A Note About SVP's Philanthropy Curriculum

Social Venture Partners' Philanthropy Curriculum has been designed to be delivered by any experienced facilitator. While a basic understanding of the content and audience will be helpful, the facilitator does not need to have extensive expertise on the topic.

The courses were designed by the instructional design team at Endurance Learning using best practices based on research about adult learning. They don't rely heavily on presentation, focusing instead on reflection, conversation and simulations to enhance the knowledge and skills of Partners and other participants. Each course was tested by partners and staff from across the network, both in-person and online.

The content is scalable, equally effective if delivered around a table to a group of 3 or 4 or as a more formal workshop with a group of 30 or 40. If you are delivering the content as an e-workshop, we recommend a tool like zoom.us, that includes features such as whiteboards, breakout rooms, chatting and polling.

While the courses were originally designed with new SVP Partners in mind, long-time Partners and staff in the pilots shared their view that all Partners will benefit from the content. In fact, community partners and individual philanthropists of all kinds can benefit, and SVP encourages wide spread dissemination of all the information herein. It is an open source document.

If you have any questions regarding SVP's Philanthropy Development Curriculum, please contact Social Venture Partners International.
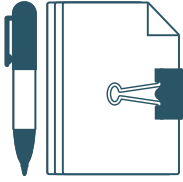
Nonprofit Capacity Building for Greater Impact

Overview

Course Time: 1 hr 50 min

Advance Preparation
Learning Objectives & Materials

1 Welcome & Introductions
Icebreaker
10 min

2 A Capacity Building Story
Storytelling
10 min

3 Tools to Build a Successful Capacity Building Partnership
Large Group Discussion, Lecture, Small Group Discussion
10 min

4 Capacity Building in Nonprofits
Large Group Discussion, Lecture, Small Group Discussion
30 min

5 Capacity Assessment Tools
Large Group Discussion, Lecture, Small Group Discussion
20 min

6 Using the OCAT to Lay the Foundation of a Successful Capacity Building Initiative
Large Group Discussion, Lecture, Small Group Discussion
30 min

7 Q&A / Wrap-Up / Next Steps
Large Group Debrief
10 min

Advance Preparation
Learning Objectives & Materials

Why this course?

Capacity building involves the development of people, systems and resources that keep a nonprofit organization strong and able to successfully deliver its programs. A nonprofit with capacity is better able to identify and take advantage of opportunities and achieve lasting community impact. Often the skills required for capacity building projects are not present in the staff of a small nonprofit, so consultants and volunteers (like SVP Partners) can help.

Facilitator

Social Venture Partners' Philanthropy Curriculum has been designed to be delivered by any experienced facilitator. While a basic understanding of the content and audience will be helpful, the facilitator does not need to have extensive expertise on the topic.

Participants

This course aims to start the conversation about capacity building for nonprofit organizations and understand the tools available to embark on a capacity building initiative. This course is best taken by participants who are interested in capacity building with an SVP community partner organization.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to...

1. Describe the role of capacity building in nonprofits

2. Identify the features of a successful capacity building initiative

3. Explore philosophies around measuring impact of capacity building initiatives

Materials

✓ Handouts

- A1. Capacity Building Areas
- A2. Capacity Building Prerequisites
- A3. Afterschool Allstars Profile
- A3. Leading Roles Profile
- A4. Truncated Blank Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool - Print All tabs
- A4. Rainbowfish Reading Project Profile
- A4. Rainbowfish Reading Project OCAT Summary

✓ Prepared Flipcharts

- A1. Instructions for each partner request in the "Stress Building" activity

✓ Other Materials

- Slideshow: Capacity_Building
- Chime
- Index cards
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Flipchart
- Pens

Welcome & Introductions

Technique: Icebreaker   10 Minutes 🕐

- A1. Capacity Building Areas

▶️ Where We're headed Today

Once you have all (or at least most) of the participants present, welcome the participants and introduce yourself.

> Welcome to this workshop which focuses on nonprofit organizational capacity building. Over the next two hours, we will walk through a series of activities and discussions to gain a better understanding and why it's a valuable concept to explore. By the end of this session you'll be exposed to content designed to help you:
>
> 1. Describe the role of capacity building in nonprofits
> 2. Identify the features of a successful capacity building initiative
> 3. Explore philosophies around measuring impact of capacity building initiatives
>
> We have a lot to talk about today. Before we get started, let's take some time to find out who is in the room.

