INNOVATIVE GRANT-MAKING:
GIVING VOICE TO THE MARGINALISED

The story of the Multi Agency Grants Initiative (MAGI) in South Africa (2006-2008)

Case Study

Written for The Atlantic Philanthropies, January 2009

Key

AC	Advisory committee
BLA	Breadline Africa
CBO	Community-based organisation
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex
MAGI	Multi Agency Grant Initiative
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
M & E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PO	Project officer
SCAT	Social Change Assistance Trust
SED	Sustainable economic development
WHEAT	Women's Hope Education and Training Trust

In reality, this is the beginning of an ongoing story. MAGI is a relatively new venture but there has been time enough to see its potential and share its learnings. In an increasingly polarised world, where the gap between the haves and have-nots is fast becoming a chasm, there is no time to be lost in providing support to the marginalised so that their voices can be heard in mainstream debates about development and human rights and their lives can take centre stage in understanding the challenges faced. This case study is based on a formative evaluation of MAGI, by Nell and Shapiro cc for MAGI in August 2008.

Table of Contents

In November 2008 members of organisations working against gender-related violence met at a workshop in Cape Town, sponsored by MAGI, to reflect on their work.

Photograph: MAGI

Executive summary

This case study describes how a group of grant-makers came together to meet the need they saw in South African society for a small-grant making mechanism, aimed specifically at community-based organisations (CBOS) working in the human rights and development fields. They formed a consortium of donors called the Multi Agency Grant Initiative (MAGI) to meet the needs of community-based service organisations and emerging membership-based social movements on the fringes or margins of the more mainstream development sector.

The consortium members believed that, if this grouping of organisations was to be strengthened in terms of infrastructure and understanding of the bigger picture of development and the origins of the need for development, their voice in the debates that concerned them should be augmented.

This original consortium, all the members of which were experienced grant-makers, agreed that the need to infuse funds into this emerging sector, in a targeted and strategic way, was not being sufficiently met. Their experience told them that collaborative models among donors could work. Many of them already gave large grants in South Africa but were frustrated by the restrictions on being able to make a difference at the grassroots level by giving small grants. A key part of the concept was matching funds, which would mean that considerably more could be leveraged from the original consortium members and any others who joined.

Both The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries (HIVOS) - as per its arrangement with the Dutch government - were able to contribute more on this matching principle. There are now six consortium members: HIVOS, The Atlantic Philanthropies, Breadline Africa (BLA), Women's Hope Education and Training Trust (WHEAT), Uthando (an associate member providing the dimension of South African business) and the Ford Foundation.

They are actively involved in the grant-making process, bringing a mixture of experience, enthusiasm and commitment to the table.

Although not discussed much, the underlying understanding of the need for the voice of marginalised people to be heard in advocacy debates was something that informed the thinking of all the original members.

The consortium members brought with them a range of sectors in which they were already active in their donor agency roles, and they saw the advantages of strengthening the sectors in which they already worked as well as making contacts in others. For the large-scale donors, more used to giving in excess of a million rand, this was an opportunity to provide small grants (up to R75

Piet and Grace Buffel, farmworkers evicted from a citrus and olive farm in Hartswater (2006). Illegal evictions makes up a significant proportion of the case load of advice offices in rural areas supported by MAGI.

Photograph: *JurgenSchadeberg*

000), an opportunity which the proportionately large administrative load usually associated with smaller grants prohibited. MAGI developed and administered a system that lightened this load without compromising on issues of accountability.

Within the MAGI model there was also room for targeted capacity-development directly, through the MAGI project officers, and through using strategic partners to mentor emerging organisations. Funds are allocated for this. Strategic partners is usually the term applied to networks and established organisations active in a particular sector, or in civil society generally, some of which provide key information and contacts and others of which are also used to do capacity-development with grantees and would-be grantees.

MAGI is located within HIVOS, which provides the managerial and administrative back-up. The small staff is made up of the head of the MAGI secretariat and three project officers (one of whom works for BLA and is seconded to MAGI for two days a week). The staff of MAGI is regarded by almost all of its stakeholders as one of its greatest assets. MAGI is a CBO-friendly model and the staff ensure that there is positive contact, support and a quick turnaround time. There is a commitment to what one grantee referred to as "an emphasis on interaction and communication with the grantees", generating a genuine sense of mutual partnership, with each side learning from the other.

The initiative got off the ground in 2006 and by the end of 2007 a total of 62 community-based and membership organisations had been supported across a number of sectors. Income committed for 2008 was R3 753 029. MAGI currently supports organisations in the categories of HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health and rights; sustainable economic development; culture and recreation; refugee and migrant rights; farm workers' rights and the rural poor; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender emancipation; and gender-based violence. It is about to add health, with an emphasis on public health issues, to this list, which may change or be rationalised as other donors come on board.

MAGI's contacts with the refugee sector enabled it to mobilise a call for proposals when the xenophobic violence broke out in South Africa during 2008. Within three weeks it had made eight grants of various sizes to help in the immediate aftermath of the crisis.

The Volcano Arts Project is a youth cultural project based in Cape Town which uses music dance and drama to educate young people about social issues such as substance abuse and HIV AIDS. The project is the beneficiary of Uthando ("Love") an independent travel agency that donates part of its proceeds to community development projects. Uthando is a partner in MAGI.

Photograph: *Uthando -SA*

While it is difficult to talk about "best" practice in so diverse a field, the head of the MAGI secretariat talks about "good" practice in small grant-making. The basic pillars of MAGI are grant-making; capacity-building; brokering linkages and referrals; monitoring and evaluation; and leveraging of additional funds within a consortium model. The key elements are accessibility (including flexibility); responsiveness; quality; quantity; cost-effectiveness; and accountability. Accountability is ensured through an innovative system that combines guided self-evaluation, external observation and a simple computerised system that can produce both quantitative and qualitative reports.

The system is still being finalised but has enormous potential, not only in terms of holding grantees accountable, but also in terms of measuring the progress of MAGI itself in its longer-term aim of strengthening the civil society sector. It is premised on simplifying application and reporting requirements, and supplementing this with support, either directly from MAGI or from one of the strategic partners. The case study looks at ways in which the system can be further refined to make it "state of the art".

MAGI has certain other ingredients that make it "good" practice: top-class people; the added value it provides in terms of leverage and brokering, as well as making emerging organisations accessible as grantees for larger agencies; a genuine partnership relationship; appropriateness in its dealings with grantees and the size of grants; and responsive and efficient systems. As it clarifies its overall intentionality or goal-orientedness, it will also be able to select grantees in a more focused and programmatic way.

MAGI is an exciting model despite, and perhaps because of, its evolving status. It is attempting to create a good practice model for grant-making that focuses on grassroots organisations and leads to the strengthening of marginalised voices in civil society in South Africa. It has made an impressive start and created a model that can be used as a basis for other grant-makers interested in contributing to creating a sustainable source of funding for the small initiatives and organisations that are often voiceless in wider civil society. Through it, marginalised people can be empowered and voice their needs. The process strengthens civil society as a whole. In this way, MAGI is helping to give deeper roots to the nascent democracy of post-liberation South Africa.

The Jikeleza ("pirouette") Dance Project, teaches dance (African, contemporary, Spanish and classical ballet) and music (marimbas and drumming) to children and young people from the informal settlements of Cape Town.

Photograph: Uthando-South Africa

I. There was a need

"… Strong democracy … needs a vibrant civil society to act independently of, and as a watchdog over, government …"

- Saras Jagwanth, UNESCO, MOST Discussion Paper 65

"We had a two-part aim in getting involved with MAGI: strengthening the voice of marginalised people in post-liberation South Africa and strengthening the grassroots level of our own strategy."

- Consortium member

"If people get a fair chance, their possibilities are almost unlimited."

- HIVOS staff member

Despite the changes since 1994, South Africa continues to enjoy a considerable degree of support from donors, and to have an overwhelming need for development initiatives. Much of the donor support comes from international sources, is channelled through the government and is bound by the provisions of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 to conform to the priorities of government policy. Even the independent foundations that fall outside the bilateral arrangements often conform to them. Others are aware that a strong civil society is a necessary dynamic if what has been called "the transformation project" in South Africa is to succeed in bringing socio-economic change to all the people of the country. They choose to focus particular attention on civil society in their programmes.

Civil society is not, however, homogenous and, in particular, there is a difference between strong, well-established non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and small, often struggling ones that are trying to fill the gaps that allow people to fall through the cracks of the system. For donors, the larger NGOs make easier partners. They communicate electronically; they speak the common language of development; they employ professionals, often with specialist knowledge; they are able to absorb and use large donations effectively. Large donations tend to be more cost-effective than small ones, allowing donors to keep overhead costs lower.

