ATTACHMENT 5: TIPS FOR DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

There are many different ways of carrying out your mission. Following are some mission statements with alternative strategies that could be used to achieve them.

Mission: *"Our NPO promotes childhood literacy by providing tutoring to children ages 5-8."*

Alternative strategy 1: We train community volunteers to provide tutoring.
Alternative strategy 2: We hire professional teachers to provide tutoring
Alternative strategy 3: We develop on-line, interactive programs to provide Internet-based tutoring to children.

You can see that each of these strategies would have very different implications for what your NPO does and the way that it operates.

Mission: *"Our NPO promotes energy conservation to help control global warming.*
Alternative strategy 1:We work with local governments to encourage use of public transportation so fewer people drive their own vehicles.
Alternative strategy 2: We encourage manufacturers to produce more energy efficient products.
Alternative strategy 3: We work with individuals and families to show them how to save energy in their daily lives.

Again, each of these strategies leads to very different activities by your NPO.

In determining your strategy, consider the following questions:

Consideration	Why it is important
Is the strategy related to our mission?	Some NPOs adopt strategies that will have little or no impact on the mission they want to achieve. Consider whether your strategy—if successfully carried out—would lead to the results you want to achieve.
Does the strategy reflect the needs of the community being	NPOs can sometimes provide a service that people aren't interested in, or deliver their services in ways that people do not find useful. For example, providing reading tutoring through Internet-based programs will be of little help in communities where children do not have access to the Internet.

served, and is it acceptable to that community?	Where possible, get input from the community you are serving before developing your strategies. See "getting community input", below.
Does your NPO have the needed expertise to carry out the strategy, or can it obtain it?	It is important to identify the important skills and knowledge to carry out the strategy, and determine if your NPO has it or can obtain it through paid or volunteer resources.
Does your NPO have the financial resources necessary to carry out the strategy, or a plan to obtain those resources?	Many strategies can be expensive to implement. It is important to determine how much it will cost to implement a strategy. If adequate financial resources aren't available, it may be possible to get grants or donations. However, this will require a well-designed plan to demonstrate to potential donors how their funds will be used.
If carried out according to plan, is your strategy likely to succeed?	You may be more likely to achieve results if you target your change at a level where you can have impact. For example, in the energy-conservation example above, a small NPO may have more success teaching individuals about energy conservation than in changing the products of major manufacturers. This does not mean you shouldn't have ambitious goals—but think clearly about what you will be likely to achieve.

Additional tips on strategy for established NPOs

SWOT Analysis

Often, organizations conduct a SWOT analysis as part of the process of determining strategies. A SWOT analysis is a systematic analysis of your NPO's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

- "Strengths" refers to the internal strengths of your NPO.
- "Weaknesses" refers to the internal weaknesses of your NPO
- "Opportunities" refers to external opportunities that you can potential take advantage of
- "Threats" refers to external threats that could negatively affect your NPO

Here is a simplified example of a SWOT analysis for the childhood reading project

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Our staff members have expertise on childhood literacy • We are familiar with the HCMC educational system • We have a small group of committed volunteers	• We have very limited financial resources • Our IT system is outdated and insufficient for most tasks • We do not have staff or money to train and support the needed number of volunteers.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Several donor organizations share our interest in childhood literacy. • Two schools are interested in partnering with us	• Parents may not be receptive to tutoring programs for their children • There is another NPO working in this area which views us as competition.

The SWOT analysis can help you develop your strategies, so that you build on your strengths and opportunities and minimize your weaknesses and threats.

In this example, the NPO might develop a strategy that builds on its small group of dedicated volunteers and partners with the schools that have expressed interest. It might seek input from families about how tutoring programs could be structured to be acceptable to families.

Based on the SWOT analysis, this NPO would probably not pursue a strategy that relied heavily on computer technology or which required a large number of trained volunteers from the beginning.