

Broadcasting Democracy

Expanding Cooperative Governance in Low-Power Radio Stations



The online modules are designed so that you may navigate directly to the content or exercises that are relevant for your station group at a particular time. For the purposes of this companion text, they are presented as follows:



Identity & Mission p. 3



Writing It Down p. 33



People Power p. 9



Group Dynamics p. 40



Governance p. 27



Community Engagement p. 48

Online modules: “Broadcasting Democracy,” by DAWN Advisors
http://prezi.com/ieeozc5ossvz/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=exoshare

Note to Participants

This workbook contains extra reading for certain portions of the online modules. In addition, it includes worksheets for the exercises and activities in the modules. An “**exercise**” is an activity that can be completed in the time indicated. An activity with the heading “**Do the Work**” is a springboard or general outline to work that will likely be ongoing for several weeks or even months.

In both scenarios, we highly recommend that one person be selected as a **facilitator/timekeeper** for any particular activity. We also recommend that, over the course of your organizing, multiple people take turns facilitating so that leadership becomes more equally distributed.



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Identity & Mission

Creating a strong identity for the organization helps the organization attract supporters and volunteers while building a consistent audience over the long term. The identity of the organization does not come from a recipe. The key stakeholders of the organization, in this case a community radio station, negotiate the identity of the organization and, as a result, will change over time. However, this change will generally be more of an evolution as new generations of stakeholders engage the radio station even if the incoming stakeholders are attracted by the current identity. This can result in a drift from the original purpose of the radio station, which creates a need for the founders and organizers to spend time on purposely creating and re-creating the identity of the radio station.

Mission

A key part of a station's (or any organization) identity rests in the mission statement. The mission statement not only informs stakeholders and outsiders as to the intent of the organization, it provides a focus for stakeholders to hold each other accountable. For some organizations, the mission statement not only provides scope and a basis for the culture of the organization, but may be a requirement to obtain and continue tax-exempt status. In this section, we will discuss the different types of mission statements with examples, some of the critical components of the mission statement, and specific IRS requirements. We will finish with exercises and a discussion about identity.

What is a mission?

At a concrete level, the mission statement informs stakeholders and others as to the basic function and purpose of the organization. There aren't any clear rules as to the content of a mission statement; some corporations use vague language such as Avis's mission:

"We will lead our industry by defining service excellence and building unmatched customer loyalty."¹

At the other end of the spectrum, mission statements can be specific such as Union Cab of Madison Cooperative's mission:

"to create jobs at a living wage or better in a safe, humane and democratic environment by providing quality transportation to the greater Madison [WI] area."²

Another example is the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States of America:

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."³

Overcoming Problems with Mission Statements

A lot of corporate missions fail because of their creation. A mission statement may have marketing value, but it is not a marketing tool. It may express the vision of the CEO, but it should not be the creation of one individual (especially in an organization that runs collectively or depends on the goodwill of community volunteers and sustainers). These issues need to be considered during the process of creating a mission statement. **A mission**

¹ <http://www.avis.com/car-rental/content/display.ac?navId=T6M21S01>

² <http://www.unioncab.coop/AboutUs>

³ <http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/preamble>

statement is a socially created statement that expresses the function of the organization as seen by the key stakeholders. In a community based organization such as a community radio station, the mission statement must express its purpose for existing and this must embrace the staff, the volunteers, listeners, and the financial sustainers (acknowledging that these groups overlap significantly). To make your mission vital, relevant and strong, it needs to be created by as many people as possible.

Crafting a Mission for Community Radio

The first question to ask the organizers must be why they want to operate a community radio station. There may be more than one specific reason depending on the people involved and the community that the station wishes to serve. In crafting a mission, keep in mind that the purpose of the mission must be focused on the primary needs that station will be fulfilling.

Key points to consider while drafting include⁴:

- Avoid language that reflects self-interests of the organizers. There should be an inspirational quality to the mission.
- Define the community being served by the station in terms of geography and other key demographics.
- The language should be understandable and serve as a means of staff and volunteers to understand how their behavior interacts with the mission.
- The mission should explain its responsibility to its stakeholders.
- The mission should reflect the culture of the radio station.

No rules exist about mission statements and opinions vary over the length and detail. The key point should be that the mission must be something that stakeholders acknowledge as the principal reason that the station exists and sets the basic standard that they agree to work within. That said, for stations that organize as 501(c)3 not-for-profit tax-exempt organizations under the rules of the US Internal Revenue Service, the mission statement carries an added level of scrutiny and accountability.

Mission Statement Accountability

It should be stated that any decisions about how your radio station engages the Internal Revenue Service should be answered by the IRS or a licensed attorney. This section should not be considered legal advice. If there are questions regarding activities, the station's organizers should consult a legal professional with expertise in this area.

While the Internal Revenue Service does not require 501(c)3 organizations to have a mission statement, it is generally a good way of helping to determine the organization's status. If a mission statement exists, it may be used by the IRS to determine if the activities of the organization fit the requirement of 501(c)3 organizations to engage in one of seven approved activities. A qualified organization risks losing their status if they engage in too much "unrelated business income" (UBI)⁵. Thus, the mission statement helps to guide the IRS and staff members who manage the radio station. UBI can include a wide range of activities including some types of fund-raising. The inclusion of the activity in the mission statement does not protect the activity as it must still fall within the areas approved for 501(c)3 organizations by the IRS which include: Religious, Educational, Charitable, Scientific, Literary,

⁴ Campbell, Andrew (1997) *Brief Case: Mission Statements* Long Range Planning vol. 30, no. 6 pp. 931-932


⁵ http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/How_to_Lose_Your_Tax_Exempt_Status.shtml

Testing for Public Safety, to Foster National or International Amateur Sports Competition, or Prevention of Cruelty to Children or Animals Organizations.⁶

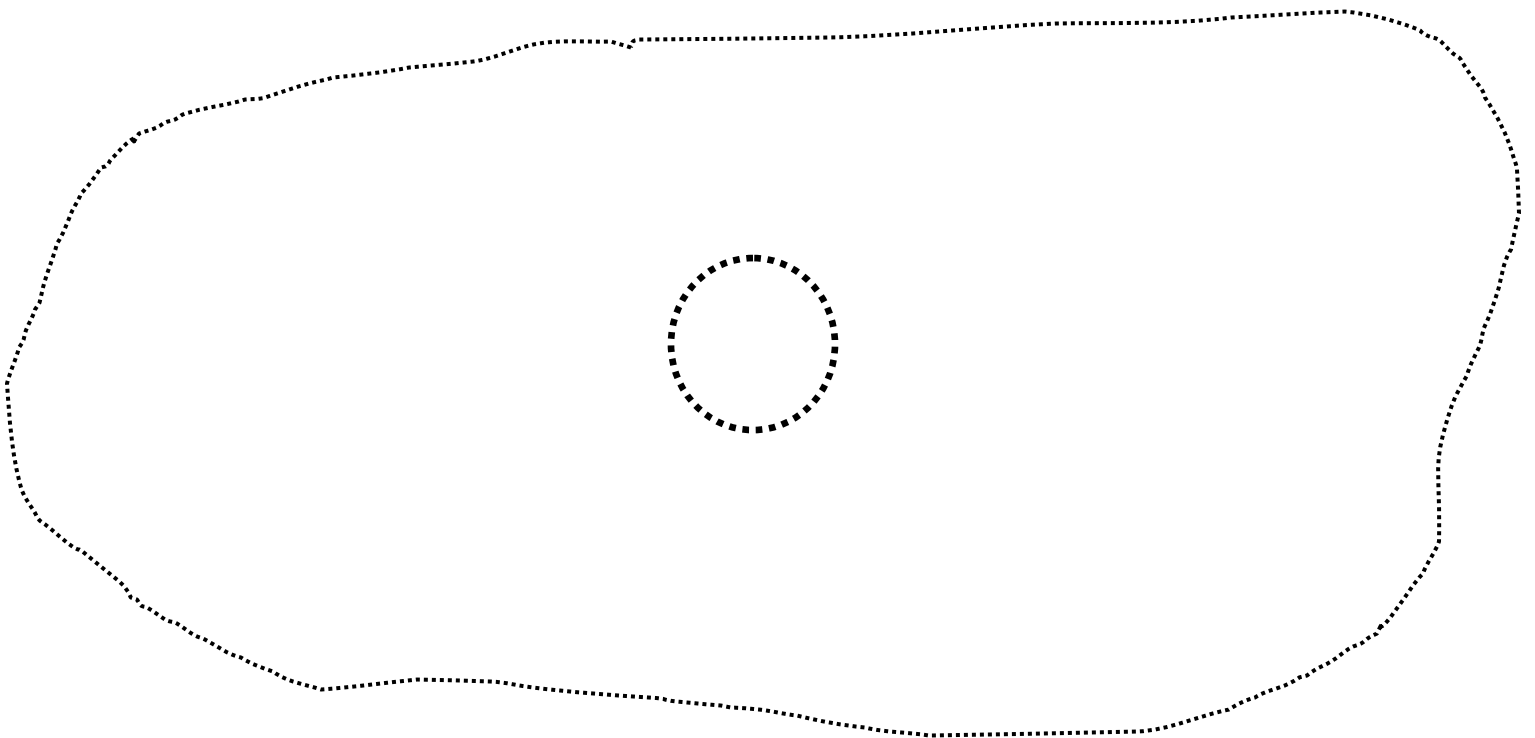
 **Identity & Mission Exercise #1: Fulfilling a Mission** (3 min per question + sharing)

1. Name an organization with whose mission you are familiar: _____
2. What actions have you seen that organization do that help fulfill the mission?

3. Share your answers with the group.

 **Identity & Mission Exercise #2: Core-Periphery Communities**

Coming to agreement now about who is included in your station's "community" will prepare your group to come to consensus about its mission. Using the framework below, write the names of various groups (e.g., neighborhoods, demographic groups, organizations, etc.) in the location on the drawing where you feel they belong. Are they in the core? On the periphery? Somewhere in between?



⁶ IRS, Publication 557 "Tax-Exempt Status For Your Organization", pp. 65-66, (Rev. June 2008), Cat. No 46573C



Do The Work: Write a Mission Statement (30 min)

This exercise is designed to get your group thinking and even crafting a mission statement. At the next meeting, set aside a half hour. Depending on the size of the organizing group, you may want to break into small groups instead at different points.

Step One (5 min)

Hand out pen and paper and ask each individual to write down five items that they believe should be in the mission, or the basic function and reason for the station to exist. At the end of the five minutes, ask each person to write their ideas onto a whiteboard or large sheet that all members of the group can see.

Step Two (10 min)

The facilitator, in conversation with the group, condenses the list of items to five common themes. Discuss and debate these ideas until there is general consensus that the five themes encompass the ideas presented.

Step Three (5 min)

Singly or in groups, ask the participants to express the themes in no more than two sentences.