But there is another category of civil society organisation that includes community-based service organisations or nascent membership-based social movements on the fringes or margins of the more mainstream development sector. They are often unfamiliar with the world of international development debates and language, with the requirements of large-scale donors and are unable to absorb big grants but desperately need small ones. They also need help in strengthening their infrastructure and often need support in understanding the bigger picture. Strengthened capacity and broader understanding would move them into the arena of advocacy and give the marginalised a voice. Debates would no longer be about them, or exclude them. They, and those they represent, would inform and augment the debates.

Residents of the Ramaphosa settlement on Johannesburg's East Rand armed with pangas and other make-shift weapons, gather prior to attacking their migrant neighbours, during the xenophobic violence of May 2008.

Photograph: *Paul Botes, Amandla Magazine*

"The women in the group were in tears when I told them we had been given money. They felt no-one cared about refugee women and it made them feel cared about. It made having a place possible and gave the members confidence going forward."

– MAGI grantee

In the beginning

A group of people who had been working in grant-making in South Africa for many years got together and talked about the need for, and the possibility of, a small grant-making initiative that could address the gaps in the grant-making system. Although they worked for different agencies, they agreed that the need to be able to infuse funds strategically and effectively into community level civil society activities was a priority. Their experience told them that collaborative models among donors could work. The fact that they all worked for donors who made large-scale grants and were frustrated at not being able to make a difference at the grassroots level increased their sense of urgency.

While they first began talking in 2003, the initiative really got off the ground in 2006, with the Dutch-funded HIVOS, The Atlantic Philanthropies and Breadline Africa (BLA) coming on board initially. A key concept was the idea of matching funds, which would mean that considerably more money could be leveraged from the original consortium members and any others who joined. Both Atlantic and HIVOS (as per its arrangement with the Dutch government) were able to contribute more based on this matching principle.

Later, others joined, including the Women's Hope Education and Training Trust (WHEAT), confirming the commitment of all the consortium members to addressing gender issues actively. Uthando, while more of an associate member, added another dimension. The Ford Foundation, another large-scale donor looking for ways to reach a grassroots level, has since joined. MAGI continues to look for other consortium members as resource streams that will enable it to continue to function even if any of the current members withdraw.

Although, in the early days, the model was still evolving, the initiators knew that they wanted to set up a good system for small grant-making and that they wanted to focus on community-based organisations (CBOs) rather than the better organised and resourced non-governmental (NGO) level. Although not discussed much, the underlying understanding of the need for the voice

Heavily-armed police protect the Central Methodist Church in central Johannesburg – a refuge for thousands of homeless Zimbabwean refugees, which was attacked during the xenophobic violence of May 2008. MAGI raised over RND 1 million in a few days for humanitarian relief and public awareness campaigns to counter xenophobia.

Photograph: *Gerald Kraak*

of marginalised people to be heard in advocacy debates was something that informed the thinking of all the original consortium members. They brought with them a range of sectors in which they were already active in their donor agency roles and saw the advantages of strengthening the sectors in which they already worked as well as making contacts in others.

The key components of MAGI are the grantees, the donor representatives, the staff and the strategic partners.

> "We have learned from the workshops MAGI funded that people appreciate having this service and women now say they are willing to stand up and deal with domestic violence. The participants are helping each other. It is a great honour to be funded by MAGI – it is the first funding we have received in such bulk."

-John Moerane of the Lethabong Advice Centre
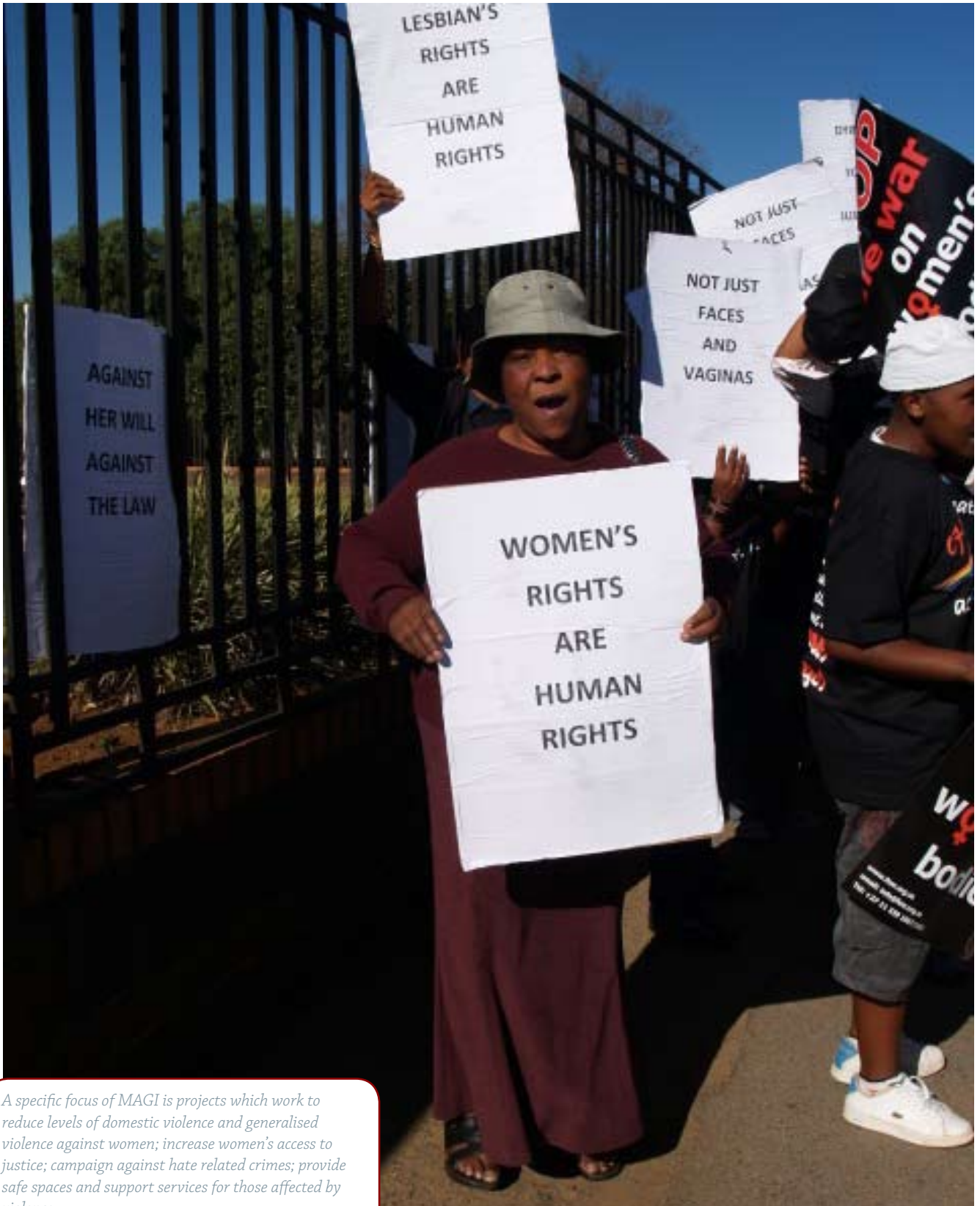
A specific focus of MAGI is projects which work to reduce levels of domestic violence and generalised violence against women; increase women's access to justice; campaign against hate related crimes; provide safe spaces and support services for those affected by violence.

Photograph: *Forum for the Empowerment of Women*

II. Who is MAGI?

"The money gives us security so we can plan; we can enter our children for music exams - last year they all passed and many got distinctions. We do classical and Amapondo for African music. Some of these kids were involved in housebreaking at the age of 11 and teachers asked us to involve them."

- Leanne Dollman from the Hout Bay Music Project

The grantees

MAGI currently funds organisations in seven sectors, to which it is about to add another - health. These sectors are:

- HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Sustainable economic development;
- Culture and recreation;
- Refugee and migrant rights;
- Rights of farmworkers and the rural poor;
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and intersex (LGBTI) emancipation; and
- Gender-based violence.

The choice of sectors is largely related to those that were already being funded by the donors that are involved in the MAGI consortium. Within the sectors, there is an emphasis on rights-based development and gender concerns are a cross-cutting issue. The areas are qualified with some focus. So, for example, culture and recreation is qualified by "activities that have a clearly articulated development component such as addressing social issues"; refugee rights is qualified by "focus on projects promoting rights awareness and protection of marginalised migrant groups (including refugees and asylum seekers)".

