



Building the Future NGO: Embracing Agility, Entrepreneurship, and Digital Innovation

29 February 2024

About us

- ✓ We help NGOs to be better funded, operate better and deploy smarter strategies
- ✓ A social enterprise with many services subsidised. Training is already free for partners. **Online training starts soon.**



Christian Meyer zu Natrup
Managing Director
chris@mzninternational.com

A struggle to adapt?

Funding for systematic impact

Organisation is geared towards either
→ GRANTS and/or
→ FUNDRAISING income

Both funding forms are often too short term, too fixed, not risk tolerant.

1. How do we work better with the finance & banking world to beat poverty
2. How do we flex our plans when needed?
3. How do we get more unrestricted funding?

Locally led action

Locally led development requires a new business model and organisational approach:

1. Quality of partnership is key
2. Empower others
3. Act as a platform
4. Mitigate Partners financial risk
5. Deploy central services (tech, knowledge, etc)

1. How do we best partner with Companies on impact?
2. How do we move decision power to global South with donors in global North?

Tech Revolution 3.0

AI and tech can boost the operating capacity of NGOs. For example

Finance- automatic allocation, fraud control, corruption fighting,

Chatbots: Direct chats with beneficiaries

Proposal development, MarCom

Watch this space activity. Act now:

We tend to overestimate the effect of new technology in the short term.

And underestimate it in the long term. (Amara)

INGO & social enterprise

Build the organisation for locally led development & system change

Build for purpose

- The client's strategy included a commitment to LLD and system change/ root causes for years - BUT
- Processes and systems still build for attracting and managing grant funding
- Structure incentivised staff unconsciously for attracting grants & completing reports
- The business model and organisational structure needed change, including (not limited)
 - Attracting new sources of funding
 - Partnering with implementation beyond programmes towards integration of systems and platforms
 - New business model creation work with investor & corporate funding and build a new income generating arm
 - MarCom boosted to communicate the value of the work domestically

Many NGOs are simply not built (in many ways) to deliver maximum impact (in many areas).

But with constant change, its difficult to envision a better organisation in an uncertain future.

Adapt faster

Partner with new organisations

**DON'T Restructure,
Change better**

Flexible Organisation design

**Innovate.
Learn. All
the time**

Digitalise where it
makes sense

Localise

Update employment
proposition

What does it mean?

An agile NGO is **less based on hierarchy** and **more on localised decision-making and shared information**. It is a shift from the old-fashioned, traditional, hierarchical structure to a more organic, responsive, and **flexible** one. As a result, agile organisations are **quick to change** course if necessary – and thus better equipped to respond to challenges.

Why go agile?

- It's the better way to cope.
- It's the better way to be prepared for all scenarios.
- It prioritises data-led learning and accountability.
- It drives operating models with more impact.
- It allows for a trust-based culture.
- Not suitable for routine-based work.



Some examples

Mid-size, national NGO

Learn → adapt → invest

Data centrality

- The client now has a new strategy that prioritising data collection, automated analysis and learning in team.
- A new innovation cycle is the basis for a continuous improvement
- An automatic allocation of funds is available to invest in projects and venture based on data and group voting

UK NGO

Diversify funding base

Income generation

- Grant based model too restrictive & not generating enough unrestricted funds
- Developed a digital run capture and business development model where EVERYONE is an Opportunity Owner.
- Resulted in a 5 fold increase in bids in just six months.

Lessons learnt from transformations since 2011

- **People change, when leaders do.**

Agile management is based on trust, data obsession, transparency, faster learning and adaptation. Where leaders internalise this partners, staff and donors follow.

- **Want to break the silo & bureaucracy?**

Build a platform that democratises information & allows rapid new team formation, without approval.

- **Digital first & Data obsessed: Measure, report, learn → foresight**

When a bot or AI can do it, let it do it (meeting booking, sentiment surveys, financial dashboard, colleague of the month vote, work time measure (find out who overworks & burns out, who is a bottleneck (unreplied messages measure)).

Lessons learnt from transformations since 2011

- **Make work work for people - (flexible work rules make better workers)**

Go digital first to power hybrid, own time, own responsibility, less control, more results based work.

- **Funding follows innovative ideas & performance: Not the other way around**

When our child rights-supporting NGOs partner innovated and published their performance more, funding partners became more interested.

5 key pillars of going agile

1

Agile Structures & Systems

To adapt, scale and localise work

2

Shared work platform

Automise routine work, boost collaboration and analysis

3

Change the funding mix

Form new donor partnerships faster and boost budgeting & forecasting capacity

4

Data is key. Knowledge is better.