Step Four (10 min)

Ask each person (or small group) to report out, writing their mission statement on the common post. Discuss the merits of each. Pick at least three of the statements to send to the larger group of stakeholders for their input and feedback.

Identity Issues

While the mission statement comprises a key component of an organization's identity, it isn't the only component. In this section, we will consider other components and the importance of developing an identity and culture of the organization from the outset, but also acknowledging that these are fluid concepts that will change over time. Identity of organizations can be quite complicated. An organization, as a group of individual humans, can be seen as a mosaic of the identity of the individuals that comprise the organization. Metaphor provides a strong tactic of explaining identity and, as part of this discussion, it will be necessary to deconstruct the metaphors at play within the organization⁷. Identity defines the culture of the group and will, in many respects, play a considerable role in the development and success of the radio station from its inception through its life in the community. In this section, we will consider some key components for organizational identity and an exercise to help develop that identity for your organization.

Components of Identity

For the organization, other than the mission statement, the conceptual components of vision and values comprise the identity. Let's consider each, in turn.

⁷ Morgan, Gareth (2006) *Images of Organization*, SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi.

A **vision statement** works with the mission statement. Like the mission statement, it seeks to explain the purpose of the organization; however, it speaks in loftier terms. It is a broader statement of the ideal. In some sense, the vision is unattainable, but something to be worked towards. As mentioned earlier, the Preamble to the Constitution speaks of a “more perfect union”. This is why the Preamble is more of a mission statement: it recognizes that it cannot create a perfect union, only seek a more perfect union. A vision for the United States might then seek to create a perfect union. Likewise, consider Union Cab’s vision statement: “The Vision of Union Cab Cooperative shall be to serve the community in such a way that we are recognized as a sustainable asset and valued resource by all.”⁸ The vision helps form the identity by expressing the ideal, just as in our own sense of our identity, we see ourselves in idealized terms. The vision statement should be short and focus on the highest inspiration for the organization. It should express the key central idealized concept of the organization.

Values provide the final part of the organizational identity. Values do not have the constraints of the mission or the vision. They can be numerous or limited to a few bullet points. A great example of the importance of values to the identity of the organization comes from the International Cooperative Association (ICA). The ICA is the largest Non-Governmental Organization in the world representing the roughly one billion members of credit unions and cooperatives world-wide. The organization was formed in 1895 to help coordinate and promote the activities of the world’s cooperatives and credit unions. However, the geo-political changes between 1895 and 1991 created a significant identity crisis for the organization. This crisis came to a head due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the corrupted identity of cooperatives in state-managed economies. Leaders of the ICA worried that its identity would not allow it to succeed unless they reclaimed the concept of cooperation in formerly communist nations.

In 1995, on the 100th anniversary of its founding, they formally adopted the Statement of Cooperative Identity. In addition to the principles of Voluntary and Open Membership, Democratic Member Control, Member Economic Participation, Autonomy & Independence, Education, Training & Information, Cooperation Among Cooperatives, and Concern for Community, they added a statement on values⁹:

“Co-operatives are based on the values of **self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity** and **solidarity**. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.”

In doing this, the ICA created an ideal for all cooperatives and credit unions. Since 1995, efforts have been made to create tools to measure the ability of cooperatives to adhere to the identity of cooperatives.

The take-away for those creating a radio station should be that the identity of the organization results from the ethics and values of the participating stakeholders. By engaging in a conscious discussion of the identity of the organization, the stakeholders may create a strong brand for the station and help to ensure the long-term success of the organization in meeting its commitment to the community and its stakeholders.

⁸ <http://www.unioncab.coop/AboutUs>

⁹ <http://ica.coop/en/what-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles>



Do The Work: *Creating Values and a Vision* (3 hours)

In this activity, the participants will be asked to define the ideal community radio station from an operational standpoint. Supplies: Markers of different colors, self-adhesive note paper in different shapes, a large space to stick the note paper.

1. Instruct all participants to grab a marker (or markers) and using only one or two words on a stickie, describe their “ideal” radio station from their perspective as either a member of the staff, a volunteer, or a listener. There is no end time to this exercise. It is perfectly okay to duplicate ideas. It is over when the group runs out of ideas.
2. The facilitator then leads the group in a discussion of sorting the different notes into areas of commonality.
3. The facilitator leads the group into separating the group ideas into larger headings (and maybe even separating along staff, volunteer and listener headings). If the idea of organizing as a cooperative is identified, it may also be useful to separate the ideas into the various values and principles of the Statement of Cooperative Identity.
4. Break—people should take a long break but think about the different ideas and headings.
5. Upon return, debate the inclusion of each note and collectively agree which should be included and which should not.
6. Use the heading and ideas to craft one or two value statements per heading with the remaining notes.
7. Present the value statement to the larger group and create space for a discussion.

Creating an identity for your radio station will set the stage for development, volunteer and sustainer recruitment, and the long-term viability of the organization. As a community radio station, the ability to change with the locality of the station will be imperative. As a result, it may be worth revisiting the mission and identity on a periodic basis (every 5-10 years).

People Power

Whether you have the most detailed plan to launch your station or no plan at all, the essential determinant of success is your people. The wrong team can drag down the dream, while a great team can not only get the work done but also motivate one another at the same time.

The online module highlights the key populations of people that deserve your attention: volunteers, staff, and board members. The exercises below can lay the groundwork for how to develop and support each group – and yourselves.



Who's on the Ship?

“The main point is to first get the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) before you figure out where to drive it.” - Good to Great, Jim Collins

Collins led a team of researchers who compared 28 companies in an effort to explain what made the most successful ones “great”. One key concept in their findings was that the successful organizations put together a star team before setting the vision and how to achieve it. Why? **People who join because of their team members fixate less on specific methods and thus better able to adapt to changing circumstances.** Also, “the right people don’t need to be tightly managed or fired up; they will be self-motivated by the inner drive to produce the best results and be part of creating something great.”

A ship and its crew illustrate Collins’ findings even better than a bus. As a founding group of volunteers, how can you apply the ship metaphor to your organizing?

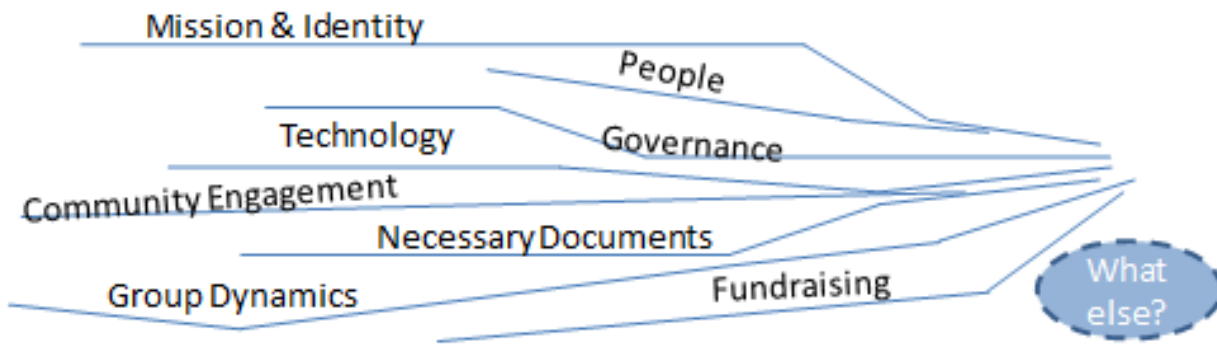
Your destination may be a radio station, but there are many routes to get there! By taking the time to develop your vision together – and not relying on a single individual – you can be more certain that all the “crew members” are committed to the trip. People who developed the “route” don’t need constant guidance as to how to implement it because they co-created it!

Just because you (or most of you) are volunteers does not mean that you shouldn’t be thought of as doing “work”. Unpaid workers have needs just like paid workers do. (More later on supporting volunteers.)

One of the most basic determinants of fulfilling and effective work is “fit” for the job! Folks who like to organize chaos are great at bookkeeping and drafting policies. Someone less talkative may be the perfect facilitator because s/he will invite others to speak. Consider it: Are the right people in the right jobs?

Bringing a new organization to life requires discussions and actions on varied fronts. If your group can identify who will carry each thread forward, you are likely to make progress more quickly. “Carrying the thread forward” does not mean making all the decisions; it can simply mean convening the conversations, clarifying next steps, and following up.

There are several threads that you will need to develop in order to operate a functional station (a station that people want to be a part of!)



People Power Exercise #1: Carrying the Threads (38-48 min)

1) As a group, list out the “threads” or work areas that need to happen as part of developing your station. (5-10 min) *If you already have committees for these areas, congrats!*

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2) Divide into pairs. Assign one or more work areas or committees to each pair for analysis. (3 min)

3) Each pair should discuss the following for their assigned areas. *Tip: Characteristics/qualities are just as important as skills!* (5 min per area)

What are 3-5 skills or characteristics required to be good at _____?
(insert area you’re discussing)

Skill or characteristic #1 _____

Skill or characteristic #2 _____

Skill or characteristic #3 _____

Skill or characteristic #4 _____

Skill or characteristic #5 _____

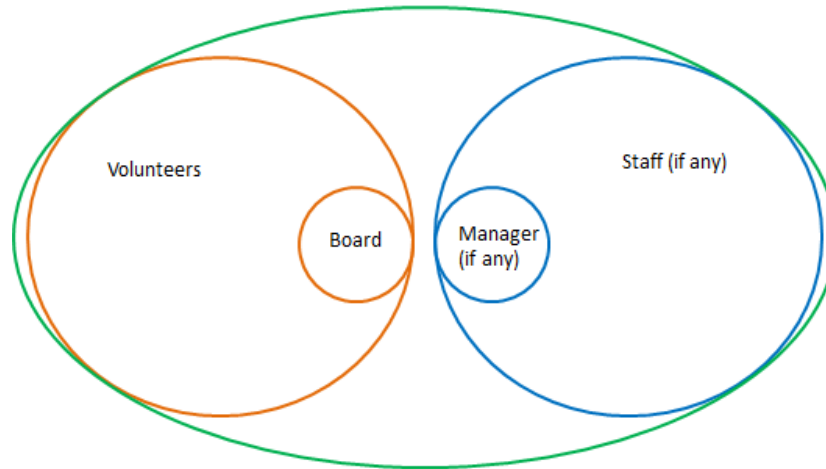
4) Share your conclusions with the full group and listen to their responses. (15 min)

Notable conclusions from others:

5) Getting in the right roles (10-15 min)

- If you didn't have area leaders yet, use the identified skills & characteristics to put the right individuals on the right tasks.
- If you already had area/committee leaders, each leader should consider the identified skills & characteristics. Are you a 100% good "fit"? If not – just say so. You can either change areas or find someone who can complement your strengths with their own.

There are several ways in which to structure your station.



Case Study: Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative

One example of a democratic organization is a **worker cooperative**. Worker co-operatives may choose many different ways of distributing work and decisions, but their essential element is that they are completely owned by the workers. At the Board and co-op level of decision-making, each person gets one sole vote.