That MAGI already funded in the area of refugee rights enabled it to respond very quickly when there was an outbreak of violent xenophobia in South Africa. Within days a call had gone out, through established connections in the sector, for proposals and the consortium members had agreed to provide an additional R1 000 000 to meet the need. Within three weeks, MAGI had made eight grants of various sizes that covered the production of documentaries and public service announcements against xenophobia; operational costs for community road shows and cultural events; a mass public demonstration; transport and pamphlets for setting up street committees to oppose xenophobia and to assist in facilitating the return and reintegration of victims of violence into communities; as well as basics such as

The Hout Bay Music Project teaches music, mainly string instruments, voice and drumming, to approximately 60 children from the historically disadvantaged communities of Hangberg, Harbour Village and Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay. In addition, the project runs life-orientation programmes which address issues of self esteem, HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy.

Photograph: *Uthando South Africa*

"It was amazing, it got things off the ground. There has never been anything like it. We strategised about the challenges of the future and looking at the sector in the wider context. We see ourselves as the leaders of the future and feel the sector depends on our development."

- Zak Mbele on the first LGBTI Youth Lekgotla

"We like the fact that the money from BLA comes from individuals who want to make a contribution."

- Consortium member

blankets and food.

By the end of 2007, a total of 62 community-based and membership organisations had been supported across all the sectors and income committed for 2008 was R3 753 029. Who are the grantees? One is **Lethabong**, a semi-formal settlement with 70% unemployment, where three to five voluntary staff members provide advice and referrals to women who are survivors of domestic violence and human rights abuses. Another is an **LGBTI Youth Leaders' Lekgotla** (gathering), which MAGI has supported for two years and which has resulted in the drawing up of an LGBTI Youth Charter and the launch of an LGBTI youth organisation. The **Hout Bay Music Project** teaches children from an informal settlement in the middle of a high-end suburb to play musical instruments, as well as lifeskills. The **Mbekweni Community Health Project**, on the outskirts of semi-rural Paarl, contributes to the health care of the community, providing information, doing practical work and running advocacy events. The **Whole World Women Association** is a self-help support group for refugee women in the Western Cape, empowering refugee women and improving their self-esteem, self-image and quality of life. One of the commitments of the organisation is to grow the voice of refugee women. A cluster of small-town legal advice offices for farm workers is funded through the **Social Change Assistance Trust** (SCAT). **Divine Inspirations** is a sustainable economic development (SED) project in the cold mountains of the Northern Cape, producing and propagating medicinal plants with the support of an intermediary organisation from rural Elgin. It is a 6km walk from the farm house to the fields and MAGI money helped to build a hut where participants, mainly women, can stay overnight. The MAGI grant is also being used as leverage to get the National Development Agency involved.

> "It made all the difference. We wouldn't exist if it wasn't for them. Because of that funding everyone else has come on board – they believed in what we were doing and didn't make demands."
>
> *- Mary Tal of the*
> *Whole World Women Association*

Tshikululu

MAGI is still looking at other possible partners, and is talking to Tshikululu (Venda name of the African rock fig). Tshikulu gives funds to support development initiatives "which take root in small gaps and in adverse conditions, and which grow over time, to bring new life into seemingly hostile circumstances".

Tshikululu is a leading social investment consultancy, representing the social responsibility arm of a number of major South African corporates. It would bring a large donor with a South African base to the mix.

The donors

A key aspect of the MAGI model is the consortium of donors that has come together to fund the grants. At the moment, they are HIVOS, BLA, The Atlantic Philanthropies, Women's Hope Education and Training (WHEAT), and the Ford Foundation. The Ford Foundation representatives sit on the advisory committee (AC) and participate in discussions, but do not participate in the actual decision on who does or does not get grants because of Ford's own regulations in this regard. In addition, Uthando South Africa, while it does not sit on the advisory committee, contributes as a donor and its funding is matched by some of the other consortium members.

It is a truism in the funding world that "people give to people". The active involvement of the consortium members in the grant-making process, therefore, is an important aspect of the MAGI model. A number of the representatives have considerable experience, knowledge of sectors, knowledge of South Africa and of funding in South Africa. The HIVOS southern African regional representative and the BLA representative have been involved from the beginning of MAGI. In addition, the HIVOS South Africa representative is head of the secretariat that runs the initiative and a BLA staff member is seconded to MAGI as a project officer (PO) for two days a week.

The members are very different and, while development concerns are something they share, their understanding of development is coloured by the different organisations from which they come. This creates some dissonance although, possibly, more because the differences have not been discussed upfront than because they would necessarily lead to major disagreements.

There is a crucial difference between large scale donors that bring in most of the money and see the fund as a way of giving at the grassroots level, and smaller scale funders that see it as an extension of "business as usual". Both parts of this equation bring something to the table. But they also bring different expectations and those need to be looked at and, if possible, resolved.

Those members that fall to the smaller funder side of the continuum bring a spontaneity that adds to the mix. They also contribute to the indigenous character of the fund. There is a need for flexible parameters, but only if those parameters include a real understanding of, and agreement on, the model and its goals. This applies both to how things are done and to the underpinning principles by which the consortium members understand what they are trying to achieve.

A key issue that needs to be discussed is the link between human rights and development. For organisations such as HIVOS, Atlantic and Ford Foundation, this is an almost taken-for-granted link, but not necessarily

> "We want to support grassroots women because they are key people in our social and economic development ... what we put in is matched by MAGI and we often get sponsorship from corporates. There are so many small organisations – who is going to take care of them?"
>
> *- WHEAT representative*

> "The project officer was open and understanding and explained it very carefully – what could happen and what could not – and didn't raise unrealistic hopes."
>
> *-Grantee*

everyone has had the opportunity to explore it thoroughly. This speaks to the need, expressed by some members, for the consortium to be not only a grant-making body which allows for networks and referrals, but also a learning forum where more fundamental issues can be discussed.

Discussions among development agencies in other forums have pointed to the need for human rights to be at the heart of efforts to achieve human development, but also to an eagerness on the part of the community of practice in grant-making to discuss such issues as the exact meaning of human rights, the link between human rights and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and a common understanding of a human rights approach to development programming. At the core of the discussions is the need for development to be equitable, just and sustainable.[1]

Adding to the mix

Uthando means "love". Uthando South Africa sees itself as a partnership between the fortunate people of the world and those less fortunate. "It is about creating an international family of compassionate and generous people who are committed to empowering and encouraging people, and making a significant difference in the lives of the most destitute and marginalised communities living in Southern Africa." Its strategy is to present the tourism industry "with an innovative and unique Responsible Tourism Initiative", where money is raised by tour operators selling and promoting a South Africa levy in the form of an amount of money added on to each itinerary sold in which South Africa is the destination. The tax is voluntary and the money goes to community projects. The idea is for Uthando to run weekly scheduled trips to the projects being funded (this is already happening to some degree, with a large percentage of the tour costs going to the projects visited) so that their clients are offered "an authentic introduction to the social problems confronting so many South Africans and the inspirational ways in which they are being handled". These trips have already resulted in visitors making spontaneous additional donations. MAGI helped Uthando set itself up and matches funding on MAGI projects. James Fernie of Uthando sees the relationship with MAGI as "a kind of big brother scenario".

[1] Human Rights and the MDGs: Making the Link, http://www.hurilink.org/Primer-HR-MDGs.pdf

Project officers from HIVOS and Atlantic visit the Mamadi Advice Office near Alldays in Limpopo Province. Mamadi provides legal advice and support on labour matters to migrant workers from Zimbawe, working on farms in the area; the office also assists Zimbabwean asylum seekers .

Photograph: *Helen Macdonald*

Andrew Warner is the BLA project officer, working for MAGI in Cape Town. He has a bachelor of business science with majors in accounting and finance. He worked in corporate finance for six years, locally and in the UK. He has also volunteered as a build co-ordinator for Habitat 4 Humanity in Cape Town, working with 2 000 volunteers over two years to build about 60 houses in townships. What he likes about his work now is **"engaging with a diverse group of funding partners with valuable experience and engaging with, and finding, grassroots projects that are doing incredible work with often very little funding".**

We value the people we work with; they are not just grantees but fellow travellers on the journey."

- Project/programme officer

The staff

MAGI staff comprises a programme officer, two project officers (POs) and a head of secretariat who manages the initiative but is employed by HIVOS, one of the consortium partners, from whose Johannesburg office MAGI is run. As noted, one of the project officers is actually a BLA employee who works in Cape Town, giving MAGI two days a week.

The staff is regarded by almost all the stakeholders as one of MAGI's greatest assets. Even with the impossibility of cloning exact replicas, they need to be seen as an essential element of the MAGI model. The simplicity and support in application, the responsiveness and quick turnaround time, staff accessibility and usefulness were highly praised by all grantees with whom we spoke. For them, it was this approach that made the model CBO-friendly and supportive.

Critical to the MAGI model is what one grantee referred to as "an emphasis on interaction and communication with grantees". It is this that makes the relationship between MAGI and the grantees a genuine partnership, with each side learning from the other.

