among indigenous peoples, while 67% are involved in sustainable agriculture, making this the fourth most important program of Asian NGOs.

The growing interest in indigenous peoples and sustainable agriculture is due to the increasing priority received in recent years by environmental issues, particularly the reforestation of upland areas and the protection of watershed areas, the ancestral domains of indigenous peoples.

7. Because of the importance of funding, an inventory of successful NGO efforts at internal funds generation should be undertaken. This inventory should include successful efforts at NGO-managed small enterprise activities, NGO-government contracts, build-up of endowment funds and others. The inventory should also include a case study on the efforts of Asian NGOs at public fundraising.

8. Finally, a study should be conducted to assess experience of NGOs in undertaking government contracts. The study is extremely important because of the emergence of government contracts as a major source of funds for NGOs in recent years.

At the same time, anecdotal evidence suggests that, in many instances, NGO-government contracting relationships have not been as fruitful as initially expected. According to Quizon, for example, in cases where NGOs are subcontracted only for specific project components and are subjected to rigid control, their tendency is either to: (a) withdraw at a later stage from the project, or (b) engage in varied forms of self-selection, that is by participating in the project based on other interests, such as, funding, contacts, etc.