



## ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

# Supporting African Civil Society Organisations to reach their full potential and achieve positive change

A Well Grounded framework for how we approach  
Organisation Development

## INTRODUCTION

In the countries in which Well Grounded works, **natural resources are central to the lives and livelihoods of the poorest and most marginalised people.** However, all too often these resources aren't managed sustainably or in a way that benefits the communities who depend on them. The situation is becoming more urgent as the international appetite for natural resources becomes ever greater. Communities and natural habitats are under pressure.

However, **there are people and organisations on the ground who are working with communities to support them as they assert their rights to manage their land and resources, and working at various levels to bring about policy and legal reform.** Well Grounded focus on supporting groups of people who have come together to take action in their own countries, and who have set up some type of civil society organisation. We choose to work with civil society because we believe that it has an important role to play in proposing positive solutions to the challenges being faced and in being a counterweight to the very powerful voices of government and the private sector.

We believe that real and sustainable impacts on natural resource management and community rights won't be possible until the people who live in the countries concerned have the information, skills and resources they need to address the issues directly, and to hold their own governments and decision-makers to account. That is why we support African civil society groups that are working to make a positive change to community rights and natural resource management in their home countries and in the wider world.

## SELECTING OUR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION CLIENTS

We use three criteria to screen prospective partners:



## WELL GROUNDED ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Well Grounded define Organisational Development (OD) as a series of interventions aimed at building an organisation's capacities through a process steered by the organisation itself. This document presents an example of an OD process as it might be conducted by Well Grounded.

OD provides an opportunity for an organisation to take the time to reflect on clearly defining or consolidating its vision, what it wants to be in the coming years and how it envisages getting there. It is a holistic approach which examines the whole organisation so that it can better fulfil its mission on the long term. OD interventions provide an opportunity for transparent discussions between the staff.

Well Grounded believes that for an organisation to have an impact, it needs a clear vision and responds to the people it works for. The organisation will be well managed, be clear about how it makes decisions, manages its resources well and supports its people well. It will work in a principled way and put learning at the centre of its practice and approach.

We express this in the seven benchmarks for a healthy organisation.

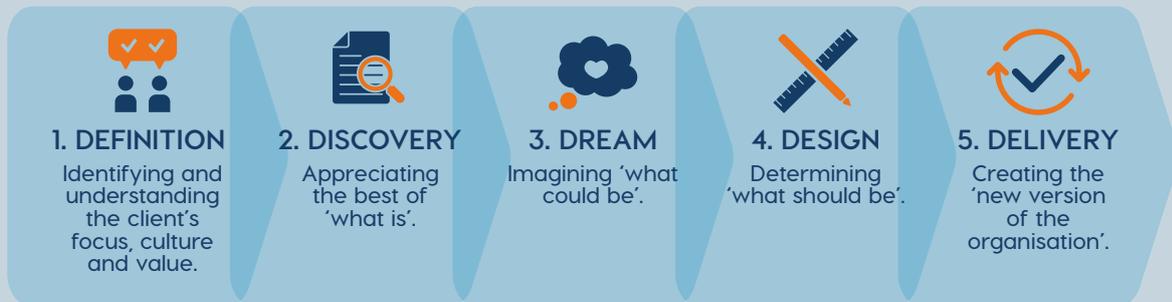
### WELL GROUNDED BELIEVE THAT A HEALTHY ORGANISATION HAS:

-  A vision and strategy that provide a firm basis for its identity and capacity to act.
-  Shared, solid values that are consistent with its mission.
-  Flexible, participatory and inclusive governance.
-  Flexible structures, systems and policies that help fulfil its mission and strategy.
-  Diversified and well-managed resources.
-  A committed, recognised, supported staff with a strong sense of ethics.
-  Strong learning culture.

OD support is done through a structured partnership and based on 5 stages: Definition, Discovery, Dream, Design and Delivery.

## THE OD PROCESS CYCLE

The five steps are based on the appreciative inquiry<sup>1</sup> model. It is based on the principle that if an organisation or team wants to progress it must work on what is important to it, on its axes of excellence, on its strengths.



### 1. DEFINITION

- Identifying and understanding the client's strategic focus, culture and value.

- This phase is about the organisation and Well Grounded understanding each other and agreeing on what they want to do. It focuses on:

1. Understanding where the client is coming from, what they expect and how they view themselves. The seven benchmark guides the analysis and discussion.
2. Understanding the client's culture and values.

To discuss the changes desired by each of our organisations and to identify common change objectives This phase is made up with a series of discussions, resources exchanges, online surveys and meetings.

The Definition phase output is the baseline information about the organisation. The baseline information will guide the monitoring of progress.

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1. Appreciative inquiry (AI) is a model that seeks to engage stakeholders in self-determined change



## • 2. DISCOVERY

### • Appreciating the best of 'what is'.

- The Discovery phase is an extensive and collaborative search for 'the best of what is', the organisation's strengths, by focusing on times of organisational excellence. We work with each client to understand their strengths, potential, successes, opportunities and challenges using our organisational framework (the benchmarks). The Discovery phase involves conversations among many or all members of an organisation including external stakeholders, and members of the organisation's local community.

A key result of this process is a rich description of the organisation's positive core – it's tangible and intangible strengths, capabilities, resources and assets.



## • 3. DREAM

### • Imagining 'what could be'.

- The Dream phase is an exploration of 'what might be', expanding on 'the best of what is'. It examines past achievements and successes identified in the discovery phase to imagine new possibilities and envisage a preferred future.

It is a time for people to collectively explore their hopes and dreams for the kind of organisation and world they want to work and live in.

The outputs of the Dream phase include descriptions of the change that they want to see in their way of behaving and operating.



#### • 4. DESIGN

- Determining 'what should be'.
- The Design phase is about co-constructing the “grounded” vision of the future created in the Dream phase. We collaboratively design a customised OD process with each client. Design activities include detailed description of the social and technical infrastructures for the organisation that will bring the future alive.

Key outputs of this phase are the definition of the OD priorities and planning.



#### • 5. DELIVERY

- Creating the 'new version of the organisation'.
- We deliver a range of interventions over an extended period of time, sufficient to achieve real impact according to the OD plan co-developed with the client. The delivery will involve stakeholders needed to drive the change. The Destiny phase relies on individual and organisational commitments for change. During this phase we monitor and evaluate our performance and that of our client as well as the outcomes, for continued learning and improvement.

The result of this stage is generally an array of changes or improvement to the organisation's systems in diverse areas such as management practices, leadership development, operations, conflict transformation, project management, monitoring and evaluation, practice and approach, structure and governance, resource mobilisation, etc.

## AN EVOLVING FRAMEWORK

Well Grounded tries to be a learning organisation. We are still learning, and we often make mistakes! We take time to reflect about our practice and the impact of our work and we are constantly identifying what we might want to do differently in the future.

This OD document has been developed based on our work with our clients over the past ten years, the experiences of our team in working with civil society organisations and is informed by numerous other sources of ideas about OD. Our future challenge is to monitor and appreciate the contribution of our work to natural resource management and community rights.

We are doing our best to develop a working culture and approach that puts monitoring and learning at the centre of our approach.