▶ Introduce Yourself

To get to know one another a little better I have a few questions for each of you to answer. The first two are pretty conventional welcome questions. We're talking about capacity building today, which always involves the desire to do more, and it also involves prioritization and trade-offs. The fact is, we're always operating with limited resources. For example, we only have so much time in each day to get things done. So the last question I'll ask in the introductions is in the spirit of "Would you rather…?" Please share:

1. What is your name?

2. How long have you been a partner?

3. Would you rather have a 30 hour long day or not need to sleep? Why?

We have a lot to talk about today. Before we get started, let's take some time to find out who is in the room.

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Thank you for indulging me in "Would you rather…?" As you heard from the people in attendance, there are a lot of different ways to look at the potential to do more. And there are always trade-offs. That's something that obviously happens in our personal lives every day, and it's also something that organizations – especially smaller, under-resourced organizations – face on a daily basis.

The term "capacity building" is a term that can mean lots of different things to different people. Let's drill down a little more on the actual subject of capacity building and make sure we're all talking about the same thing. What does capacity building mean to you?

Allow time to answer, asking clarifying and follow-up questions as necessary.

Capacity Building

Use the answers from the participants to connect with the definition on the screen.

> To make sure we have a productive session, let's look at a definition for capacity building that you may or may not completely agree with, but that we'll be using for the next two hours simply to ensure we're talking about the same thing.
>
> Capacity building is developing core skills, leadership, culture, management practices, strategies, and systems to enhance an organization's effectiveness, sustainability, and ability to fulfill its mission.

Distribute A1 handout: Capacity Building Areas

> Beyond the definition, there are 10 areas – which you can see in your handout – that SVP often focuses on when it comes to capacity building. We'll be talking about these areas and examining a tool that can help us to assess these areas throughout the remainder of our time today.
>
> Take a look at the 10 areas of focus on your handout. Can anyone give an example of how you may have helped build capacity in an organization through any of these 10 areas?
>
> Has anyone had an example of a capacity building project or experience that might have fallen outside of these 10?

Facilitate a short group discussion. Keep in mind that these 10 items are very big picture categories. Professional development, for example, is not found among these ten categories but could be covered within the broader umbrella of the category on Human Resources.

Great discussion. Some people think of organizations as a table metaphor. If you think of the mission as the top of the table, the funding and operations are the legs of the table, and capacity building is what adds support to the legs and strengthens the table.

Now that we have taken a few minutes to get on the same page about capacity building, let's look at capacity building of our investees.

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A Capacity Building Story

Technique: Storytelling   10 Minutes ⏱

▶ 📽 Capacity Building Stories

I would like to tell you a a story about capacity building as an SVP Partner that is meant to illustrate what this work can look like when working with a nonprofit.

David is a lead Partner at SVP and is in the third year of working with an SVP community partner organization. In this third year, David says this organization is in the middle of their capacity building efforts.

When David began working with this investee, the executive director (ED) was co-leading the organization with the program director (PD), who was one of the two co-founders of the organization. David sat down with the organization and assessed areas of capacity building with the OCAT. A lot of information came from that assessment and as a group, they made a list of areas of focus and then prioritized and assigned tasks with measurable goals.

In year one, David, working with both the ED and PD focused on developing a business plan that laid out the goals and challenges of the organization and a plan to scale impact. Additionally, late in the first year, SVP consulting funds were used to support board development, significantly strengthening the board.

David's goal in year two was to focus on executing the plan. However, in year two, tension developed in the co-leadership of the organization, ultimately resulting in the departure of the ED. With leadership as the top priority challenge to address, David shifted focus to helping the board in finding an interim ED. David worked with the interim ED who led the organization for eight months, supporting her as she worked to stabilize basic operations and systems. The interim ED led the organization for eight months and guided the board in eventually hiring the former program director to fill the new ED role

By the third year, having addressed leadership, they worked on other ways to move the organization along, including building operational capacity and board governance.

Based on the founder's domain expertise, the organization was adapting its programs based on evaluation results, and were beginning to use data collected in an operations database to validate and update their business model.

What jumped out at you from this story regarding what worked to help build capacity for the organization? What didn't work as well? How could that have been alleviated?

Answers should include:

- Challenges during capacity building

- There was a key person in the organization who helped with capacity building

- Persistence led to success.

If these answers don't come up naturally, ask leading questions to get them to these answers like "Did this Partner run into roadblocks?"