Most worker co-ops range from being run as a collective to a structure with designated managerial or functional roles.



Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative was founded in 1989. It strives to offer materials that “challenge the status quo.” It is owned by “consumers” (its shoppers who are members) and its very small staff functions as a collective. In addition, staffing is provided by several dozen volunteers and more than 200 member-owners.

Photo posted by Daniel Boster & Marni Valerio.



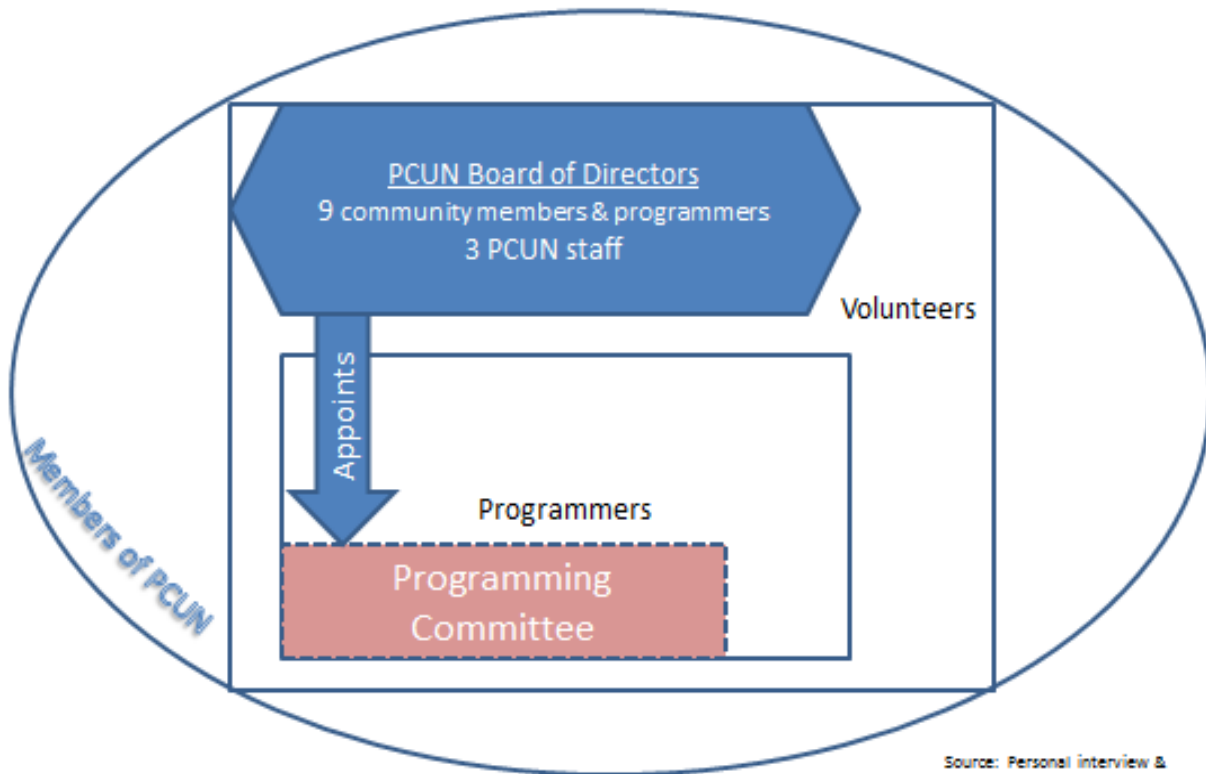
Case Study: KPCN / Radio Movimiento

KPCN began as a service provided by PCUN (*Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noreste*, Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United) to the agricultural workers in the community.


The PCUN Board of Directors selects new candidates for the KPCN Program Committee. They serve on the Program Committee for one year. There are about 17 programmers broadcasting 24 hours per day in multiple languages. The shows range from music to interviews, debates, and updates about regional and national issues of particular interest to farmworkers.

Read a more detailed history of PCUN and the Radio Movimiento:

<http://www.pcun.org/about-pcun/history-pcun>



Source: Personal interview & correspondence.

 **People Power Exercise #2: Debate Double-take** (25 min)



The online example showed that *Radio Movimiento* currently combines the functions of Programming Committee and Community Advisory Board.

- Divide your group at random into two. The group of Streamliners feels that allowing the Board to select the Programming Committee is preferable. The group of Separators feels that the Committee should be determined by the Programmers or members, not the Board.
- For 10 minutes, take turns expressing one rationale at a time to justify your “opinion,” alternating between the Streamliners and the Separators. No one on either team should speak twice until everyone on the team has spoken once.
- After 10 minutes, stand up, change places in the room, and switch identities.
- After 10 more minutes, return to being your “actual” selves. Do a quick straw poll vote to respond to the question:

“Our station’s Programming Committee should be elected by a broad group.”

For your future discussion, write here the summary of your current personal opinion:

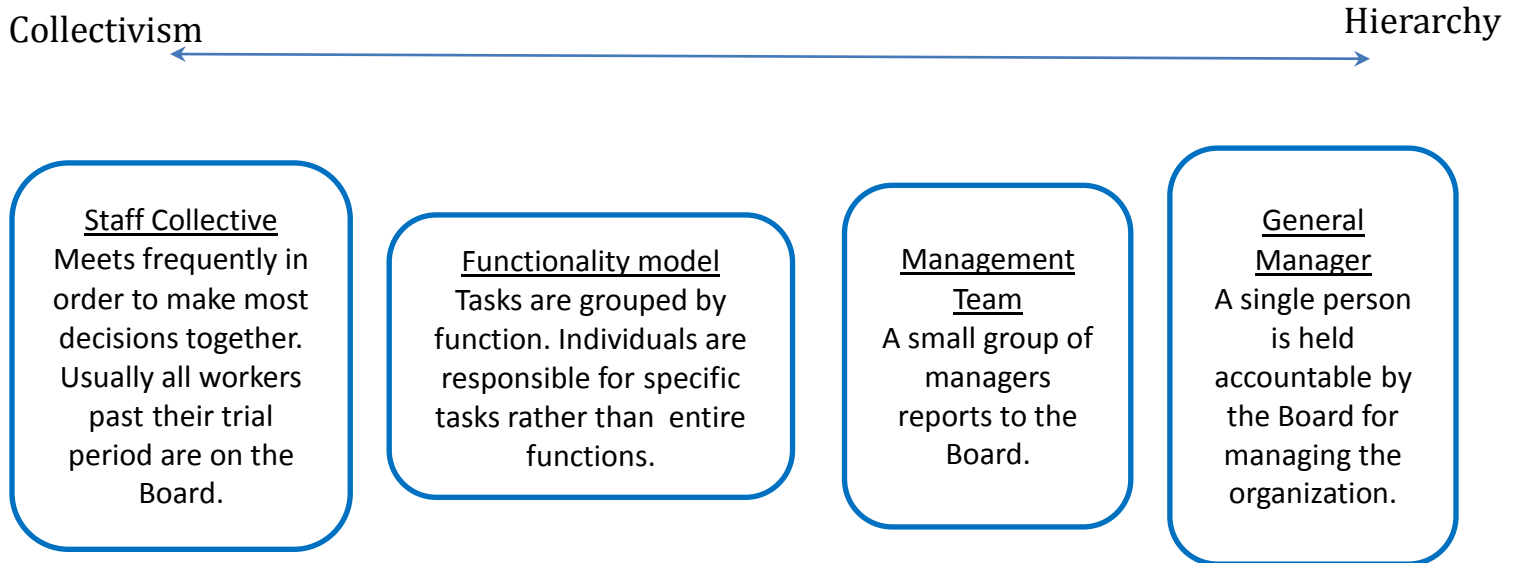
“I feel the Programming Committee should be [elected] [selected] [other creative arrangement] because _____

_____.”

Menu of Management Models

Your station's group can choose the degree of hierarchy that feels best for your situation. Increased hierarchy can often mean decreased participation by those you believe you are intending to serve.

All of the organizational structures on the range below may be less or more formal. Too much formality can paralyze an organization if it's too rigid to act quickly enough to be responsive. But too *little* formality often allows influential personalities to become unofficial leaders even when the structure appears to be egalitarian.



1) Draw a ship in the box below.



2) On the hull of the ship, write the name of an **organization** that you find very effective. (1 min)

3) Think about who **leads the organization**. (It may not *necessarily* be the manager or elected president.) Add this person or people near the captain's wheel. (2 min) *Stick figures are fine!*

4) Who else is on the ship? Add **key crew members** to your drawing. (3 min)

5) What made this organization effective? Draw in the **tools or methods** that the people used. (4 min)

6) Share your answers with the group. Focus especially on the tools and methods. (1 min per person)

Volunteers: Taking Care of Your Core

Most community radio stations rely on volunteers for nearly everything, from programming to facility maintenance to marketing. Volunteers are one of your most important assets, so let's focus on them first! Even well-intentioned people will not stick around if they don't eventually get their needs met. What do volunteers typically need?ⁱ

... to feel part of a **meaningful** activity, larger than themselves.

... to feel their efforts are **effective**.

... **education** about the area in which they are volunteering as well as the larger station **context**.

... support in the way of adequate ongoing **information**.

... clear signs of **appreciation**.

You can read more about the Volunteer Satisfaction Index at <http://volsat.wordpress.com/>.

Another great resource on this topic is "Recruiting and Managing Volunteers" at www.knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers.



Case Study: ACE

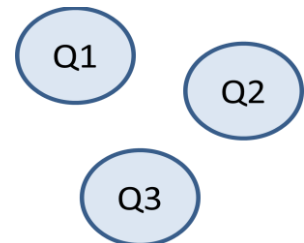
ACE is an environmental justice organization in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston. Their programs include education, direct action, and legal advocacy. They rely on committed volunteers, especially to show up at rallies and hearings.

ACE hosts volunteers on three Wednesdays per month, each with a distinct focus: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays are Volunteer Nights; anyone can help make phone calls, materials for events, etc. Second Wednesday is Game Night. The 4th Wednesday is the monthly Member Meeting. Volunteer members always know to come on Wednesdays to get involved, express themselves, or get anything they need!



