

Theme: WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT



Working with government - celebrating World Mental Health day in the Government Community Health Centre, Sahaspur, Uttarakhand the Burans HOPE team. Photo Sanjeev Isachar, Burans HOPE

EDITORIAL



It is essential for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to work in partnership with government as in the long term government must take responsibility for health, education and social services and is the only structure with the funding and mandate to work in these areas across the whole population. While government is the main service provider, NGOs act as the conscience, the ones who see the areas of greatest need, and as the facilitator to ensure that the benefits of various government programmes are reaching the members of the community.

In order to work with the government, it is important for an NGO to gain their acceptance and trust by reporting, relationship building and showing positive outcomes from their work. NGOs should also have the capability to provide necessary technical assistance tailored to the needs of the government. By working with government, NGOs can closely engage with communities, leverage their own resources and skills, and increase their own understanding about how to effectively scale interventions. Partnership with government programmes can also provide access to new resources, expertise and skills which help us (NGOs) to build our capacities and visibility in the communities we work with.

This issue of Safar focuses on the importance of working with government, the ways we can do that more effectively, and discusses best practices in partnering with government.

Happy reading

- Kaaren Mathias and Feba Jacob

WHAT'S inside...

Editorial 1

Devotion 2

Working with Government 3

Success Story 5

Partnering with Government 5

Interview- Mr. Lawrence Singh 7

Working with Government
and Advocacy 10

HR Movements, Upcoming Events 11

CHDP News 12

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DEVOTION

WORKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT

[*Rev. Prakash George*]

Reading through the Scriptures we find very little written on this topic. There were few separate social organisations in Biblical times and we do not read of Churches working with the governments of that time. In the current situation we do find NGOs seeking government aid/help to implement community programmes especially for the poor and the marginalised. There are also situations where the government seeks the help of NGOs to implement its programme. In these types of engagements what principles should guide Christian NGOs? I would like to list a few.

1. In working with the government Christian values and practices must not be compromised. They should be upheld. For example, if all our programmes begin with prayer, then such practices should not be curtailed because one is accepting financial help from the government. Another example would be if the sanctity of the Lord's day could be compromised.

2. There should be no compromise on Christian ethical practices. One could be asked to pay a bribe in order to get a government sanction of funds or to deliver a government programme. We should always be committed to do right at all cost. What is of utmost importance is to seek God's glory and not the programme and the benefits it could bring. As Paul says, "whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).
3. Do not work with the government when it involves policies, practices and procedures which are contrary to Scripture.

As stated in the Scripture all governments are established by God. Working with the government gives Christians the opportunity to influence the government to do what is good and right. In such a situation we are called to be the salt and light of the world. So seek out such opportunities but at the same time maintain our Christian identity.

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT

[*Mr Somesh Pratap Singh, Deputy Director, Community Health and Development Programme*]

There has been a dynamic interaction between state and its people from the ages unknown. The design and structure of state has been ever evolving, and so has been the interaction between state and its people. In various parts of the world, different groups have played the role of conscience keeper for the state, but primarily it has been religious and academic institutions or both.

After the Second World War the socio-economic and political situation changed more rapidly and entirely in a new direction. The whole world witnessed and faced the consequences of two world wars within a period of 30 years. In addition, with the growth in technology information and people started travelling more quickly from one part of the world to another and the exchange of ideas and philosophies occurred more frequently and at a much larger level. This led to the formation of the United Nations which made regular interaction between nations a reality. The ideas of freedom, democracy, human rights, accountability of government and so on were freed from the domain of select countries and started taking transnational shape. The world also started witnessing greater commitment from nations to support and propagate such ideas, even in countries that avoided such values and ideas. With the passing of United Nation resolutions and a majority of the countries becoming signatory to it, an accountability mechanism in nations started taking shape globally.

The role of civil society/NGOs was primarily seen as running charitable institutions for neglected sectors such as orphans, widows, beggars and so on, for whom society has no regular mechanism. In India during the Independence movement and after freedom, NGOs gained space in machinery that acted as conscience keeper, and in recent times NGOs became much more part of regular accountability framework.