At the moment, MAGI staff is committed to making at least one on-site visit to each grantee (in the Western Cape this seems to be in addition to a pre-visit in response to most applications). MAGI believes that the most the current staff complement of three POs could handle is about 70 grants a year (including potential repeat grants and new ones). The addition of health as a sector might mean the employment of an additional PO whose speciality is health - this changes the model by introducing the notion of specialist rather than generalist POs, but a PO with special knowledge of health and generalist knowledge in other areas of development would address this. Currently, MAGI has an overwhelming focus on the Western Cape and Gauteng, where the model has been piloted, but the intention is to make grants nationally. The wider the spread of the grantees, the more time required to assess and service them, even using the strategic partner model. A surprise visit to some of the grantees would require a two-day drive.

Delegates socialising at the second national LGBTI youth lekgotla (gathering) in Grahamstown (July 2008). The lekgotla brings together LGBTI youth and student organisations annually to discuss strategy.

Photograph: MAGI

Zak Mbhele has been studying towards an honours degree in international relations. Born in Durban and raised in Johannesburg, his "career passion is African politics and economic development". What he likes most about being a project officer for MAGI is that *"it has opened my eyes to a whole other reality and widened my perspective on what's out there. The whole grant-making/donor arena is quite a hidden world unless one is in it. It's also gratifying to be in work that's contributing and making a real difference in the world."*

There is no doubt that the grantees find visits from MAGI staff productive. There are ways of addressing the issue of a potential need for more staff: limiting the geographical spread for convenience sake; or limiting the number of grantees. There are definite advantages to these options but they also put limitations on the specific MAGI model and elements of the model such as accessibility, responsiveness, quality, quantity, cost-effectiveness and accountability. MAGI will need to weigh up the advantages of more direct staff visits against accessibility to more CBOs and cost-effectiveness.

One way of balancing cost-effectiveness against quantity, while retaining a CBO focus, would be to give some larger grants (in some kind of ratio, say one quarter larger and three quarters within the current range) to CBOs that have proved their worth and accountability but have not yet reached the stage, as MAGI would like, of getting sufficient funding from larger donors. That would enable MAGI to give away more money without necessarily increasing overheads.[2]

It could look at other ways of increasing quality (and more use of strategic partners is an option). It could make more systematic use of the current visits - a format exists for these visits but needs to be used more rigorously - in terms of the monitoring and evaluation system, by using them to ensure that the information loaded on the computerised system reflects both the facts and the stories. This adds an element of time to the work of the PO but it also provides an opportunity for reflection which can feed into MAGI generally.

---

[2] The MAGI head of secretariat would like to limit the grant-making to not more then R3 million in small grants in a year, but would increase this by R1 million if some of it was given out in medium-sized grants of R250 000. Such sums frighten some of the AC members and they certainly increase the risk element, which seems to be minimal at the moment, with the MAGI head of secretariat saying to us: "I am pleasantly surprised at the lack of corruption and at the commitment of the grantees to use the money in an accountable way."

Clients seeking legal advice and support wait their turn at a rural advice office.

Photograph: *The Association of University Legal Aid Institutions*

"We need to use strategic partners more – to do mentoring and to expose small CBOs to the wider issues in the sector."

-Donor

"We have learned an enormous amount from working with the grantee."

-Strategic partner

"Strategic partners know the field and help us make informed decisions."

- Project/programme officer

The strategic partners

One of the tools used by MAGI is strategic partners, who increase the reach of the staff in an innovative way.

What are strategic partners in the MAGI model? Most usefully the term applies to networks and established organisations active in a particular sector, or in civil society generally, some of which provide key information and contacts and others of which are also used to do capacity-development with grantees and would-be grantees. Funds are allocated for this. These partners are not used as gate-keepers but as key informants, "intelligence on the ground", as one staff member put it, not only about a specific applicant but about the sector as a whole. Other strategic partners would include donors from outside the consortium from whom applicants might access funds. There may even be times when a government department is a strategic partner because additional funds can be leveraged from it for a specific purpose.

Activists from Lulekusizwe in front of their office in Guguletu. Lulekusizwe is a support group for black lesbians in greater Cape Town.

Photograph: MAGI

III. What is the MAGI model?

Other models do exist for small grant-making in South Africa, each with its strengths, but the MAGI combination is what makes it special.

The MAGI head of secretariat believes that one should be talking about good practice rather than best practice. There are, as he says, "many ways to skin a cat"! MAGI is attempting to provide a model for one way of making it possible to do small grant-making so that it counts and makes a difference, not only to a few individuals, organisations or even communities that may benefit, but more fundamentally than that, so that it strengthens civil society and contributes to creating a healthy balance of power in our society. No matter how much some would like to see development as neutral, it is not. MAGI is about more than improving the quality of life of, and service delivery to, poor women and men in communities (which could, for example, be achieved by a soup kitchen), although it certainly does not exclude this.

The summary of the model in the block should be seen as one of an evolving model which is learning and clarifying all the time.

In summary

In setting up a small grant-making initiative you need a clear intention. In this case it was "strengthening the voice of the marginalised in particular and civil society in general".

MAGI is not unique as a small grant-making initiative, but it is an attempt to respond to a unique set of imperatives and elements in a particular way:

Basic pillars:

- Grant-making;
- Capacity-building;
- Brokering linkages and referrals;
- Monitoring and evaluation; and;
- Leverage of additional funds within a consortium model.

Key elements:

- Accessibility (including flexibility);
- Responsiveness;
- Quality;
- Quantity;
- Cost-effectiveness; and
- Accountability.

Women cross Beit Bridge, the border post between Zimbabwe and South Africa. In response to the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, thousands have sought refuge in South Africa. MAGI supports a number of organisations that provide legal advice and support to Zimbabwean asylum seekers in the border town of Musina and further afield.

Photograph: *Helen Macdonald*

"I think the sectors where we have the most impact are those where there is commonality of interest among the donors."

- Donor

MAGI is still a new initiative and it is an evolving one. It is not trying to be like other models, good though they may be, but to bring together a particular set of imperatives and to test how best they can interact to produce good grant-making.

The basic pillars of MAGI are:

- Grant-making;
- Capacity-building (this is not only about better governance and record-keeping but is also about better understanding of one's own sector and the structural basis for the problems confronted);
- Brokering linkages and referrals;
- Monitoring and evaluation; and
- Leveraging additional funds within a consortium model.

The key elements are:

- Accessibility (which includes flexibility);
- Responsiveness;
- Quality;
- Quantity;
- Cost-effectiveness;[3] and
- Accountability.

In addition, given the success of the initiative thus far, within the limitations of its emerging mode, the ingredients that seem to be required are:

- Top-class people, with experience and networks in development, or with the potential to develop these, and with passion for, and commitment to, what they are doing.
- Added value, through leveraging additional funds, through the in-built networking nature of the consortium, through innovative mechanisms to facilitate capacity-building and through an innovative monitoring and evaluation system. At another level, value is added for consortium members: this may be in the form of leveraging additional money, extending the scope of funding and/or getting to a constituency not

---

[3] *Being located in a multi-purpose granting agency such as HIVOS adds to cost-effectiveness.*

Volcano Arts project perform a play at a local Nyanga school (Cape Town) to make young people aware of the danger of "Tik" (crystal meth) addiction.

Photograph: *Uthando*

normally reached as a way of strengthening a sector's contribution.

- A genuine partnership approach to giving away money that involves donors, grantees, staff and strategic partners.

- Appropriateness in the way of giving, the size of the grants, the forms of capacity-building, and the expectations from MAGI of the grantees. This includes ways of exiting.

- Responsive/efficient systems.

Elements or ingredients that are important and which are implied in the model but still require more focused attention are:

- Reflection, both on a project by project basis and within MAGI itself, using monitoring and evaluation information and a learning approach to partnership, both among the consortium members and with strategic partners.

- Clearer "intentionality" or "goal orientedness" that focuses on what the initiative wants to achieve longer term, other than the existence of a useful form, and develops indicators for this that can be included in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Both these elements should, inevitably, affect selection, whether of projects, focus areas or geographic areas. They should also lead to a balancing and even targeting of types of projects funded in terms of service, advocacy, crisis relief, sectoral impact and so on.

As already noted, the fit of consortium members is also a factor that needs to be addressed so that those involved are on the same page and are clear and in agreement about the long-term goals of the initiative. To ensure this, shared strategic reflection is a key factor.

"If MAGI is really trying to measure its impact then they need more intentional outcomes and to be stricter on approvals to fit outcomes."