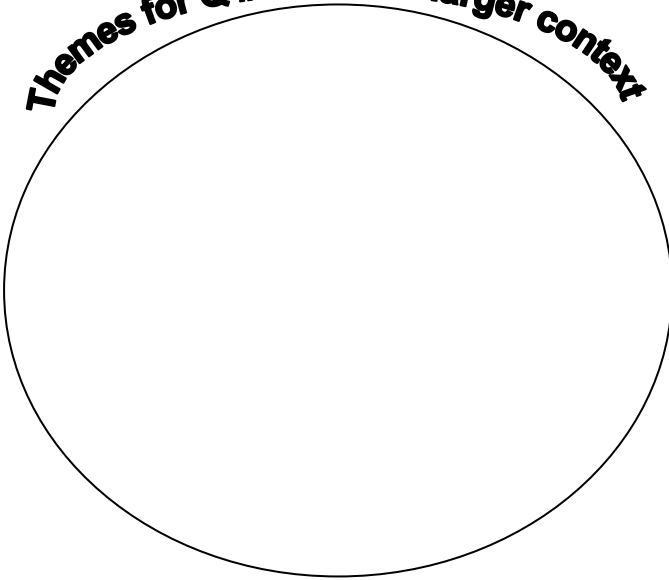
People Power Exercise #4: Supporting Volunteers (35-45 min)

- Divide into three groups, one at each table with one large sheet of paper.
- Write one of these questions or statements on each sheet:
 - 1) What is a fun way to keep volunteers up to date about how their specific responsibility fits into the larger station context?
 - 2) Describe a time when you received recognition for volunteering.
 - 3) If you've ever had a good manager, describe what s/he did that was supportive for you. Could a volunteer coordinator offer these things?

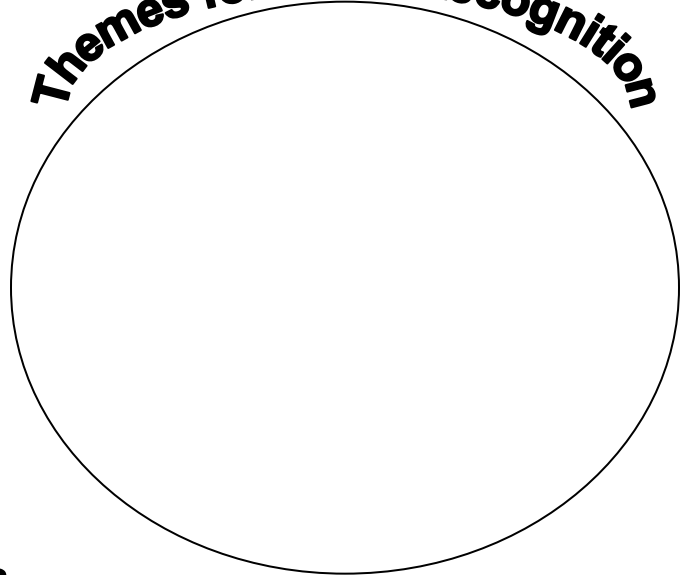


- Each group discuss its question or statement for 10 min., writing key phrases on the paper.
- After 10 min., one member of each group stays at the table and the others rotate to the next table, adding their key phrases to the existing notes on the paper. Repeat.
- After all the questions have been addressed by each group, the table-stayers should report back to the full group on the themes that emerged on their table's paper. Note themes below from each table.

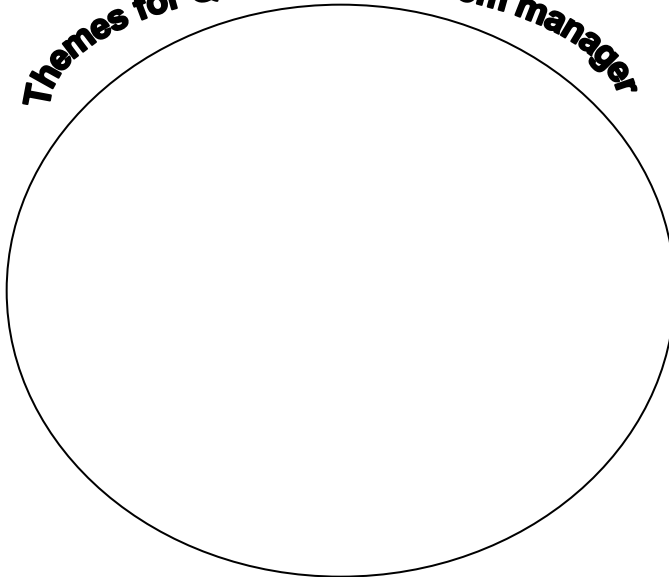
Themes for Q #1: Info on larger context



Themes for Q #2: Recognition



Themes for Q #3: Support from manager



Taking Care of Station Manager &/or Staff

If your station will have more than one paid staff person, you must choose how they will relate to the station manager, to one another, and to the board of directors. As shown back on the menu of management models, this can range from a staff collective to a single person accountable for station operations.

Regardless of the model you choose, the station staff are likely to know the most about the station operations simply by virtue of how much time they spend there.

However, this does not mean that the Board should defer all decisions to the staff, or that the staff does not need support. Often, helpful “support” takes the form of posing thoughtful questions that prompt staff members to reframe problems and challenges such that they think of potential resolutions. Support also includes advocating on behalf of the staff and helping to clarify roles and responsibilities.

If your station will have a station manager who reports to the Board, it is typically the manager who will provide these kinds of supports to the staff, and the Board to the station manager. If the station is managed by a team, don’t forget that the team members will still need coaching from one another. Wherever lies accountability also lies a need for support!



Case Study: WORT

WORT is a community radio station serving South-Central Wisconsin. It has been on the air since 1975. The organizational chart on the following page gives extensive detail about the way they have organized their work. Most distinct from the second station profile, WFMU, is that WORT staff operate as a collective.

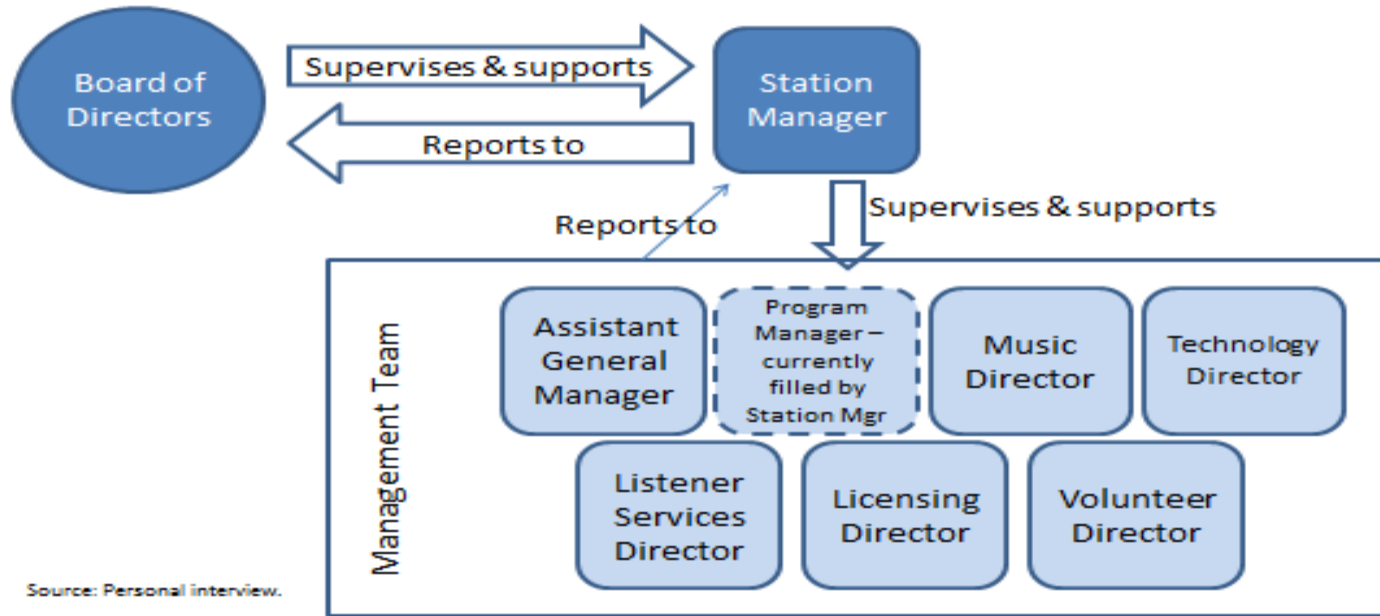
“The paid and unpaid workers (the volunteers) at the station elect the Board of Directors; the Board sets policy and hires full-time and part-time paid staff. The full-time staff is organized as a collective that operates within sound management practices and written policies established by the Board. The staff collective oversees the day-to-day operations of the station.”

The staff positions listed are:

1. Operations Coordinator
2. Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator
3. News Facilitator
4. Music Director
5. Listener-Sponsor
6. Development Director
7. Business & Foundation Development Director



Case Study: WFMU



 **People Power Exercise #5: Station Manager &/or Staff** (30-50 min)

1 - On the continuum below, write your initials on the spot that you personally feel is appropriate for your station. (1 min)



2 - Before sharing, write down your responses to these questions: (5 min)

- a) Why do you feel this balance is best for the station? _____

- b) What personal experiences have you had that are influencing your opinion? _____

3 – Draw a large continuum in front of the group. Each person should mark their initials on the continuum. (3 min)

4 - After all the initials are marked, discuss the reasons behind your leanings. If there are outliers on the continuum, those individuals can try explaining the assumptions underlying their preferences. As a group, consider what structural element or policy can help address the concerns. (20-40 min, depending on the group’s degree of agreement)

What structural elements or policies could help address the concerns that group members have about collectivism vis à vis hierarchy?



“Development” has many interpretations, but for today’s purposes, think of it as the ability to do something that you could not or did not do before.

In pairs, answer the questions below:

- ❖ What are 1-2 things that you could not do, or do very well, a few years ago? They could be from your professional or personal life.

- ❖ How did you eventually learn or improve them? (E.g., practice? Feedback from a friend? Classes? etc.)

[

]

- ❖ What would you like to be able to do for the station in a year that is not your forte now?

- ❖ What can others in your group do to encourage you or help you achieve the progress you want?

Investing in *all* staff members is important if you want your station to survive beyond its first, amazingly committed station manager. A strong team can minimize manager burnout and keep a station stable if its manager leaves.

Board Members

The same rationales apply to the Board of Directors; directors need to feel fulfilled, be supported, and grow their capacities over time. A strong Board president is great! But a balanced distribution of participation and influence across the Board will be an essential key to keeping the station on the air.

Much like the continuum from collectivism to hierarchy, boards run the gamut from strictly policy-makers to the hands-on tasks of a “working board”. Your Board may even evolve its role over time as the station grows or shrinks. There is no cookie-cutter answer for where on the continuum your station’s board should fall.

What is recommended, though, is a clear understanding of each group’s rights and responsibilities. (I.e., board director, particular roles on the Board, station manager, other staff, programmer, other volunteer positions.)

If a Board delegates certain authorities to a station manager but then later interferes or overrides his/her decision, that Board has nullified its right to hold that manager accountable. Likewise, in a collective’s decision, the group should be sure to clarify the boundaries within which the implementing members should work. If not, and the members go beyond the group’s intention, they may become discouraged from taking on future tasks.



Case Study: Equal Exchange

“Board development” usually refers to activities undertaken by the board to improve itself. Examples include trainings, self-evaluation, and evaluation by other stakeholders not on the board.