In India working with government can mean i) running projects funded by government or complementing government services through projects funded by some other source; ii) improving accountability and quality of government function; iii) or making government accountable for upholding the rights of every citizen. Each way of working with government has its own pros and cons. Often the government system is comfortable with the agencies that run projects funded by government, but many times there are underlying undeclared negotiations involved. In my experience of running a government funded project, the thing that helped us to get through the project approval and implementation period was complete transparency, perseverance and consistency in follow up with the system. But all this takes lot of time and sometimes one wonders whether it is a worthwhile investment. Secondly, if an NGO invests its own resources to complement

government services there is always a very good functional relationship and the state is appreciative of this. Some of our projects run clinics and camps or support HIV related activities in places, where government is unable to deliver due to its defunct system. While these kinds of activities are well recognised by the government, there is also a risk of government being relieved of its responsibility. In general government appreciates investment to build its capacity, but strong bureaucracy finds it difficult to be accountable to an outside agency. A classic example is investment on *Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)* by NGOs; once capacity enhancement investment was completed in this scheme, accountability mechanisms became dysfunctional. Theoretically triangulation of information is valued but government systems in India find it difficult to accept divergent opinions. Civil society does not have a constitutional basis like legislative, bureaucracy and the judiciary, or social recognition like journalism, so often they have to depend on any one or all of these bodies to put forward their ideas, theories and submissions.

Civil society/NGOs find enough space and voice in societies with strong democratic values, where voices of citizens matter irrespective of the stage which the person uses to propagate voice. In societies where

individuals are dominated by a feudal mindset, the voices of established institutions are heard and any other voices are often considered to be voices of dissent. I want to make the point that India, after receiving independence has voluntarily embarked on journey of democracy but it had remained a feudal society for a very long period, a period long enough to shape the mindset of the population and drive feudal values deep into the collective unconscious. So it will take strong effort to annul of mitigate the impact of these deeply entrenched values and drill the very basic ideas of equality, freedom, justice in the minds of its citizen, which are a prerequisite for having healthy dialogues and for creating a framework where



Saharanpur District hospital - visit by SHIFA team - relationship building. Photo- Dr. Kaaren Mathias

different groups can express their opinions. For this reason we need to make every effort to promote democratic values in the life of citizens and not rest until every voice in the country begins to be heard and matter. India has embarked on a journey with commitment to fundamental values enshrined in its constitution, and if civil society wants to work with government in a healthy dynamic relationship they should invest most in strengthening democratic values among citizens of India, who become part of the government in one way or another. This will make 'working with government' a reality in the truest sense.

SUCCESS STORY

from CHDP, Fatehpur

[*Dr Sunita Varghese, Project Director*]

Fatehpur had been working in the urban slums before the arrival of the National Urban Health Mission. Our needs assessment done in 2009 showed very poor immunisation rates, particularly in the poor areas. We approached the then District Immunisation Officer with a plan to utilise nurses of the mission hospital with the purpose of immunisation coverage. He did not agree so we dropped the idea. Later when a WHO survey in the region revealed poor urban coverage, he approached us for help. By then, we had established good community rapport. He invited us to sit in on the micro planning for immunisation and contribute to where coverage was lacking. We gave our inputs. We saw that when it came to implementation, the government nurses did not have conveyances and it would be impossible to cover the breadth of their regions on the said day for immunisation. So we began to help them in three ways - firstly, we spread the information among the community that immunisation was critical for their children. These communities resisted immunisation and had several false beliefs about it. Secondly, we ensured that the community was rounded up in time for the nurse's visit. And thirdly, we helped the nurse travel from one slum to the other by our two wheelers! We did all this for about a year and a half. By then coverage in the region had climbed from 15% to over 50%. The government was very grateful for our help and still is, though we have since stopped the two wheeler trips! This was a good example for us about how we can turn the situation into a win-win scene and work with the government for the people.

PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT

[*Prabhadutt Nayak, Project Manager, Prerana*]

The government is the biggest development agency in the country and we as Non- Governmental Organisations should realise this. We cannot achieve our vision for a better society on our own. Community needs are too numerous and society's problems are too complex. We need to work with the government (elected and appointed officials) and other stakeholders to accomplish our goals or objectives.