Collection → Analysis → Insight → Foresight

5

Make work work for people

Flexible, clear arrangements, Digital Platform based work to allow work anytime

Training Courses



Write Winning Proposals

In this course you will learn how to write, manage and negotiate a winning proposal. You will improve your proposal writing skills through exercises on real proposals, case-studies from the world's leading donors and learn together in small groups. Before and after the course, you can benefit from our online learning offers.



Grants & Beyond; Diversifying Income & Building Reserves

Successful NGOs need the right funding mix to create impact and build a better world. But with donor funds severely restricted, and constantly changing priorities and demands, the key question is how can we build a financially sustainable NGO?

<https://mzninternational.com/training-courses/>



Getting Project Budgeting & Reporting Right

The budget is the most frequent reason why proposals fail to win funds. And many projects are limiting their impact due to budget management issues. Let's fix that!

Stay in touch!

We are here to make doing good better. We help non-profit organisations secure more funding, drive innovation and develop smarter strategies.

By 2030, most of our services to NGOs will be free of charge or subsidised. Training already is.

Christian Meyer zu Natrup

Chris@mzninternational.com

New blog, podcast and upcoming events www.mzninternational.com

Upcoming webinars: mzninternational.com/mzn-events/#webinars

2024 WEBINAR SERIES

HOW TO GET DONOR MAPPING RIGHT

Donor mapping is one of the most important tools in the fundraising process and getting it right determines the success or failure of your NGO. In this webinar, we review what a good donor map looks like, dive into the top five sections to focus on and share lessons learned from creating over 200 donor maps.

DATE
14 MARCH 2024

TIME
3 - 4 PM CET
9 - 10 AM EST

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2024 WEBINAR SERIES

SECOND QUARTERLY FUNDING BRIEFING & DONOR UPDATE

Get an update on current donor strategies. Our team will share donor trends, upcoming new funding streams, and programs from USAID, the EU, GIZ, Nordic donors, and the United Nations.

DATE

28 MARCH 2024

TIME

3 - 4 PM CET

9 - 10 AM EST



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ANY QUESTIONS?

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Appendix

Lessons learned from agile transformations

- **Going agile does not mean dissolving structures.**
- **Trust and data transparency** are mutually reinforcing
- **Agile organisations try more and do more (different) things.** Let them
- **Data is the key to impact:** collection → analysis → insight → foresight
- **Make work work for people:** Flexible work arrangements, platform-based work allows people to work when they want/can

Making operations agile
is a good start...

Finance and budget management

- Allows good budget control and within it operational freedom
- Embraces decolonisation and decision decentralisation
- Drives owner-management mentality over income generation
- Operates through a global digital platform built for collaboration



3 Examples of agile operations

Human resources

- Empowering your employees to make hiring and firing decisions
- Teams form where and when needed, without top-down management
- Allowing cross-department collaboration - often gets rid of them
- Allows for a much stronger analysis - hindsight - insight - foresight learning loop

Programs

- Using value to respond to opportunities and possible changes
- Allowing development to occur in parallel with delivery
- Allowing user involvement (example of interactive development)
- Allowing stakeholders engagements (as example of program management)
- Teams become an evolving system

Agile Management **vs** Waterfall Management, from theory to practice...

Conditions	Agile Management	Waterfall Management
Project's Ownership	The ownership is shared equally between all the members of the team as well as its associated stakeholders.	The project manager is considered as the owner of the project in terms of operations, until its accomplishment.
Working Style	Free flow of communication is encouraged so that everyone can float their ideas.	Hierarchical management is implemented. Which allows the implementation of directs from the top management only.
Project Pre-planning	The pre-planning phase remains active throughout every step of the project.	The pre-planning is conducted once before the initiation of every major phase of the project.
Project Planning	The plan is delivered to the client in distributed chunks.	A one-time plan is delivered to the client, along with a negligible margin of change.
Modular Approach	The work can be broken down into independently working modules, which can be improved by iterative updating.	The testing of the product cannot begin until the project is accomplished in terms of the developmental phase.
Project's Deliverance	The project is delivered as well as parallelly evolved in terms of incremental deliverance.	The project is delivered on a one-time basis.
Change Affordability	Late alterations to the project can be accommodated and will not incur significant losses.	Late alterations to the project can either be very expensive or impossible to accommodate.
Managing Changes	Changes can be made in any module at any point in the development phase, with a greater amount of flexibility.	A top-down pattern in managing changes is observed since the development of the project is carried on from one phase leading to another.