Board development can be implemented for the group of Directors (how they function as a whole) as well as in terms of individuals. Equal Exchange, a worker-owned fair trade food cooperative, voted in 2011 to adopt a revised governance model called “GLASS”: Governance for Leadership, Accountability, Scalability, & Success.”

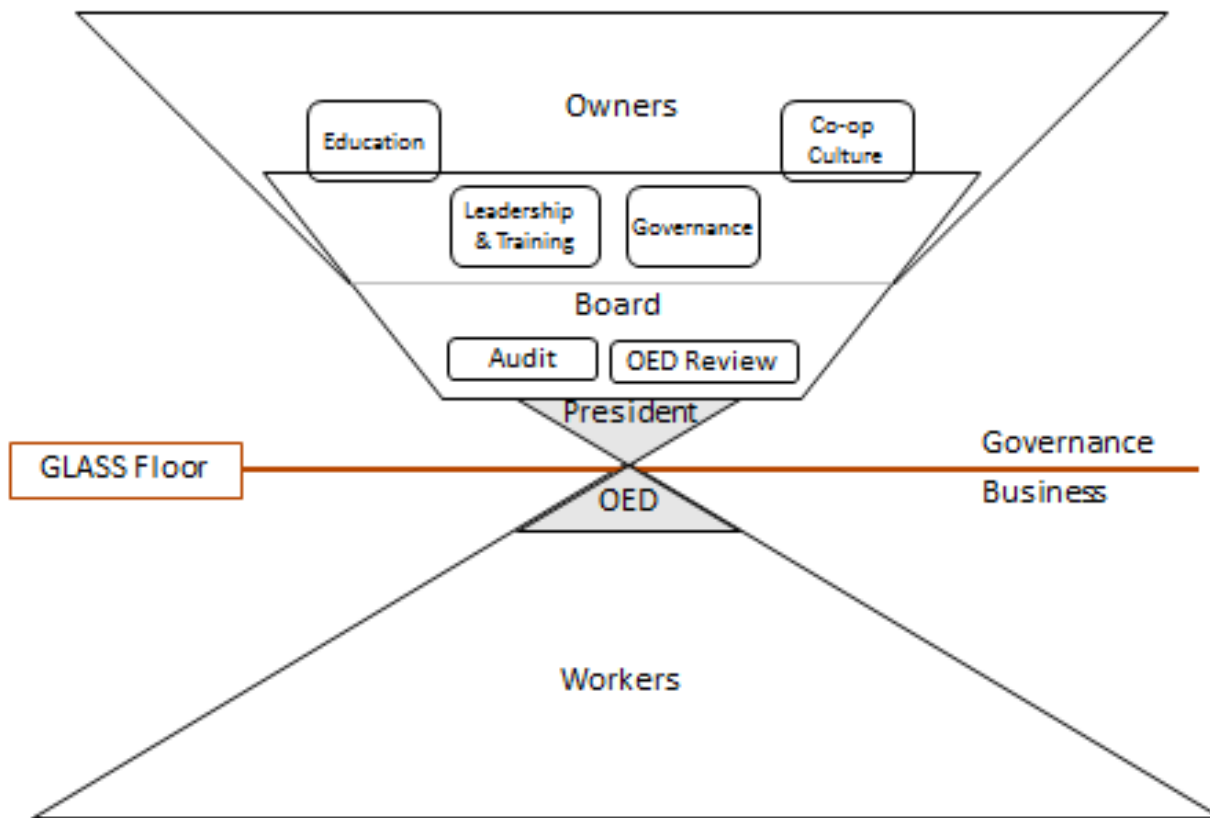
This model’s primary evolution from the organization’s original governance structure is that it proposed two new committees: Co-op Culture and Leadership & Training.

The Leadership & Training committee planned activities to build the skills of individual directors; all members were invited to participate so as to start building a deeper bench from whom to recruit future board members.

Through several member and Board meetings, the Leadership & Training Committee prioritized three topics on which to focus the cooperative’s development:

- 1) Building Peer Networks
- 2) Financial Education
- 3) Acting like a Learning Organization

GLASS Model Governance Structure



The Board convened a sub-committee to lead each area. Some of the activities implemented include a book group and engaging an outside consultant to lead workshops on peer networking.

In a group-level duty for board development, the board filtered their accomplishments onto a list of their responsibilities as described in the GLASS model. This enabled them to judge how well they were fulfilling their role.

They also added future desires in the same format: (table below)

Responsibility	What We Have Done	What we Would Like to DO
Hire/fire Executive; establish annual goals for Measures of Success; Conduct Annual Review	Currently conducting executive review.	
Define and support the Vision		Re-evaluate relevancy of Vision Statement b/c the market has changed.
Amend By-Laws, Dashboard, Measures of Success, Compensation Philosophy, & Governance Structure	Revised Measures of Success	
Provide financial oversight for organization	Entire Board reviews financials with Treasurer at Board meetings.	Have conversation with Treasurer about what's in report to make sure it best helps us do our work.

 **People Power Exercise #7: Board Development: Ring of Inquiry** (30 min)



- Sit in groups of three. For each question, one person poses one of the questions below to a second person. Meanwhile, person #3 listens carefully.
- After a question, rotate roles. Each person should spend at least one question listening, one question responding, and one posing the question. (15 or 30 min: 5 min per question)
 - a) Have you ever served on a board? If yes, what was done to orient you or prepare you for your responsibilities? If nothing, what do you think *should* have been part of the introductory board training?
 - b) Who is the best board member you have ever known? What about them made them an effective board member?
 - c) In your observation, what can make it challenging to develop board members or the board as a group?
 - d) What have you seen done to surmount or minimize the challenges of developing the board?
 - e) In your experience or opinion, what do board members offer to the organization they are serving?

f) In your opinion, what does an organization offer to its board members?

If the discussion was animated and there is time, each trio may highlight a response that seems especially relevant to your station.

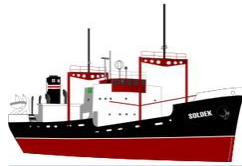
Trio #1:

Trio #2:

Trio #3:

Although *Good to Great* clearly told us not to figure out where we're going until we found the right travelers, this is rarely practical. You're likely reading this because you know your destination – a community radio station – and you're already travelling with others who want to go there with you.

The numerous activities in the “People Power” module may feel like you've been taking the scenic route. And you were – “seeing” the people around you as individuals with needs and with a lot to offer. As Collins put it, *“if you have the wrong people, it doesn't matter whether you discover the right direction... Great vision without great people is irrelevant.”*



Governance

WHAT IS GOVERNANCE? Good Governance is:

- Consensus Oriented
- Accountable
- Transparent
- Responsive
- Equitable & Inclusive
- Effective and Efficient
- Follows the Rule of Law
- Participatory

The Board of Directors:

The Board of Directors is elected by the stakeholders. If the organization chooses to operate without an elected board, each cooperative member should be designated as a director. The primary responsibility of the board is to ensure that the best interests of the station and its workers are protected. The board is responsible for the organizations actions and compliance with regulations.

3 Primary Responsibilities...

1.

Act as trustees on behalf of staff, volunteers, and members.

The board does this by establishing mechanisms for members input, by carefully monitoring the station's financial status, by hiring auditors to review the financial records, by making regular reports on the status of the station to the members, and by making sure that the station follows its bylaws, policies, and appropriate regulations.

2.

Ensure the sound management of the organization.

The board is responsible for selecting and supervising the station's management. It does so by reviewing management reports and monitoring key indicators (such as inventory turnover, cost of operations, sales trends, or other financial ratios) and evaluating management performance.

3.

Set long-term goals and plan for the organization's future.

The board does this by participating in strategic planning discussions with the membership and managers by approving yearly and long-range plans, and by setting performance goals.

Rights & Responsibilities:

There are six traditional major areas of responsibility of the Board of Directors:

1. **Mission:** Determine the organization's mission and set policies to ensure the fulfillment of the mission.
2. **Fiscal:** Establish fiscal policy and ensure the ongoing financial integrity and viability of the organization.
3. **Leadership:** Hire, evaluate, and if necessary, fire, the Executive Director.
4. **Supervision:** Provide ongoing supervision, direction and support for the Executive Director, managers, and/or membership.
5. **Strategic Planning:** Provide the long term vision and plans for the organization; develop priorities and policies to implement these plans.
6. **Public Image:** Represent the organization to the public and advocate for the organization.

The Board of Directors should **not**:

- Become involved in day to day operations;
- Hire or supervise staff other than Executive Director; or
- Micro-manage the Executive Director or the staff.

Governance vis à vis Management:

1. *Governing bodies* dictate the strategic direction, spearhead resource development, maintain financial accountability, and develop leadership potential within the membership.
2. *Managing bodies* implement the governing body's strategic direction and fulfill the station's administrative tasks.

Governance and management can be done by distinct entities, such as in a station with an elected Board of Directors and a management structure, or by the same body, such as in a collective where all members sit on the Board of Directors and committees of those Directors take care of daily operations.

Managers, Staff & Programmers:

***Accountability:** Managers are selected, supervised by, and accountable to the Board of Directors.

***General Responsibility:** Establish and oversee the management of the station's affairs in accordance with the bylaws; meet the goals and objective set by the Board of Directors and members.

Specific Responsibilities *could* include:

Board Relations:

- Work with the Board to prepare for and ensure productive, effective board meetings. Prepare proposals for board consideration.
- Prepare clear, timely reports to the Board.
- Keep the directors informed about pertinent matters between board meetings.

Financial:

- Ensure adequate financial records and internal controls to provide timely and accurate financial statements.
- Ensure that the station's assets are adequately safeguarded from loss.
- Coordinate the preparation of all budgets and financial projections.
- Oversee in-depth financial analysis and promptly address financial problems.
- Initiate financial planning, including the use of the members' equity, financing needs, and future profitability.

Operations:

- Organize operations to maximize profitability and meet specific goals of members.
- Identify and address operational problems.
- Plan for ongoing operational needs, including program development, technology, facilities, and equipment.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.
- Maintain adequate security of facilities and insurance for the station.
- Prepare plans for effectively developing and utilizing the skills of workers.
- Establish and ensure that effective worker participation policies and procedures are in place and that they support the station's established goals and objectives.
- Select, hire, and evaluate the effectiveness of additional management as needed.
- Ensure adequate training, evaluation, safety, and compliance with the station's grievance systems.

Member Relations:

- Establish communication systems and procedures to keep the members fully informed about the co-op's financial status, needs, and activities.
- Make sure that members' needs and interests, as workers and owners, are regularly determined and addressed.