In our Indian culture or mindset, when we have some work in a specific department, the first thing that comes to our minds is *Do I know anyone in that specific department?* If not we try to find out from our near and dear friends, so that our work can be done smoothly. Hence, this kind of mindset or working style values the quality of relationships between the person and government officials more than the process itself.

So how is it possible to have a healthy relationship with government?

A healthy relationship with government is only possible when both parties share common objectives. Clarification of roles and greater communication between both parties helps to foster a more effective relationship in an environment where, at present, neither can work properly without the other. For example, if the government's commitment to poverty reduction is weak, we will find dialogue and collaboration frustrating or even counter-productive.

Building a cooperative relationship with a government ministry or department takes effort and time. We need to find allies - people in the ministry who have influence and share our values, vision and goals. Then we work to build trust with them. Strong relationships are based on shared goals, trust or mutual benefit. When we build strong relationships with people in government and make them our allies, we can accomplish a lot together. Partnerships take different forms, ranging from informal and casual to formal and structured. We can build relationships by sharing information, ideas and experiences. We can also have highly organised and collaborative relationships where we design projects, raise money and run the projects together. When both parties see that their solutions are not competing alternatives but are complementary contributions, the possibility for a genuine collaboration is opened.

Practically we could adopt some of the simple ways mentioned below to improve a healthy and complementary relationship with government officials:

- ★ Identify exactly what each other's respective roles are and should be
- ★ Submit periodic reports to the line department heads
- ★ Pro-actively participate in the different levels of their relevant meetings
- ★ Involve the government in our research efforts
- ★ Provide the government with information about our programmes and plans
- ★ Travel with relevant government field staff to inaccessible villages
- ★ Invite them to our various events, training sessions and project inaugurations

So, what are the barriers to a healthy relationship with government?

We often fall in the opposition camp and the government or ruling party may see us as the sole legitimate voice of the people, causing them to keep distance from us. On the other side we sometimes prefer isolation from government, leading to an unwillingness to dialogue with government, and poor coordination with one another. Some of us prefer to keep well separated from the government orbit to avoid drawing attention and therefore outside control, to their activities. The most frequent complaint against the government by concerned communities is rampant corruption, which has become endemic and is severely undermining state-building efforts.

Conclusion

Government needs us to accomplish their missions and they need us because as NGOs we often have very deep relationships in the communities we work with. We also have the ability to operate with high levels of flexibility and creativity, with participatory approaches to development, filling gaps where Government staff has difficulty reaching poor or vulnerable people. In a way we complement each other in bringing about positive change in the community. This is only possible by pursuing healthy relationships with the government officials.

Reference:

<http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/state-ngo.html>

:: INTERVIEW ::

AN INTERVIEW WITH
MR. LAWRENCE SINGH
 PROJECT COORDINATOR,
 AGNES KUNZE SOCIETY- HOPE, DEHRADUN
 [By Feba Prakash, Co-editor, Safar]

Safar- *Could you please share about your organisation - HOPE and its major initiatives?*

Mr. Lawrence Singh- The Agnes Kunze Society 'HOPE Project' started its work more than a decade back with street or "slum" children by providing education and vocational training. Now this project assists children and the poor in a holistic manner in the areas of Health, Education, Empowerment and Advocacy.

We help people by enhancing their capacity and dignity so that they can help themselves and the others around them; in order to bring a sustainable change in people's life. In keeping with Sr. Agnes Kunze's vision we never distribute funds directly but utilise them for holistic development of people.

Our Mission is to assist children and community in need - regardless of background, caste, race, religion, sex, in accordance with Sr. Agnes Kunze's vision that the mark of the human being should be love for one another.

We create an enabling atmosphere and offer direct and professional aid to children and the community across all the development domains notably Education, Health, Social Development and Nutrition and Hygiene in the form of awareness, childcare,

upbringing, education, job-oriented skill building and facility provision across social and development sectors.