David credits a lot of the success of this capacity building effort to a good relationship with the EDs, both previous and current, as well as a well-organized annual work plan with measurable outcomes. Lessons can be learned from David's experience with board development. In hindsight, he felt that the board should have been the first focus of this capacity building effort. Strong board leadership is critical in a successful organization, particularly if there are senior leadership issues

David continues to be very involved with this organization as they work to build capacity and grow in their mission to do good work.

Does anyone here have a story of capacity building that demonstrates some of these issues they'd like to share?

If there are no stories from the room, feel free to move on to the next section.

Now that we have talked about what capacity building looks like, let's look at how we evaluate the need for capacity.

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Tools to Build a Successful Capacity Building Partnership

Technique: Large Group Discussion, Lecture, Small Group Discussion

10 Minutes

- Sticky notes
- Flipchart
- Markers
- A2.Pre-requirements for Capacity Building

▶ Tools for Capacity Building

> What tools have you used to evaluate capacity building needs?

Using a flip chart, write down the tools they use.

> These tools are here to help us understand the current state of the organization and how they can grow specifically in areas like Organizational Development, Systems and Infrastructure, and Metrics and Evaluation.

Create a flipchart with two columns: Actions and Watch Outs.

⭐ Each of these tools help us to understand what actions need to be taken to grow an organization's capacity and also what to watch for as we engage in capacity building. Using the sticky notes on your table, please write down a few actions that can be taken after using the capacity building tool you are familiar with, and also what it will show you to watch out for. Once you are done, come place your sticky in the appropriate place.

Allow five minutes for participants to complete the activity. Once complete, review the actions and watch outs with the group. Allow discussion and opportunities for clarification.

> It looks like we can learn a lot about an organization using these tools, so how do we determine readiness for organizational capacity?

Handout A2.Pre-requirements for capacity building.

> We put together a graphic to understand capacity building readiness. In this handout, you will see some of the prerequisites for capacity building. Can anyone tell me what happens if we engage in capacity building and an organization is not ready?

Allow time for discussion. You should expect answers like:

- The organization will not have enough resources to dedicate to building capacity.
- Without buy in, time is wasted.
- Partners have a very big role when starting capacity building with an investee.

> Yes, an organization and the partner need to be ready for capacity building. Once we have determined readiness we can look at capacity building. Let's do an activity where we look at a couple organizations to see what capacity building looks like from their points of view.

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Capacity Building in Nonprofits

Technique: Large Group Discussion, Lecture, Small Group Discussion   30 Minutes 🕐

- A3. Afterschool Allstars Profile
- A3. Leading Roles Profile
- Flipcharts
- Markers

▶️ Capacity Building in a Nonprofit

Divide participants into two groups.

⭐ When possible, it would be beneficial to have one large group and one small group to mirror the nonprofits of the activity, though this is not a requirement.

Provide each group with a different overview of a nonprofit organization to review.

- Handout A3. Afterschool Allstars Profile goes to the larger group (if possible) and
- Handout A3. Leading Roles Profile goes to the smaller group.

These handouts include information on staffing, division of work, budget, and additional resources.

Provide the participants with the scenario overview and tell them they are going to be stepping into the shoes of these nonprofits to engage in some decision-making around capacity building.

Be sure to emphasize that they are not going to know all of the answers, and that is okay. They should just do the best they can with the knowledge they have!

> Your handouts contain information about two different nonprofits who differ in size and capacity. In this activity, you will take on the role of nonprofit staff on the handout you are given. Please review the information on your handout and then capture capacity building ideas on your flipchart.

Provide each group with a flipchart and markers to capture their capacity building ideas. You will be guiding the groups through this **stress building** activity. The focus is on the process and how quickly nonprofits must react with limited resources.

Development Advisory Committee

Allow time for discussion. You should expect answers like:

- List the key qualities and traits the members of this advisory committee should possess to provide a well-balanced set of funding skills.

- Determine who in your organization is best suited to interface with this committee and explain why.

Your executive director is working with an SVP partner to aid in capacity building and after several conversations and some initial analysis, the partner has recommended steps to your organization that can be taken to build capacity in the area of fund development. In your groups, you will complete these steps to experience a nonprofit capacity building scenario.

The partner has recommended that you create a development advisory committee to help widen the reach of your organization in the community, and supplement some of the knowledge and skills necessary to bring in diverse funding sources.