Committees: Developing Effective & Lasting Committees

- **Select an Effective Facilitator:**
A good meeting facilitator is skilled at delegating tasks and monitoring progress.
- **Build Committee Skills:**
Projects can falter when key individuals leave. Share tasks and cultivate skills to ensure that no one person is indispensable.
- **Establish Set Meeting Times:**
Frequent meetings at regularly scheduled times give the committee continuity and stability, and will encourage consistent attendance.
- **Communicate:**
Send out agenda, meeting notes, and other pertinent materials to keep members informed and prepared for upcoming meetings.
- **Make Every Meeting Count:**
At each meeting have an agenda and stick to it. See that the group makes decisions to move forward and that members leave with assignments to be completed within specific timeframes.
- **Keep Meetings Concise and to the Point:**
Start and end meetings promptly. Keep meetings to less than one hour unless participants agree to a longer meeting. Be aware of discussions that may be more appropriate for a longer time.
- **Reinforce and Celebrate the Spirit of Collaboration:**
If multiple groups are involved in a collaborative development effort, then it's essential that all groups receive credit for their participation. Make sure that single individuals or groups do not get credit for what is a collaborative endeavor.



Do the Work: Committees

Using your founding group, decide what committees are needed, and what the purpose of these committees will be. For each committee, document your decisions with the form below.

This committee worksheet is not only relevant during the beginning stages of your organizing. You should also use it every time a new committee or finite task group is created. Making its expectations as clear as possible from the start will help focus the work and avoid duplication or wasted efforts.

Title What is the committee's name?	
Purpose Why does the committee exist?	
Term How long will the committee be established?	
Expectations What responsibilities is the committee expected to fulfill? What are some boundaries that it is not permitted to cross?	



Governance Exercise #1: Challenges in Governance (20 min)

1. Divide into groups of two.

2. Share with each other some examples of governance challenges that you yourself have seen or experienced. Write down the examples on butcher paper or here:

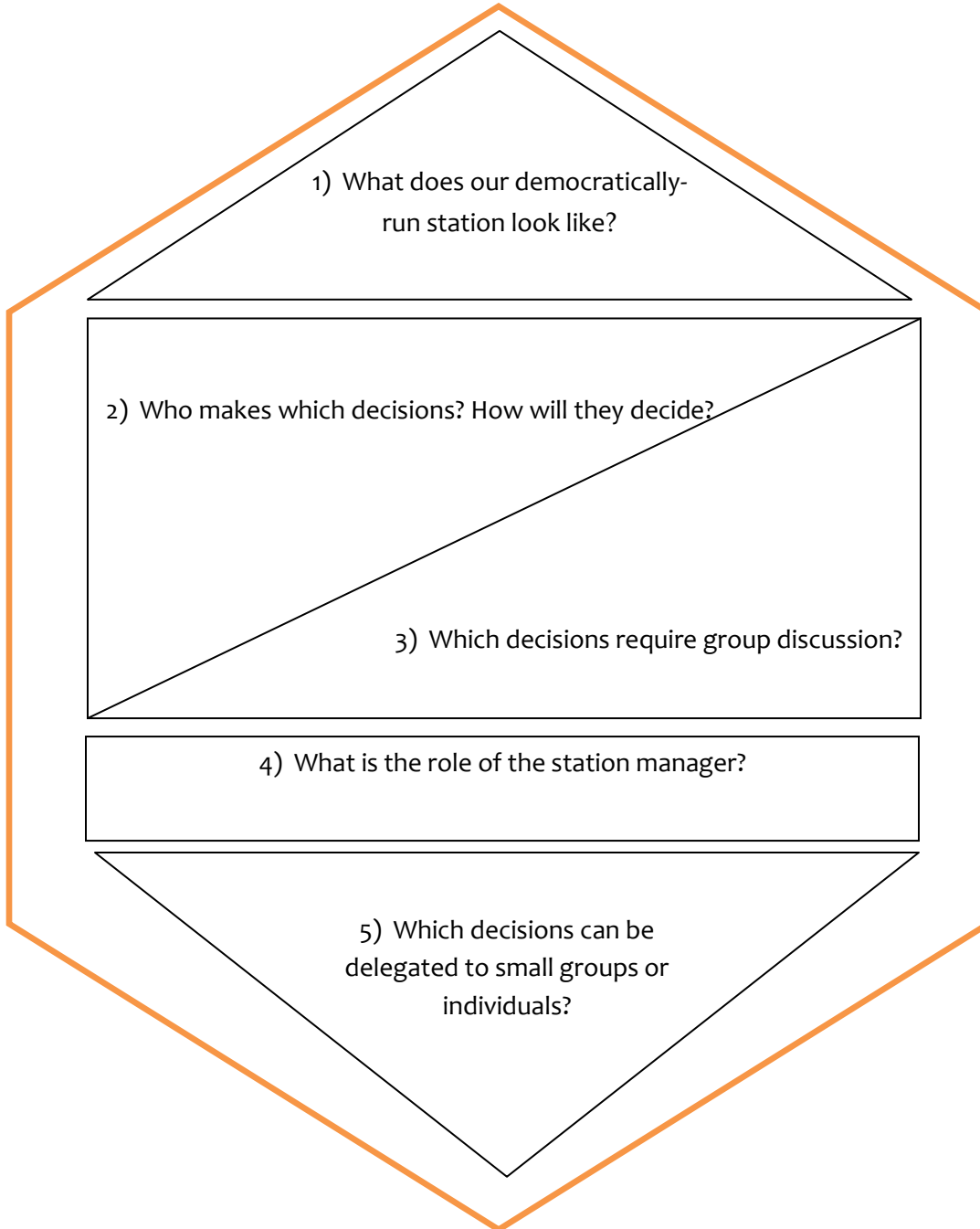
3. Report back to group.

4. Discuss together: What are some preventative measures your group can adopt to decrease the likelihood of these situations happening to you?



Do the Work: Governance at your Station

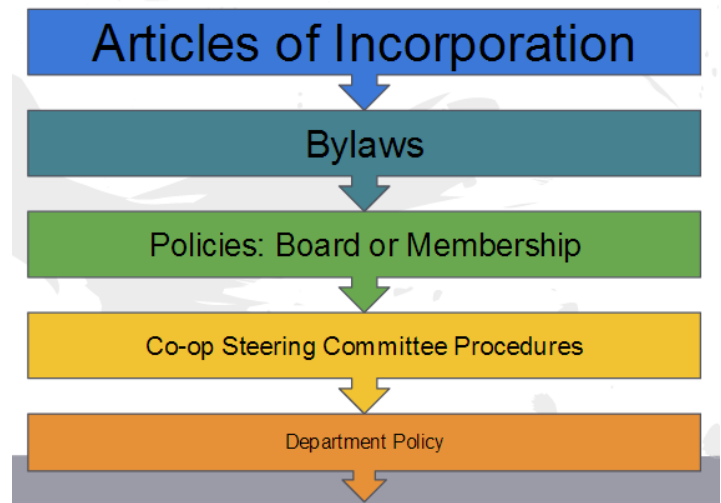
The questions below are rarely, if ever, answered in one sitting. Your group will need to discuss them in order to make decisions about foundational documents such as bylaws and governance policies. They are numbered in a suggested sequence, but you may find that one discussion affects another, so don't become frustrated if it becomes an iterative process to zero in on your final decisions.



Writing it Down

The hierarchy of rules places the Articles at the top: the most foundational and general.

Moving down the hierarchy, the rules become more explicit.



Articles

The language below describes the function of articles from the perspective of as stations who'd like to structure themselves as "democratically run."

- The articles of incorporation constitute the legal document that establishes the organization as a legal business entity, subject to the laws of the state in which the organization is chartered.
- The articles state the name under which the organization will operate and the purpose of the corporation. They are the backbone of the organization and can be difficult to amend.
- The articles also define the classes of stock that the organization is allowed to issue and how many shares of each kind.
- The articles should state the purpose of the corporation, which should be articulated in general terms.
- The articles must also provide for their own amendment and for the operation of the corporation through its board of directors.

Bylaws

- The bylaws of the corporation state how the corporation will operate, how meetings will be held, how many directors will serve on the board, the structure of membership meetings, and other rules of the corporation.

Sample Articles:

Article I Name

Article II Location of Principal Place of Business

Article III Location of Registered Office

Article IV Name & Address of Resident Agent

Article V Purpose

Article VI Number of Directors

Article VII Capital Stock (where applicable)

Article VIII Distribution of Dividends

Article IX Names of Incorporators & Initial Directors

Article X Membership Termination

Article XI Duration

- The bylaws are the basic blueprint for how the organization will operate, and the place where the members of the organization really define for themselves the institution they are creating.
- The bylaws generally can be amended by a majority vote of the membership, but given the importance of the document and the elements it contains, many organizations set the standard for changing the bylaws much higher, at 75 percent or more. Amendment procedures are outlined in the bylaws.
- Board members, in particular, should be familiar with the bylaws, which should be reviewed on an annual basis.

Sample Bylaws:

Article I	Name and Location of Corporation
Article II	Purpose and Powers
Article III	Membership & Membership Shares
Article IV	Internal Capital Accounts
Article V	Member Meetings
Article VI	Directors
Article VII	Officers
Article VIII	Committees
Article IX	Financial Regulations
Article X	Seal
Article XI	Waiver of Notice
Article XII	Repeal or Amendment of Bylaws
Article XIII	Dissolution & Property Interests of

Bylaws should do the following:

- *Set voting rights.
- *Allocate power between the general membership and the board of directors.
- *Provide details of the organization's operations.
- *Provide guidelines for amending the bylaws.
- *Define membership, including who is eligible and how much shares will cost.
- *Set forth the relationship between the individual member and the corporation.
- *Set forth the distribution of capital account funds at termination from the organization and at dissolution of the organization.
- *Provide for the establishment of operating rules, which may be more fluid and easier to change than the text of the bylaws.

1. Corporate affairs or organizational agreement

This section often recaps what is outlined within the articles of incorporation. This is an opportunity to include a clear, concise statement of purpose for which the organization is formed and the powers which it may exercise. Make sure the bylaws agree with the articles of incorporation. You may wish to include this handy phrase: "The articles of incorporation are hereby made a part of these bylaws. In case of any inconsistency between the articles of incorporation and these bylaws, the provisions of the articles of incorporation are controlling."

2. Membership

- Include specific statements of who is eligible for membership, the classes of membership, the requirements to become a member, and voting rights.
- Cover rules regarding suspension or termination of membership.

3. Membership Meetings

Not surprisingly, this section may be referred to most frequently. Be sure to address:

- Details of the annual meeting.
- Special membership meetings, including requirements for calling a special meeting.
- Rules regarding the notice of meetings.

- d) Rules concerning voting (absentee ballots, voting by proxy, etc.)
- e) Number and percentage of membership which constitutes a quorum (this is very important).