Safar- *What key strategies adopted by your organisation can be considered as successful for achieving the organisational goals?*

Mr. Lawrence Singh- We operate with a TEAM Based Management structure which differs from the traditional hierarchal structures and that helps in the attainment of organisational goals. Our managers operate more as facilitators and team leaders are autonomous in making routine decisions. The whole team is responsible for setting objectives and evaluating performance. Thus we tend to focus on tasks, accomplishment of shared objectives and use temporary teams or task forces to deal with particular issues or cross-cutting initiatives. In short our strategy is to be participatory and interactive.

Safar- *How important is it to work in partnership with government for ensuring sustainable outcomes of various initiatives?*

Mr. Lawrence Singh- The partnerships with the government are crucial as they help in the sharing of vision, resources, expertise, and systems to create a greater and meaningful impact on a certain sector and the community as a whole. Moreover,

government involvement from the very beginning can help ensure the success of the projects. With excellent results, the government may continue to support interventions over the longer term and replicate them as good practices in other areas where there is similar need. The government may also upscale the project if success is demonstrated.

Safar- *Any initiatives or programmes carried out in cooperation with government? What strategies did you adopt to ensure full cooperation from the government officials?*

Mr. Lawrence Singh- A number of initiatives have been carried out by AKS-HOPE in collaboration with the relevant government departments. Some of these are:

- ★ HOPE Academy and Higher Education Projects (with Department of Education)
- ★ Tuberculosis control – DOTS Project (with RNTCP)
- ★ HIV AIDS – Community Care Centre (with NACO and Uttarakhand SACS)
- ★ HIV AIDS – Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre (with NACO and Uttarakhand SACS)
- ★ HIV AIDS CSC (with NACO, HIV AIDS Alliance and Uttarakhand SACS)
- ★ HIV AIDS and TB Awareness Programme and Health Camps (with Department of Health)

We ensure that we have a consultative partnership with the government from inception of the initiative and there is

information exchange. We also avoid duplication of activities and synchronise efforts to achieve complementary partnership.

Safar- *What are the key challenges you faced while working with government? How did you overcome these?*

Mr. Lawrence Singh- While we feel that we must consult with the government for any project sometimes the objectives and priorities differ. The response time from the government is often lengthy and communication is an issue. The relationship can be very inefficient and time consuming.

We overcame these by perseverance, prayer and not expressing too much resentment.

Safar- *What are the key principles to keep in mind while working with the government to ensure maximum cooperation and outcomes?*

Mr. Lawrence Singh- The key principles to keep in mind while working with the government are:

- ★ Have a consultative process and establish relations for information exchange, know each other by sharing experiences, ideas, and opinions.
- ★ Coordination of efforts to avoid duplication of activities and for greater efficiency and effectiveness in field operations.
- ★ Be guided by a common programme framework and support each other.
- ★ Long term collaboration plans of action must be institutionalised so as to facilitate

delivery of services to their target communities and be sustainable.

Safar- *In which ways can NGOs working for community / urban development work with government and assist them in their programmes?*

Mr. Lawrence Singh- NGOs working for these programmes can help the government deliver and can ensure that their programme

is efficient, effective and well designed and monitored. We can help ensure that social justice, equity and people's empowerment is at the heart of every programme and can suggest the government consider the models of sustainable and self-reliant development.

Thank you so much Mr Lawrence for your time and input.



Meeting with Chief Medical Officer - Selaqui State Mental Hospital - relationship building. Photo- Dr. Kaaren Mathias



Director General of Health, Uttarakhand, and State Nodal officer, and a community representative attend the opening of a new EHA partnership mental health project. Photo- Kaaren Mathias

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT AND ADVOCACY

[Punita Kumar, Programme Manager, Advocacy]

The definition of a democratic government could be ‘a government made by the people or their elected representatives.’ But the government needs a body to perform the functions of the system. This is achieved through various departments and is called ‘bureaucracy’. It is a part of government made up of officials and administrators who work for the government, but these people are not elected but appointed. Hence running the government is different from running the bureaucracy which actually runs the government.

Working with the government is a huge topic which requires training and workshops to be fully understood. “Working with the government” is an advocacy approach which was very well taught by Mark Delaney (former Advocacy Program Manager – EHA) through advocacy training.