On a flipchart, please document this recommendation, and then in your groups, develop a list of the key qualities and traits you feel the members of this advisory committee should possess to provide a well-balanced set of funding skills. You should also determine who in your organization is best suited to interface with this committee and why.

You'll have **fifteen minutes** for this conversation.

Give the groups **four minutes** to begin brainstorming this list before the next recommendation is introduced.

Keep track of the time and do not share the time constraint with the participants.

After the four minutes are up, introduce the second recommendation.

Sustaining Membership

In addition to the advisory committee, your partner has recommended that you develop and implement a 'sustaining membership level'-style giving campaign as part of your fund development strategy. On a flipchart, please document this recommendation, then outline what this will look like, who your target audience will be, and how you might go about converting existing one-time donors into sustaining members.

Who in your organization will spearhead this? (Hint: Take a look at your org chart.)

Your partner has recommended that this and the previous request be done concurrently.

Give the groups another **three minutes** to complete what is asked of BOTH recommendations before the facilitator will introduce a staff change.

You may already be getting pushback from the participants that they need more time. Be strong!

Office Manager Resignation

Allow time for discussion. You should expect answers like:

- Who are key stakeholders in recruitment?
- How do you advertise for the position to ensure good candidates?
- What does your organization think is a realistic timeline for having this role filled?
- Who will cover the job duties of the office manager until that role is filled?

Your office manager accepted a position with another organization, and you are now left with an open position. While you continue your work on the your other recommendations, you must find coverage for the job duties of the the office manager and work to fill that position with a qualified individual.

On a flipchart, please document this unexpected staff change. Your group will need to develop a plan and answer the questions on the screen.

Allow groups to work for an additional **five minutes** on the two recommendations and staff change.

Your respective boards have called meetings to check on your nonprofit's progress preparing to implement the partner recommendations and the status of the staff change. It's time to report out. So, please stop working!

▶ Capacity Building Progress (Please Stop Working)

Go ahead and raise your hand if your group was able to complete the two recommendations from your partner and make a plan for staff change.

Keep your hands up if you feel good about what you came up with in completing those recommendations.

This activity was an attempt to simulate the stresses and added work that is dropped into the laps of nonprofit professionals on a daily basis. And it was done in the context of attempting to add capacity - in this case financial capacity - to the organization, even when facing challenges like staff changes.

Capacity Building Roadblocks

> I'd like your groups to think for a few moments about capacity building in general. We offered a definition at the beginning of this session. We simulated one aspect of an organization trying to build capacity that was specifically designed to induce elements of stress on the process.
>
> Drawing from the experience you just had, as well as other real-life experiences you may have been involved in, what do you think could create a roadblock to capacity building and why is capacity building hard in nonprofits?
>
> Please take five minutes in your group to discuss.

After five minutes, have each group report out on their discussion. Answers may include:

- Capacity building takes people away from working on the mission.
- Some organizations may not be ready for capacity building.
- Limited resources force you make tough choices, and sometimes capacity building needs to be cut to keep up with the needs of the organization.

After each group has reported out, start with the debrief question below to get participants thinking more about the experience. Continue the conversation by asking several of the optional questions using your best judgement based on the conversation in the room.

Optional - Please choose two of the questions below to discuss as a large group.

- Why do you think we added tasks during this activity? How does that relate to capacity building?

- What (if any) differences do you notice between the groups working within larger organizations and smaller organizations?

- What implications might this have for your work as a lead partner in an organization?

- What are some of the ways that an under-resourced organization can engage in capacity building in order to escape the cycle of being under-resourced?

We just engaged in a conversation around conditions that need to be in place in order to be successful in capacity building. Let's turn our attention to some tools that can help give such efforts some structure.

Tools to Build a Successful Capacity Building Partnership

Technique: Large Group Discussion, Lecture, Small Group Discussion   20 Minutes

- A4. Blank Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool
- Sticky notes, flipchart
- Markers

If your affiliate has a tool that they prefer over the OCAT, please feel free to update this section with your tool of choice. Please make sure to follow the format below and update the slideshow to match your additions to this document.

Capacity Assessment Tool

> When evaluating capacity, has anyone used the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (or your tool of choice)?

If anyone has, have them share their experience.