- Project/programme officer

IV. Systems and procedures

MAGI grant process cycle

APPLICATION FORM → Entered on project database with project data sheet → Checked against general and sector specific criteria → ◆ → **Info checked and expanded**
- PO visit
- Info from strategic partner
- Follow up phone call

→ ◆ →

Completed by applicant, can ask for help (criteria are provided on form)

Automatic rejection letter – personalised

Reject – personalised rejection letter

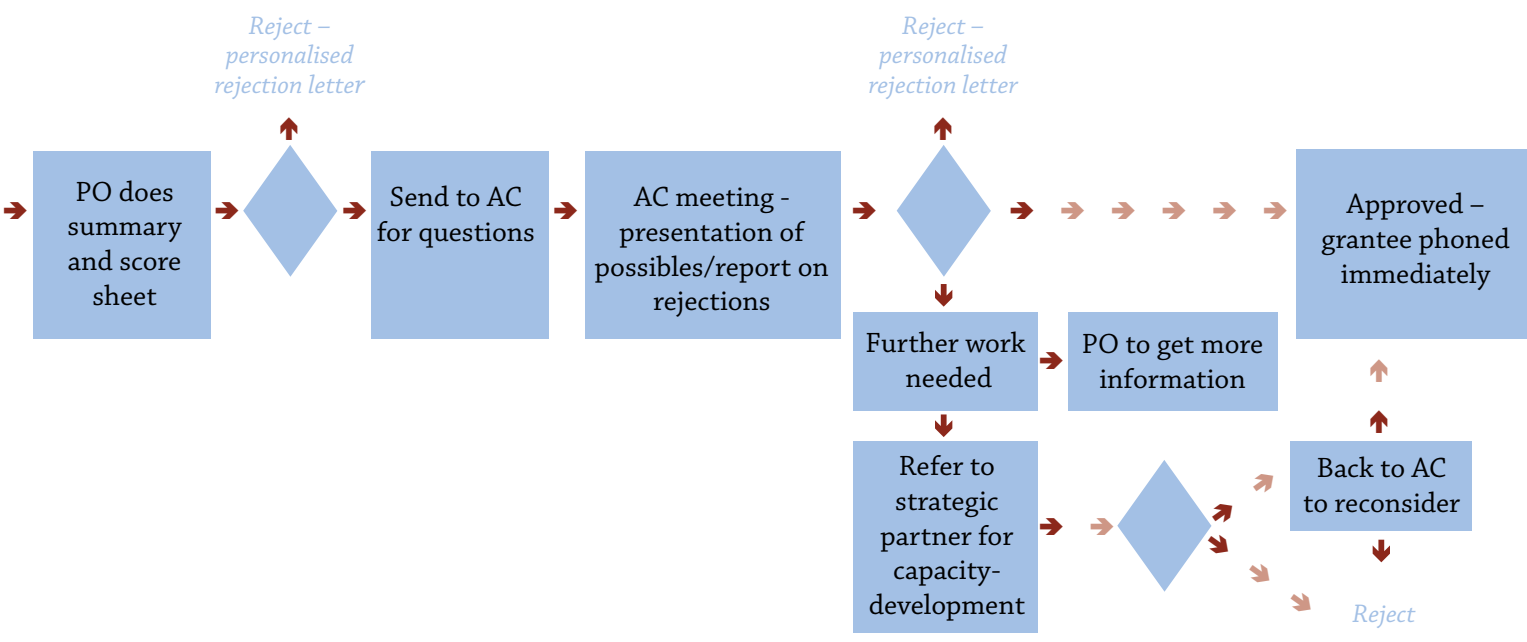*Refer to strategic partner for capacity-development*

The MAGI funding cycle is premised on simplifying application and reporting requirements, while supporting capacity-building to strengthen the grantees. Staff is currently budgeting at least one physical visit to each grantee during the cycle but is also using targeted training, mentoring and peer learning as tools for capacity-development. The intention is that emerging CBOs will, through the MAGI grants, become more sustainable in the longer term.

The application process includes a call for proposals (with an application form available on the MAGI website as well as non-electronically); clarity on what is and what is not[4] funded; desk appraisal of projects (sometimes accompanied by a site or field visit, although additional information is sometimes garnered through networking in the sector); presentation of a summary to the Advisory Committee (AC), which is a management committee mandated to make decisions on applications; decision-making; contracting; and monitoring and evaluation. Provision is also made for providing capacity support to would-be grantees from programme funds.

HIVOS-South Africa is the lead organisation in terms of management of the initiative and takes responsibility for management and maintenance of a programme database, management and updating of the website, financial management of the grant programme, reporting to donors, and implementation of a jointly agreed upon monitoring and evaluation framework.

One of the strengths of the system is that it brings together a group of people (at AC level) with a broad network of donor links. Where a worthwhile project application is received but does not fit within the MAGI criteria, it may well be that a member of the AC can make a suggestion as to where it might be more successfully submitted, information which the POs would pass on to the applicant.

[4] *Exclusions specified are bursaries, individual educare institutions, individual entrepreneurs to establish businesses and loans, individual or otherwise.*

| PO does summary and score sheet | | Send to AC for questions | AC meeting - presentation of possibles/report on rejections | | | Approved – grantee phoned immediately |

Further work needed → PO to get more information

Refer to strategic partner for capacity-development
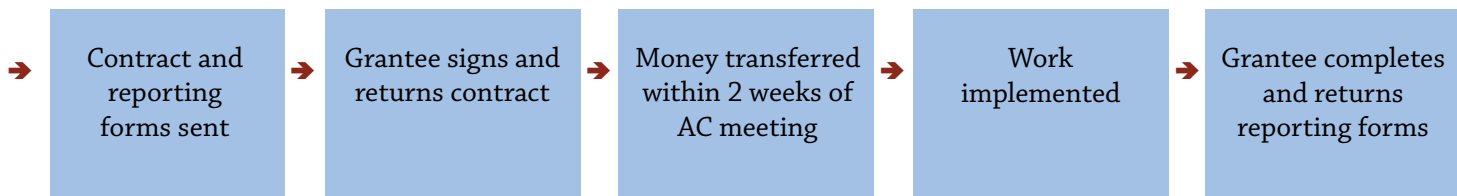
Back to AC to reconsider

Reject

There is some out-of-cycle funding based on a round robin consulting process in urgent cases. On the whole, however, the preference is for applicants to work within the three annual deadlines which are at the end of February, June and September. The response to the xenophobic attacks in South Africa showed how MAGI was able to put into action what it had learned from its normal cycle in a civil crisis.

The actual procedures and systems have three major phases: application, grant-making and monitoring and evaluation. In all three, the intention is to keep the process as simple as possible both to ensure accessibility for grassroots community-based organisations and to ensure that the principle of accountability is upheld without excessive overhead costs. At the core of this particular model is the balance between strengthening the civil society sector, particularly that encompassing the most marginalised in society, and ensuring accountability in a way that is cost-effective. To do this, the model has to be responsive, build capacity and build in accountability without raising overheads excessively, one of the dangers of any small grant-making model.[5] The model also aims for quantity as well as quality (and in this is different from some other small grant-making agencies where quantity is not necessarily a criterion). The system is, therefore, as noted above, geared to meet the challenges of:

• Accessibility;
• Responsiveness;

[5]*It costs as much to give away small amounts of money as to give away large amounts, in terms of project officer (PO) time and administration. This increases the ratio of administrative costs to grant in small grant-making and one of the innovative elements of the MAGI model is its attempt to do responsible grant-making without raising overheads excessively. Most donors would find overheads of 15% to 20% acceptable. MAGI is currently slightly above 20%. In this context, one interviewee suggested that 30% was more realistic. Nevertheless, the aim is to keep overheads as low as possible without compromising quality.*

Contract and reporting forms sent	→	Grantee signs and returns contract	→	Money transferred within 2 weeks of AC meeting	→	Work implemented	→	Grantee completes and returns reporting forms

• Quality (including capacity-building);
• Quantity[6];
• Cost-effectiveness; and
• Accountability.

While none of these elements is unique in itself, the combination is. In this context, the system takes on a special value, enabling project staff to be accessible, respond, build capacity and monitor quality and accountability in as cost-effective a way as possible.

MAGI is a new initiative still in its formative stages. It has made great progress towards achieving a system that can do this. However, there are still some gaps where tightening is needed to make the system state of the art. These gaps lie in the process of grant approval, guidance to grantees in reporting, and effective linking of the cycle to the monitoring and evaluation process.

With regard to the application process, an application form exists that all grantees spoken to, said was easy to complete. Although some applicants get a pre-visit before the application is put to the AC, in some instances additional and confirmatory information is sought via telephone, networks and other organisations active in the sector.

Once an application has, firstly, passed the criterion of sector-relevance and basic sector indicators, and additional information has been gathered, the PO involved writes a summary report, with a recommendation, for the AC. These are sent by email in advance of the AC meeting to allow AC members to ask for additional information. All proposals that have passed the first sifting are presented at the one-day-per-cycle AC meeting. As the number of proposals grows, this process may have to be streamlined by relying on the round robin method for the non-controversial proposals, before an AC meeting. (This happens now to some degree as follow-up when more information on a project is requested at an AC meeting.)