I believe that we should work with the government or bureaucrats at all times in all situations, and try to mainstream the government in our programmes and activities, not only when we are lacking funds. This approach has recently become popular because of the lack of funds, but in fact this is a way in which

we can make the big governing structure more operational, functional and accountable. It is only when we work with them that we can identify the gains and gaps of government policy and welfare programs and suggest amendments. Let us not consider them our enemies, although we may experience delays, laziness or possible corruption. Let us work with them not only to bring the change around us but in us, through us to others.

संस्थान में उपलब्ध औषधियाँ			
क्र.सं.	औषधि का नाम	मात्रा	
1.	TAB. OLANZAPINE (10mgm)		✓
2.	TAB. RESPERIDONE (4mgm)		✓
3.	TAB. CLONAZEPAM (1mgm)		✓
4.	TAB. LORAZEPAM (1mgm)		✓
5.	TAB. SOD. VALPROATE (200mgm)		✓
6.	TAB. LITHIUM CARBONATE (300mgm)		✓
7.	TAB. HEXIDYL (TRIPHENHEXIDYL) (2mgm)		✓
8.	TAB. CARBAMZAPINE (200 mgm)		✓
9.	TAB. NITRAZEPAM (10 mgm)		(X)
10.	TAB. ALPRAZOLAM (0.5mgm)		(X)
11.	TAB. TRIFLUPERAZINE (5 mgm)		✓
12.	TAB. CHLOR PPOMAZINE (100 mgm)		✓
3.	INJ. HALORERIDOL (HPL) 5mg		✓
4.	INJ. PROMETHA ZINE (50mg.)		✓
5.	INJ. LORAZEPAM (4mg)		✓

HR MOVEMENTS

[by: Ms. Hemlatha]

Name	Designation	Project
NEW JOINEES		
Deepika Tikvah	Community Coordinator	Urban Project Agra
Samson Rana	Project Assistant	Burans Project
Sumit Kumar Lima	Accountant	Duncan SVJ Project
Mukesh Kumar Paswan	Community Coordinator	Duncan Ashish Project
Paul Naik	Community Coordinator	Duncan Nayi Roshni Project
Pramod Ram	Community Coordinator	Duncan Ashish Project
Asunta Hembrom	Community Coordinator	Duncan Ashish Project
Sandeep Kumar	Community Coordinator	Duncan Ashish Project
Santosh Kumar Singh	Community Coordinator	Duncan Ashish Project
Suleman Soren	Community Coordinator	Duncan Ashish Project
Neeraj Kumar	Community Coordinator	CHDP – Fatehpur
Meghna Badola	Orthotic Technician	Herbertpur – Anugraha Project
Lalan Kumar	Community Coordinator	Madhipura – Alamnagar Project
Umesh Prasad Yadav	Community Coordinator	Madhipura – Alamnagar Project
Kamal Chandra Sen	Project Coordinator	Chhatarpur – PACS Project
Augustin	Community Coordinator	Sahyog Project
Barnabas Mahukal	Community Coordinator	Sahyog Project
Kushal Kumari	Community Coordinator	Sahyog Project
Shweta Masih	Project Officer	Sahyog Project
Kripa Dan	Driver	Spandana CHD Project
Anesimus	Project Officer	CHD Tezpur
Preeti Lama	Project Officer	CHD Tezpur

UPCOMING EVENTS

CHDP half yearly reporting meeting

Dates: 27-29 October 2015 | **Place:** Navintha, New Delhi

Theme: Community Transformation



CH Annual Meet 2015. Photo- Thomas John

CHDP NEWS

- ★ The Annual Reporting of CHDP was held from 28th of April to 2nd of May 2015 at CRSC, Dehradun
- ★ Mr Kuldeep Singh participated in Joint Monitoring Mission (JMM-2015) of WHO/GOI as an expert to review RNTCP in April 2015

NEXT ISSUE OF SAFAR

Safar Issue 20 is focusing on

SHG and CBO

Please send contributions to Feba Jacob
(fjacob@eha-health.org) by

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