> The OCAT is a self-assessment instrument that helps nonprofits identify capacity strengths and challenges and establish capacity building goals. It is based upon work done by the consulting firm McKinsey and years of experience. It isn't the only tool that can be used for capacity building, but it does have some good applications. As such, it is primarily a diagnostic and learning tool. In addition, the assessment provides a useful framework for measuring growth in organizational capacity over time. There are several versions of the OCAT out there, we will just look at one today. It should be mentioned that this is simply a framework that should serve as a conversation starter.

If your affiliate has a tool they prefer to the OCAT, please substitute it here.

Distribute Handout A4. Truncated Blank Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool

> This handout is a truncated version of a much longer document we use for capacity. Using this version of the OCAT, think about a nonprofit you've worked with. Use the sticky notes on your table to write down the answer to the following questions. If you have more than one answer, please use more than one sticky note.
>
> 1. What is the value of this tool?
> 2. How can the this tool be used to measure progress in the organization's capacity?

While the participants work on their sticky notes, make two columns on a flipchart; **Value** and **Progress**. After the participants are finished, have them put their sticky notes under the appropriate column.

> Please come up to the flipchart and place your sticky notes under the appropriate column.

Allow five minutes for participants to distribute sticky notes.

> Let's review the answers you provided. What themes do you notice, if any?

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Using the OCAT to Lay the Foundation of a Successful Capacity Building Initiative

Technique: Large Group Discussion, Lecture, Small Group Discussion   30 Minutes 🕐

- A4. Rainbowfish Reading Project Profile
- A4. Rainbowfish Reading Project OCAT Summary or a summary using the tool you prefer
- Flipchart
- Markers

▶ Divide participants into groups of 3-5 people. Each group will receive:

1. The Rainbowfish Reading Project profile

2. The Rainbowfish Reading Project OCAT summary or a summary using the tool you prefer.

3. Flipchart and markers to capture their ideas

Groups will utilize the documents and work together for 20 minutes.

▶ Laying the Foundation

> In your groups, please use the flipchart to write the answer to the questions at the top of your handout.

After 20 minutes, small groups will share their ideas with the large group. The large group will identify any commonalities and best practices across service areas. Be sure to discuss any differences in outcomes of each group. It is interesting to see people come up with very different answers to the same questions for the same organizations.

> Now that we have used a tool to evaluate capacity, let's hear from a few of our partners to see what they think of capacity building tools.

Capacity Building Testimonials

Each testimonial is on a slide. Please move through the slideshow to let participants read the testimonials on the screen as you read them out loud.

As I mentioned earlier, many people across the SVP global network have used the OCAT, and we've gotten a lot of feedback over the years:

- OCAT is a reality check. Once you check reality, figure out where you want to focus your capacity building.

- The biggest surprise is that it isn't as difficult as I thought it was going to be.

- Once we took it, I was excited to go back and measure the impact after one year.

- For measuring impact, OCAT may not be the perfect tool, but it can shape the conversation.

- The value of the OCAT is to generate a conversation that doesn't normally happen both between the board and the board and staff.

- There is some redundancy, which is good. It helped you look at things through a different lens. It didn't feel like anything was missing.

In your groups, please discuss which of these perspectives resonates most with you and why.

Q&A / Wrap-Up / Next Steps

Technique: Large Group Debrief   10 Minutes ⏱

Real Capacity Building

In this final debrief, use the remaining time to discuss capacity building as it relates to real scenarios.

> In the beginning of this module we defined capacity building as the development of people, systems and resources that keep a nonprofit organization strong and able to successfully deliver its programs and have a positive impact on its community. During this course, we talked about skills and resources for capacity building at nonprofits.
>
> In the real world, organizations may not have enough resources for capacity building. How do we help organizations be ready for capacity building?

Facilitate discussion based on what was learned today. Try to tie in tools like the OCAT and how to use the focus areas to grow capacity one section at a time.

After a few minutes of discussion, ask the next question.

> Regarding the OCAT or any tool that gauges capacity, do you think it is necessary to address any element that is scored low?

Facilitate discussion based on what was learned today. You may want to tie in an example like:

Maybe a small organization has a low score in the Legal category, but that is not a priority. What happens if they continue to ignore it? How do we find that balance?

After a few minutes of discussion, wrap up the session.

Thank You!

The skills required for capacity building projects are often not present in the staff of a small nonprofit. Tools like the OCAT and consultants and volunteers (like SVP Partners) can help. Please take the blank OCAT with you as leave as a tool to reflect on what we learned about capacity building today.

Thanks!