4. Board of Directors

Another frequently referred to section of the bylaws. Include:

- a) Number and qualifications of the board directors. Generally boards have an odd number of directors. For efficiency, many new co-ops start with a small board (say five or seven directors) and may increase the board size over time to better reflect the changing demographics of the membership (for example, proportional representation).
- b) Election of directors. Be sure to address length of term and whether you wish to have term limits (or a mandatory time off the board before running for office again). You may wish to build in a rotation system for staggered terms so that you don't have a mass exodus of experience in a single year.
- c) Filling board vacancies. (Do you want the board to appoint a temporary director until the next annual meeting? Should names be drawn from a list of runners up in the last board elections?)
- d) Removal of directors (either by the board or the membership). This gets messy. It's easier to have this discussion before personalities become involved.
- e) Reimbursement and compensation of directors. (Check your state statutes.) You may wish to include a clause stating that no board member may vote upon reimbursement for their services – this is a decision for the membership.
- f) Conflict of interest. Here's a handy phrase: "It shall be the duty of all board directors to make prompt and full disclosure to the board of any personal, professional, or financial conflict of interest in a matter under discussion. When a conflict of interest is disclosed, the board member must not participate in the discussion or vote on the relevant issue."
- g) Details about the board meetings (how often they will meet, rules concerning special board meetings, notice of board meetings, quorum, etc.) Here is a handy phrase in case the board wishes to hold an emergency meeting and doesn't have time to call a special board meeting (called an action without a meeting): "Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors may be taken by written action signed by all of the directors. The written action is effective when signed by all of the directors and shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote at a meeting."
- h) A section describing the general duties of the Board of Directors, the relationship with management, and the duty to the membership. Encourage the board to avoid micromanaging by keeping their "nose in the business, but their fingers out."
- i) Describe the duties of the General Manager or the Executive Director (reports directly to the board, responsible for daily operations and implementing policy, etc.).

5. Board Officers

- a) Define the duties of the president, vice president, secretary/clerk, treasurer, and alternates.
- b) How and when are officers selected? (Will this be directly voted upon by the membership? Will the board decide among themselves who will serve as officers? What will be the duration of the officer terms?)

6. Administration and miscellaneous

As the name implies, this is the catch all category. You could include items such as:

- a) When your fiscal year begins.
- b) Meetings will be governed by Robert's Rules of Order (optional).
- c) Will you have a corporate seal or not?

- d) Indemnification and insurance statement (basically that the organization will cover insurance and reimburse a director for expenses incurred due to a legal proceeding).
- e) Financial review – Will you have an annual review or audit? (a good idea)
- f) Option for the co-op to have advisory councils, committees, etc.
- g) Severability. Here is a handy phrase: “If a court of competent jurisdiction judges any section, clause, provision, or portion of these by-laws void or invalid, the remainder of these by-laws will not be affected.”

8. Amendments to the bylaws

State the procedure for amending the bylaws (whether initiated by the membership or the Board).

9. Dissolution

What are the rules and procedures to follow if the station stops operating? Check your state statutes!

Board Resolutions

Policy and operating decisions should be recorded via resolutions voted upon during board meetings, not in the bylaws. Resolutions may include decisions such as changes in the personnel handbook, etc. Due to the fluctuating needs of the station, it is common for a board to pass one or two resolutions during its meetings.

Policies & Procedures

Two questions to consider...

- **What** are your policies & procedures?
- **Who** gets to decide your policies & procedures?

Writing it Down Exercise #1: Rock, Paper, Scissors

“Who decides which policies?”

- Rock - Board of Directors
- Paper - Committees and/or Management
- Scissors - Membership

1. Choose 1-3 sample policies (e.g., hiring policy; hours of operation policy; programming procedures).
2. One person describe the situation of policy #1.
3. On the count of three, each participant show the hand signal for the governance body that they believe is the final authority on the issue at your organization.
4. If participants are displaying different hand signals, discuss your rationales with one another, or check your bylaws!
5. Repeat with 2-3 more policies or decisions.



Do the Work: Defining Who, How, and Why

Step 1 - The First Meeting: Define & Accept Roles

Guidelines

- primary purpose is to approve legal documents & institutionalize the process of governing.
- minutes should record what transpired.
- annual meetings are held to consider financial reports, and review, discuss, and vote on policies.

Step 2 - Decision-Making Process & Election of Board Members

1. Decide whether to run the organization as a collective without a formal Board of Directors and/or managers, or a more traditional governance structure with a Board.
 - ❖ If a collective is incorporated, the need for a Board of Directors can be met by making every member a board member.
2. Specify the decision-making process.
Refer to Group Identity module for specific models of decision-making.

Step 3 - Adopt Articles

1. Review the articles.
Allow time for members to discuss concerns and/or questions.
2. Vote to approve the articles.

Step 4 - Adopt Bylaws

1. Review & discuss bylaws. Amend any necessary changes, making sure they are legal.
2. Vote to approve bylaws.

Step 5 - Convene the Board or Members

1. Select a financial institution and determine who will be handling the bookkeeping & finances.
2. Clarify how roles are to be assigned and fulfilled.
3. Determine training needs and arrange for the training to be provided.
4. Create a plan to address all start-up matters that were detailed in the station plan.
5. If part of the structural plan is to appoint a manger, board establishes procedures to carry out the search and selection of manager(s).



Do the Work: Pre-Attorney Questions

Yes, it is a lot of work to answer the questions below. However, the more that you have decided before speaking with an attorney, the more cost-effective will be your time with the lawyer. **Answer the questions listed before consulting with an attorney to help you design your legal documents.**

Building the Foundation for your Documents:

- Who are the members of the station? What needs of theirs is the organization designed to meet?
- List the assumptions you have.
- Identify the blocks for moving forward.
- List the core values/principles that guide your station.
- How do you want the world to be different because the station exists?
- What is the vision you hold for this station?
- What do you want the station to accomplish? What is its mission?
- Who will serve as the startup Board of Directors, overseeing the development activities?

Membership:

- Who is eligible for membership?
- Will each member have one vote? Or will voting be weighted?
- Are there financial obligations for voting?
- Are all members treated the same? Or are there classes of members?
- How can a member terminate their membership? How can the station terminate a member?

Board:

- Who is eligible to serve on the board?
- What are their duties?
- How many seats should there be?
- Will you have board members from outside the station?
- How long will a board member serve?
- Are they paid? Are expenses reimbursed?
- How will vacancies be filled? How can a board member be removed?
- How often will the board meet? What quorum is required? What meeting notice is required?
- Will there be standing committees of the board? If yes, what are they and what are the functions?
- Will there be officers? If yes, what offices, terms, duties, & selection process?

Membership Meetings:

- How often will members meet? Who can call a special meeting? What notice is required? What quorum is required?
- What issues will members decide?
- How can members vote? By proxy, by mail, electronically?
- How will the by-laws be amended?

Membership Agreements:

- What will members receive?
- What will members agree to give?
- How will quality be evaluated?
- How will the agreement be enforced?
- How will the agreement be terminated/renewed?

Sources

Frederick, Donald A. Sample Legal Documents for Cooperatives USDA Cooperative Programs. Cooperative Information Report 40. 1999.

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pub/cir40/cir40rpt.htm>

University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives. Guidelines for Cooperative Bylaws.

<http://www.uwcc.wisc.edu/info/bylaw.html>

Group Dynamics

Your organization, regardless of the structure that you choose, will likely have two means of making decisions and conducting business. One will be the formal structure that exists on paper (a Board of Directors, management team, collective, etc). The other will be an informal process that results from human interactions, friendships, disputes, and individual desires. This section discusses the various group dynamics of the organization. Official and unofficial roles should be examined, meeting process and decision making should be codified and conflict management should be created. The goal should be for members of the radio station to have a clear, mutual understanding of how decisions get made, proper behavior within this construct, and how participants (staff or volunteer) will be held accountable.

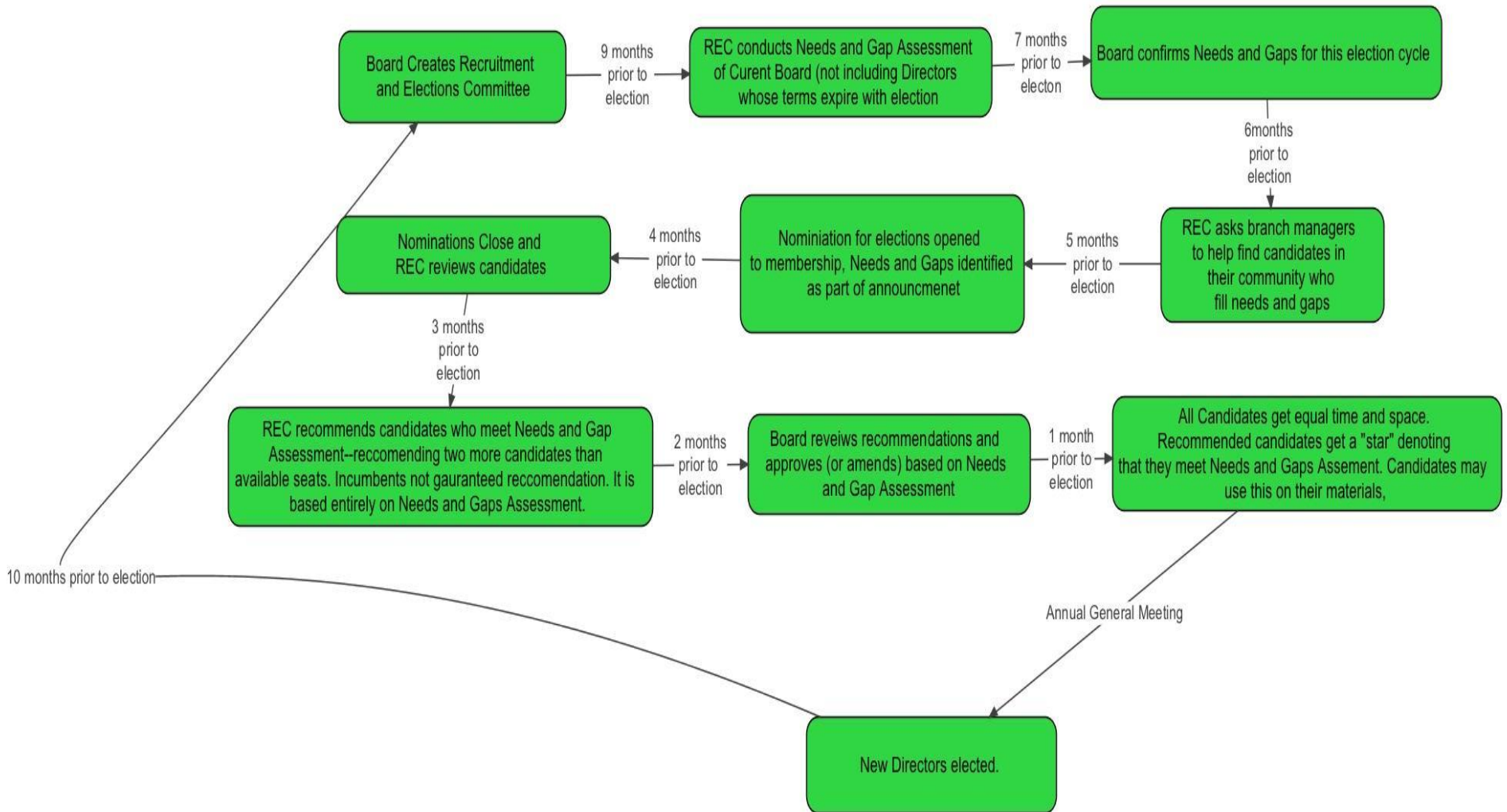
Whether your group chooses a traditional hierarchy (often referred to as a “benevolent dictatorship”) or a collectivist model in which all have an equal voice in the decision or somewhere in-between, the organization should clearly explain the decision making process. Co-operative organizations engage in the ethics of openness and honesty. Whether the radio station being planned adopts a cooperative structure or not, the ideal of transparency will still be important in attracting volunteers, staff, and financial supporters.