The narrative summary could be supplemented by a scoring against significant MAGI criteria in a schedule so that the project officer reasoning is clear. This might allow more time for what one AC member called "learning

[6] One of the distinctive things about MAGI is its attempt to show that quality and quantity are not mutually exclusive. It is not just trying to give away money but trying to do so in a way that demonstrates innovative systems to ensure accountability.

PO uses all forms to complete a form which will be entered electronically, giving all necessary monitoring and evaluation information	PO makes a recommendation about further funding and the cycle begins again

meetings" which, in addition to approving proposals, could look at issues of strategy and overall impact, not only within sectors, but across the civil society sector, which is where the interests of all consortium members, with regard to this fund, lie.
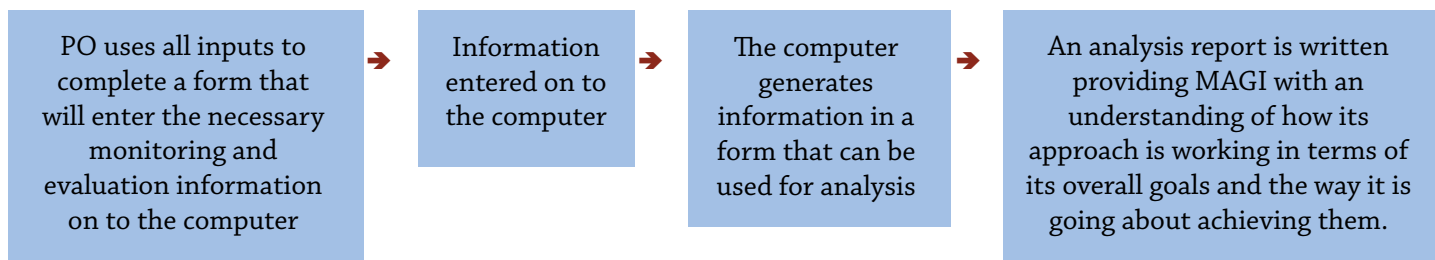
There has always been an intention to provide grantees with financial and narrative report back formats, something the grantees spoken to would like. They would also like to know what the "MAGI indicators are", in addition to the specific indicators for their projects. If structured properly, the narrative format could help grantees think about outcomes and results in a more focused manner. It could also assist the PO in evaluating MAGI's contribution at the project/organisational level, sector level and general MAGI intentionality level. It would also feed into an internal form that ensured that POs signed off on the information provided by grantees. This would save time and improve accuracy when an evaluation analysis is done. A draft form for consideration is included in Appendix 1. This tightening up would enable MAGI to make better use of the computerised system and to provide quantitative and qualitative information, individual and aggregated, through reports generated by the system as soon as the information had been entered.

Monitoring and evaluation is one of the recognised pillars of the work of MAGI. The purpose of this is both capacity-building at the grantee level and ensuring that there is accountability for funds given, from the grantees to MAGI, and from MAGI to the donors. At the capacity-building level, thinking in terms of results rather than just outputs moves organisations to a more strategic level. It is not enough just to run four workshops; they are pushed to ask themselves, "What was achieved by those workshops? Where did they take us in terms of the difference we are trying to make?" This kind of thinking is a cornerstone of organisational capacity-0development.

At an accountability level, monitoring and evaluation is the mechanism by which grant-making proves its worth. Few people and few organisations will continue to make contributions if they cannot see some return on their investment and, in development, that return is measured in terms of an improving situation.

Grant size and frequency

Maximum grant size is determined from time to time by the advisory committee representing the donor agencies. Within set criteria, multi-year granting for up to two years may be made. In this case, expectations in terms of organisational development are higher for the second year (for example, an audit is expected and grantees are helped to meet this requirement).

V. Monitoring and evaluation

MAGI evaluation process

PO uses all inputs to complete a form that will enter the necessary monitoring and evaluation information on to the computer	→ Information entered on to the computer	→ The computer generates information in a form that can be used for analysis	→ An analysis report is written providing MAGI with an understanding of how its approach is working in terms of its overall goals and the way it is going about achieving them.

M AGI has chosen to use a particular model of evaluation - "developmental evaluation"[7]. It is a dynamic model that makes allowance for the constantly evolving nature of civil society, and for the need for testing a variety of innovative ways of piloting development work. Its developmental approach does not obviate the necessity for longer-term intentionality and for testing the immediate context of "how" and "what" against their value for contributing to, in this case, a stronger and more vibrant civil society. The accountability element in MAGI is certainly about ensuring that money spent is spent in the way intended, but it is even more so about testing the validity of MAGI as an innovative grant-making mechanism that makes a difference within the broader framework of development. This understanding and commitment are one of MAGI's strengths and, if MAGI gets the "how" of monitoring and evaluation right at both these levels, then there is much to learn from it. Monitoring and evaluation are too often afterthoughts in development. The process is too often reliant on indicators that are too vague to be measured or that would require great expenditure in terms of establishing benchmarks and then measuring progress against them. (For example, "The attitudes of people have changed".) On the other hand, they too often rely on easy indicators that can be measured by counting ("There are 10 more black women leaders in the sector than there were three years ago.") The MAGI model offers the opportunity to combine the measurable (quantitative) with the qualitative. This is done through a longitudinal process of collecting data about a relatively big number of projects in civil society, taking into account both quantitative and qualitative information. Because it measures MAGI's success through this, it allows for some form of plausible attribution to the fund and the way in which it works. There is no way of turning this into a science and, we think, rightly so. The subjective element is part of it. If, however, the MAGI system is used properly, then there is scope for testing the reliability of subjective opinions.

What will be required is for POs to use due diligence at the end of each

[7] Developed by Michael Patton, the approach is seen as particularly useful for emergent programmes and in the context of capacity-building through monitoring and evaluation. It prioritises careful tracking, through monitoring and evaluation, where reporting on what has been done is seen as a form of accountability. (www.mcconellfoundation.ca/default.aspx?page=139)

As many as six million South Africans are infected with HIV and AIDS claims a thousand lives every day. An objective of the MAGI programme is to increase access to life-saving treatment and to support education and awareness programmes about HIV and AIDS that help prevent further infections.

Photograph: *Henner Frankenfeld/Picturenet Africa*

project, scoring projects against a set of indicators, using information that has been gathered from initial and later field visits, strategic partners and, most importantly, from the projects themselves, to make assessments that, while expressed in quantitative terms, are in fact qualitative judgments. The computer will then allow this data to be turned into meaningful reports, although - and we think this is a blessing - it requires a human to draw out and make sense of the meaning. In addition, information is fed into the computer with the stories, the narratives that bring the figures to life. The fulcrum on which all of this is dependent is the accurate and thoughtful completion, by the PO, of a final form, the information from which gets entered into the computer (see Appendix 1). Because all the other information is available as well (the information from which the PO worked), it is possible, through checks, to pick up any problems or biases or incompetence on the part of the PO (currently not a problem but it could be in the future) that affect the data.

If that one form, as proposed, is completed correctly and at the right time, then the work that took six weeks to complete to produce the last analysis done (at the end of December 2007) could, we believe, be done in one week. In that case the analyst was struggling with incomplete data, with having to go back to projects completed more than a year before and get details all had forgotten or had never known, and to make judgments against MAGI indicators that needed some refining (and probably still do). Most of the work he did manually could be done by the computer, and far more could be done in terms of cross-referencing. For example, are we more likely to get the results MAGI wants to see if a project from this sector is crosscutting with two other sectors? Is the total number of women involved related to an increase in civil society activity and/or even policy change? Do linkages between organisations result in joint activities? The system could, to some degree at least, answer the questions put by the MAGI head of secretariat: How do

Para-legals from advice offices in Limpopo Province at a training workshop (in Musina) on how to deal with asylum seekers, sponsored by MAGI in July 2008.

Photograph: *Musina Legal Advice Office*

we grow sectors so that the voices of strong organisations representing community interests are heard? Which kinds of grants are more likely to affect a sector rather than a community or individuals? This kind of cross-referencing is almost impossible to do manually, certainly if one is talking about literally hundreds of projects over five years. In addition, if the system was set up to record relevant stories to illustrate strengths and weaknesses, based on the actual projects, reports would come alive for all stakeholders and for anyone interested in the dynamics of change in civil society. The PO would be recording the relevant stories while they were fresh in his or her mind, for retrieval when needed. The basic system already put in place by MAGI means that it should not be over-complicated to include this refinement.

Of course, the process of monitoring and evaluation does not end with the results. What is important is what has been learned, such as: if that is so, maybe we need to fund more of this kind of organisation or activity; if that is so, then maybe the capacity-building element of our work would be strengthened by doing this; and so on. Monitoring and evaluation should be a living tool for doing things better, a spur to increased understanding and evolving action. And the magic of this system on which MAGI is working is that, once it is fully operational, it will provide meaningful monitoring and evaluation data in a very cost-effective way. Of course, there is no magic – the system will not produce anything that has not been entered on it with due diligence and consideration, but once the information is there, the possibilities are exciting. It is not that this kind of monitoring and evaluation should replace all others, but it would be an invaluable addition to increasing the body of knowledge about development, and especially about adding value to development based on small grant-making.

VI. Where is MAGI now?

> "Maybe with fewer sectors we could take a deeper look. We need to do deeper homework."
>
> *- Project/programme officer*

MAGI is an exciting model despite, and perhaps because of, its evolving status. It is attempting to create a good practice model for grant-making that focuses on grassroots organisations and leads to the strengthening of marginalised voices in civil society in South Africa. The progress made thus far is impressive. The short-term outcomes have, we believe, been secured, as have, to a considerable extent, the longer-term goals which focus on the form of the initiative. That there is room for development is natural and, indeed, one of the exciting things about MAGI is that it is in a formative stage in which good practice learnings can be incorporated into the model. It is probably too soon to be looking at specific sectoral impact, although the system needs to be developed now so that it can support such an investigation in the future.

- The number of initial donors has been doubled, and there is potential to increase this number if this is seen as strategically advisable. With MAGI now an established entity, there is time to look more at what the composition of the consortium should or could be to make the grant-giving as effective as possible.

- The focus on the form or logistical model has borne fruit because it has enabled grant-making to happen, money to be distributed, small organisations to work. The learnings from this now need to be fed back into more in-depth strategic thinking and consolidation of both the model as an implementing tool and the model as a support to strengthening the civil society sector.

- There is an argument for the strategic rationalisation of sectors, with an emphasis on cross-cutting issues. This would enable MAGI to gain a greater understanding of those sectors on which it does focus. All consortium members agree on the importance of gender issues and the initiative is gender-sensitive in implementation. There are other areas that could be cross-cutting rather than a separate sector focus. Sustainable economic development, for example, could be incorporated as a theme in all the other sectors.

- There is more scope for linking CBOs to strategic partners to increase

> "Grassroots organisations are closer to people; through them you can sense what people are saying."
>
> *- Project/programme officer*

their understanding of the structural impediments to addressing broader issues such as poverty and patriarchy so that they can become part of wider civil society advocacy around these issues. The assumption, for example, that more women participants, and even more women leaders, will automatically lead to greater understanding of the many-faceted ways in which women are disadvantaged in all sectors, is misleading. The positions women take on important issues are at least as important as the positions they hold.

- The MAGI model can be implemented with a small, competent staff provided good use is made of strategic partners, there is good administrative back-up and the computerised system is adjusted and used with commitment by staff. The responsiveness, non-bureaucratic style and genuine partnership established with grantees are crucial ingredients of the model. Through the consortium, additional money has been leveraged for use with CBOs. The challenge is to leverage more and be able to make more grants in a useful and responsible manner that strengthens civil society.

- Within the consortium, applicants have been linked to other donors and information has been shared. The collaboration model clearly enhances the grant-making process. Given the mix of different types of donors, consortium meetings also have the potential to provide a forum where development and grant-making issues can be discussed and debated so that the consortium is itself a learning community of those with shared concerns.

- Capacity-building is taking place in a number of ways which are innovative in terms of the model: these include the direct capacity-development done through contact between POs and the grantees, the way in which MAGI is making use of strategic partners, and through the simplification of the procedures for applying for, and accounting for, MAGI grants.

- To some extent, small Band Aid-type projects are being linked into bigger debates, giving the more marginalised in civil society an opportunity to be heard.

- Now that MAGI is more established, this is an area to which it can give more attention, thus magnifying the impact of the work being done by consortium members in the relevant areas.

- The evolving system for managing the project cycle and the monitoring and evaluation process so that it complements the MAGI model is a distinctive element of the whole which requires relatively small adjustments to make it, potentially, state of the art.

VII. Where to?

MAGI is a new grant-making initiative. It still has to make good on all the potential its model shows and in the next three years this will be its focus. This should include:

- Clarifying its longer-term purpose or goal and developing indicators for measuring its success in achieving these;

- Clarifying the differing roles of the secretariat and the AC;

- Focusing its grants and capacity-building efforts towards the achievement of its goals; and

- Developing and strengthening its electronic systems to support a cost-effective way of managing small grants that is also accountable and a source of learning for the grant-making sector.

There is no one right way to do small grant-making. MAGI is evolving a way that is in line with its goals and with the goals of its consortium members, and which seems to be working. The value of reflecting on its progress and learnings is that others can build on them and contribute to creating a sustainable source of funding for the small initiatives and organisations which are often voiceless in wider civil society. In this way, marginalised people can be empowered and voice their needs. This process strengthens civil society as a whole. In this way MAGI is helping to give deeper roots to the nascent democracy of post-liberation South Africa.
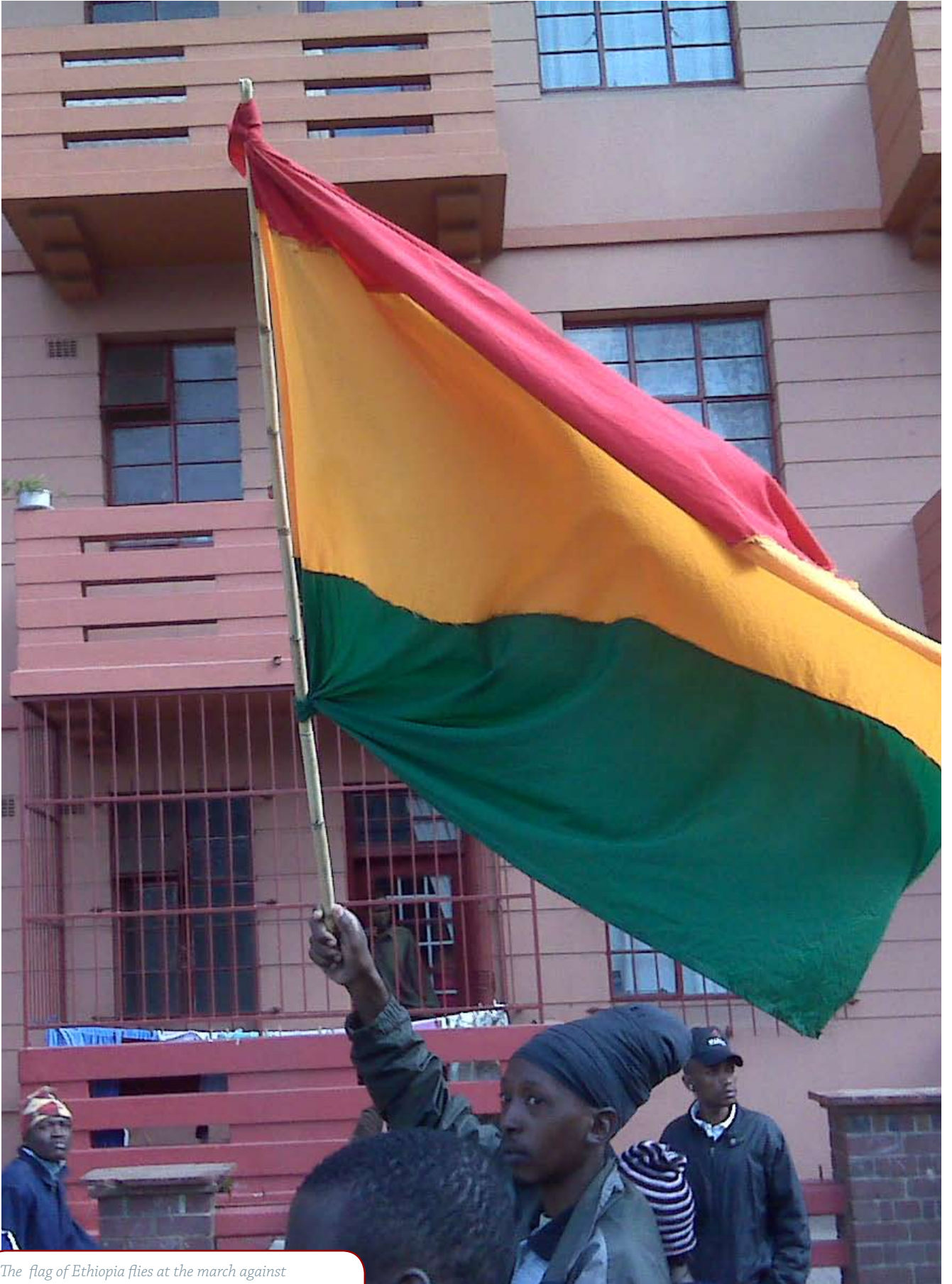
The flag of Ethiopia flies at the march against xenophobia sponsored by MAGI in Johannesburg on Saturday 24 May 2008.

Photograph: *Gerald Kraak*

Appendix 1

Signing off form for project officer to complete

This is an example of what such a form might be. The PO should base the input on the application form, any reports of visits and on the narrative and financial reports received from the grantee. Once the PO has completed the form, it can be entered by an administrator. The system should then generate the kind of information indicated in Appendix 2.

Sector:
Name of project:
Name of organisation (if different):
Name of contact person:
Contact telephone number:
Funding period covered (note if multi-year grant):
Has the organisation/project received funding from MAGI previously?

Section 1: Evaluation of activities reported

For purposes of overall evaluation, the following section is taken from the organisation's report and scored:

1 Activity and result: Please specify output and outcome.	2 If there is a good story that goes with this project, please summarise it briefly here. This will help to give evaluation reports more of a qualitative feel because short case studies can be added – try to use stories that illustrate things that are important to the intentions of MAGI or the sector.	W	M	Score on usefulness where 1 = not very useful, 5 = very useful. Use your judgment by reviewing column 1.
a				
b				
c				
d				

Calculate a total score for usefulness by dividing your total for the final column by the number of activities. Score the project on contribution to the sector, from 1 to 5, using your own judgment, where 5 means that you think the project made a major contribution to the sector as a whole, rather than just the target audience.

Total number of women participating in events, etc:

Total number of men participating in events:

Section 2a: MAGI criteria

For purposes of overall evaluation, the following section is taken from the organisation's report and scored. This may not seem important to you now but will provide invaluable information when analysis is done. Certain of the categories from the narrative report back form are put together to get a composite score on a MAGI criterion, as follows:

Better service to community/group served
Participants acquire skills, knowledge and awareness (average of rows 2 and 3 in narrative report, section B)
Through lobbying and advocacy and/or civil society action of some kind, policy has changed (could include litigation)
Increased civil society activity
Women show increase in participation and leadership (average of rows 6 and 7 in narrative report, section B)
The organisation has made useful linkages
The organisation has been involved in joint activities
The organisation has grown in internal capacity and strength (average of rows 10/11/12/13/14 in narrative report, section B)
The organisation is developing a useful written record of results and learnings (average of rows 15 and 16 from narrative report, section B)

(Scoring: 1 to 5 where 1 = poor and 5 = excellent)

	Criterion	Score
1	Better service to community/group served	
2	Participants acquire skills, knowledge and awareness (average of your score based on rows 2 and 3 in narrative report, section B)	
3	Through lobbying and advocacy and/or civil society action of some kind, policy has changed (could include litigation)	
4	Increased civil society activity	
5	Women show increase in participation and leadership (average of rows 6 and 7 in narrative report, section B)	
6	The organisation has made useful linkages	
7	The organisation has been involved in joint activities	
8	The organisation has grown in internal capacity and strength (average of your score based on rows10/11/12/13/14 in narrative report, section B)	
9	The organisation is developing a useful written record of results and learnings (average of your score for rows15 and 16 from narrative report, section B)	

Section 2b: Additional information on leadership

Information taken from narrative report – useful for reporting purposes; here you are using totals, not aggregated:

Black women	Black men	White women	White men

Section 2c: Additional information on cross-sectoral projects

If the project affected more than one sector of MAGI work, complete the boxes below:

The following sectors (focus areas) were involved:

Main sector	
List other sectors:	

(For purposes of entering this information on the computer there would need to be a category on cross-sectoral projects and then a field for total number and then for how many in each of possible combinations. The point here would be to get a picture of how the work was enriching across sectors. Your service provider will set up the system so this can be entered easily and cross-referenced.)

Section 3: Contribution to the sector – assessment based on sector criteria

PO to write in narrative form and then to score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = very little contribution to the sector:

Narrative comment:

Score:

Section 4: Pertinent comments from section C of narrative form

Section 5: Recommendation to advisory committee on future funding

Section 6: Decision of advisory committee on future funding

Name of project officer:

Date completed:

Appendix 2

Summary report form generated by computer

This can be generated whenever it is time for an evaluation (or, for a particular project, at any time once the information from the PO is entered).

Review period:																		
Sector:																		
									Score on MAGI indicators of achievement as per intention of fund. Key provided below, information taken from PO sign-off form								
Name of project and organisation	Has the organisation/project had MAGI funding previously? If yes, score 1	Score on contribution to sector	Averaged score of usefulness of activities as a percentage of a possible x number of activities	Total number of women participating	Total number of men participating	Multi-year funding (score 1 if it is)	Re-grant given (score 1 if yes)	Case study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Totals (for those with asterisk)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

If you want average scores for projects in the sector, divide totals by number of projects.

Key:
(Figures from PO form as indicated)

1. **Better service to community/group served**
2. **Participants acquire skills, knowledge and awareness (average of rows 2 and 3 in narrative form, section B)**
3. **Through lobbying and advocacy and/or civil society action of some kind, policy has changed (could include litigation)**
4. **Increased civil society activity**
5. **Women show increase in participation and leadership (average of rows 6 and 7 in narrative form, section B)**
6. **The organisation has made useful linkages**
7. **The organisation has been involved in joint activities**
8. **The organisation has grown in internal capacity and strength (average of rows 10/11/12/13/14 in narrative, section B)**
9. **The organisation is developing a useful written record of results and learnings (average of rows 15 and 16 from narrative form, section B)**

Comments worth recording from narrative report:

Date report printed:

Appendix 3

Summarising the learnings

So, you are thinking of setting up a small grant-making initiative that invests in grassroots organisations? What are the learnings so far from the MAGI initiative?

Some questions to answer:

1. What is your intentionality? What is it you hope the initiative will achieve in the next five years? What difference will it make?

2. Why do you think your initiative is necessary? What gap will it fill? How will it add value?

3. What has this told you about what kind of work and what kind of sectors you would like to support?

4. Who are you? Do you have enough in common to make this a truly joint venture? Have you explored your intentionality together or cobbled a collaboration? Remember, collaboration can work but it should be based on common understandings and values.

5. Do you have, or can you access the resources you need to make a difference?

6. Does the way in which you plan to function leverage additional resources?

7. Does the way you plan to function leverage capacity-development and mutual learning?

8. Does the way in which you plan to function create the likelihood that networks will overlap, extend and become more useful?

9. Have you decided who will make decisions about grants, how they will be made, what criteria will be used and the degree of leeway the secretariat will have? You want decision making to be flexible, non-bureaucratic and rapidly responsive.

10. Have you thought about the application form and how it can stay simple, provide information, while generating discussion and thought in would-be grantees?

Women from the Aurora Women's Network in the Western Cape, received support from MAGI in 2008 to create a soap-making business which supplies soap to local guesthouses and hotels.

Photograph: MAGI

11. Have you planned a database that records the information you need and can produce reports that are useful to you? Remember not to collect information you will never need.

12. Have you worked out how you will do site visits in the most useful and capacity-building way?

13. Have you worked out the most cost-effective way to do monitoring and evaluation?

14. Have you thought about the formats in which you will expect financial and narrative reports and how this can stay simple and still generate information that is useful for ensuring the accountability of the grantees but also your own accountability to your overall goals? Remember to gather only that information which is necessary and important.

15. What are the implications for all of this in terms of how you work with other organisations that could be strategic partners?

16. What are the implications for this in how you staff your initiative?

17. What are the implications for this on how often your decision-making body meets?

18. How will decisions be made about the maximum and minimum amounts of grants?

19. How will decisions be made about how often any particular grantee will get a grant and what the conditions for re-granting will be?

20. How will decisions be made about which sectors to support?

21. What decisions will need to be made about how, and from whom, grants will be accepted?

About the authors

Marian Nell has an MBA from the University of the Witwatersrand and an honours degree in Psychology from the University of South Africa. She and **Janet Shapiro**, who has a BA degree in Ethics and English from the University of Cape Town and an honours in Sociology from Rhodes University, have worked together as organisational consultants for the past 28 years. Initially they worked with anti-apartheid organisations but, since 1994, have done consultancy work in development around the world, with a specific emphasis on Southern Africa. In 2008 they were involved in an evaluation of the MAGI programme and this publication is based on the evaluation.

The
ATLANTIC
Philanthropies

Find out more about the programmes and activities of The Atlantic Philanthropies at:

www.atlanticphilanthropies.org

Details of how to apply for support from MAGI can be found at:

www.magi.org.za

*Design and layout by Limeblue design: **www.limeblue.co.za***

Case Study

INNOVATIVE GRANT-MAKING:
GIVING VOICE TO THE MARGINALISED

The story of the Multi Agency Grants Initiative (MAGI) in South Africa (2006-2008)