Official Roles and Unofficial Roles

Community stations and community radio stations tend to have a small group of staff and a larger group of on-air volunteers (including on-air programmers). Generally speaking, each staff person has specific functions that they coordinate, e.g., fundraising, marketing, listener support, volunteer management, oversight of programming, financial management, long-term planning, and stakeholder relations (Board of Directors, government regulators, bankers, major donors, etc). In smaller stations, one person may wear several hats. In larger stations, a general (or station) manager role may be created to provide oversight and coordination among the staff. One of the issues in planning your station will be to determine how many people you need to support the on-air programmers, raise money, and manage the station.

Regardless of the roles, the staff may operate as a collective that contracts with the Board of Directors (such as WORT-FM in Madison, WI) or have a strict hierarchy in which the Station Manager makes the final decisions and oversees the work of all other staffers (such as WFMU, Jersey City). The Board of Directors may also have different formats from directors elected to set terms by either the volunteers or listener supporters to a self-perpetuating board that appoints its own members based on it needs. See following example from Assiniobe Credit Union.

Assiniboie Credit Union's Need and Gap Assessment Model of Board Candidate Recruitment



There aren't any set rules to the structure other than decisions need to be made and either an individual or a group needs to make them. Part of the structure that you will decide for your organization will depend on the culture of your group and the experience that members of the group have with making decisions. The important thing to do is to codify your decision-making process and structure. Create a flow chart, an organizational chart and description of each position, its duties, and accountability.

Worksheet: Who Decides What in Your Organization?

Use the following worksheet to check which group of deciders makes which decisions. Add more columns or rows as necessary to create a matrix of all the decisions and deciders.

Decision/Decider	Volunteers	Staff	Manager	Board	Membership
Bylaws					
Loans					
Fundraising Goals					
Vendor Decisions					
Daily Operations					
Work Policies					
Donor Policies					
On-Air Content					

To this point, the discussion has centered on the official structure of the radio station. As mentioned, there will also be an unofficial structure. Even flattened organizations that operate as pure collectives tend to have unwritten rules and hierarchies. These rules and hierarchies exist from the social nature of our existence. Friendships may inhibit people from holding each other accountable. Power personalities (and traditional aspects of power through race and gender dynamics) may privilege some individuals over others. Even the manner in which people speak can create unwritten power relationships. For example, a staffer or volunteer may constantly refer to their experience as a “banker” that privileges their opinions on the stations finances over other members without financial experience. This experience may be valuable to the organization, but it doesn't ensure that good financial decisions will be made.

More traditional soft networks include people in the organization who socialize with each other outside of the official meetings and work area. Social events can be great tools to build bonds within the organization, but can also create hidden networks and alliances that stifle open discussion. In the worst case, it can privilege a group of people based on characteristics that have little or nothing to do with the station's mission. These have traditionally been described as “Good Ol' Boy Clubs” due to the historical challenges that women and visible minorities have endured while attempting to excel in organizations.

Overcoming the negative aspects of social networking may be difficult, but not impossible. The following is just a partial list of activities that organizations can engage to keep social interactions positive and an asset to the organization:

- Creating an organizational identity committed to diversity through a strong mission, values, and ethics statement.
- Churning leadership positions or even on-air programming to prevent “ownership” of positions or radio-slots.
- Codifying decision-making and conflict processes.
- Engaging in education and training on all aspects on the management of the station helps prevent privileged knowledge.
- Engaging in education and training around societal power relationships especially in relation to race, class and gender.

Group Dynamics Exercise #1: Transparency (70 min)

First the individuals in your group should note down their own answers to the questions below. Then, as a group, discuss your responses and brainstorm potential ways to safeguard transparency.

Individual questions

What does “transparency” mean to you?

How do you define it?

WFMU in Jersey City forces a hiatus on all on-air programmers after ten years. The programmers “lose” their show for up to two years in order to allow new voices access to the air waves and maintain a continuous diversity of programming. Some programmers choose not to return, finding the break creates space for other interests in their lives. During the hiatus, programmers are encouraged to continue to volunteer with the station and all are assured of returning to the air. At first, it created some difficulties, but has generally been accepted and prevents on-air programming from presuming that they “own” a time-spot.

Group Discussion

Share in a go-round what transparency means to each of you. There is no need to agree or disagree about each other’s perceptions.

After everyone has spoken, have one person serve as note taker. Based on each other’s feelings about transparency, brainstorm potential structural ways to encourage and safeguard transparency at your station.

What policies or structures should we implement to ensure transparency?

Communication

Creating a strong communication matrix will be essential to avoiding misunderstanding and minimizing conflicts. People have different ways of communicating. Some prefer face-to-face interaction, others prefer email, and still others may prefer reports. The method of communication may also depend on the ideas being communicated. Some organizations go so far as to create a communication sheet for each person in the organization that allows people in the organization to tailor their communication style to the person that they need to work with. Other organizations may use routing slips to ensure that each person in the communication chain has read the document. Those may be a bit bureaucratic and complicated for most small radio stations. However, taking time to discuss how people will communicate with each other (such as a requirement to read email by 9 am each morning, or respond to requests within 48 hours) may help create stronger communication structures and reduce problems in the future.

Group Dynamics Exercise #2: Communication (20 min)

1) As a group, talk about the different ways that people in your group communicate. Use “potluck etiquette,” i.e., everyone should have the opportunity to speak before anyone goes up for “seconds.”

2) Based on the discussion, jot down your personal preferences on how you like to communicate.

3) In a go-round, share these preferences with each other. (There is no need to agree or disagree.)

4) Together, brainstorm some ways to accommodate future members who may have other preferences, communication disabilities, or who lack consistent access to email or telephone.

Meetings: Planning, Facilitation and Decision Making

Most community radio stations have a small staff. This makes using traditional meeting models such as Robert Rules of Order cumbersome and overly complicated. The conduct of meetings, facilitation, and decision making creates an opportunity for the radio station to minimize conflicts and increase buy-in to the outcomes. There are basically three methods of making decisions: a hierarchical decision maker, majority vote, and consensus model. This toolkit will consider a specific option of modified consensus, but first a discussion of planning and facilitation is in order.

Regardless of the decision making model, the planning and facilitation of meetings may be done in a way that is inclusive of the group. Proper noticing of meetings, with clear agendas, allows people the opportunity to

participate. Facilitation practices can be used to encourage all voices while also focusing the group on the issues and keeping to a schedule.

Group Dynamics Exercise #3: Meeting Process

The following questions will assist in creating a consistent process for meeting and disseminating information. Your meetings will be more productive if there is underlying agreement about the meeting processes of your group.

- How often should the staff meet? _____
- What business needs require a meeting? _____

- Is there an inclusive time to meet regularly? _____

- Will the group be meeting in person or through electronic means? _____
- How much time do the staff members need to prepare? How do people prefer to receive their information (e.g., paper or electronically)? _____

Facilitation aims to create a smooth flow to the meeting that avoids tangential discussions and manages to complete the group's work. Each person will have their own skills and styles for facilitation. Some organizations rotate the facilitator and note taker to allow everyone to gain experience and to help prevent people from dominating positions (or feeling unduly burdened). The facilitator should limit their participation in the discussion to focus on running the meeting. Some techniques that assist facilitation include:

- Setting times for each agenda item and requiring the group to negotiate the time if they run over (i.e., to use more time on one item requires less time on another).
- Listening carefully and urging those who haven't spoken to speak.
- Keep a list ("stack") of those wishing to speak, but manage the list if it seems everyone is in agreement (ask if anyone wishes to speak in opposition and if none do, then ask to move to a decision).

Modified Consensus

When most people hear consensus, they often groan. The idea of getting everyone to agree, or allowing a single voice to block decisions, can seem difficult. However, the power of consensus results from commitment of the body to a decision to which everyone has agreed. There are many versions of modified consensus; this is simply one of many.

- **Step One** - A member of the group makes a proposal
- **Step Two** - A discussion and questions about the proposal ensues until such time as the facilitator believes that the group is ready to make a decision.
- **Step Three** - The facilitator asks if there are any "clarifying questions". These are questions that people may need answered to understand the intent of the wording of the proposal so that they can make a decision.
- **Step Four** - After all clarifying questions have been answered, the facilitator asks if there are any "stand asides". A "stand aside" is a decision by a person in the group in which they do not support the proposal but do not feel strongly enough against it to block it.
- **Step Five** - The facilitator asks if there are any "blocks". A "block" means that the person is fundamentally opposed to the idea as presented. If there are no "blocks," then consensus is achieved and the proposal passes. If there are two blocks, then the proposal is blocked and set aside until the next meeting. The people "blocking" are asked why they blocked and, importantly, what changes would need to be made to erase their blocks.
- **Step Six** - A blocked proposal returns to the next meeting. If it remains blocked, the proposal maker may ask for a majority vote.

This process allows minority opinions to be presented and engaged. It forces their considerations to be considered. It may be that the reasons for blocking (which are serious concerns for those choosing to block) may not be a major issue for the makers and the proposal can be amended to achieve full consensus. At the same time, it also prevents obstructionism from taking place since those seeking to block must state their reasons and ultimately must convince others to join them.



Do The Work: Meeting Ground Rules (25 min)

“Ground rules” at meetings set the tone by reminding participants what is expected of them and also what the group has set as boundaries not to cross. See the example from Equal Exchange in the sidebar.

1) As individuals, jot down a few practices that you have observed or experienced that contributed to productive meetings.

2) Share your thoughts with one another. Choose a recorder to combine your ideas onto a whiteboard or large paper.

3) Look together for common themes.

4) Based on the extent of agreement but also on the importance of other suggestions, draft a list of your group’s Meeting Ground Rules:

Conflict Management

Conflict doesn’t have to be a negative. Having disagreements can lead groups to better decisions. Sometimes the conflict becomes negative or becomes based on issues not related to those being discussed. Setting up a process for managing conflict at the outset will pay dividends as the station and organization move forward. An organizational

W/O Meeting Guidelines

From Equal Exchange

Everyone arrives on time and comes prepared.

Everyone gets a chance to participate.

All ideas have value, and discussion of ideas is encouraged.

Our goal is consensus.

Stay focused.

Do not interrupt or make personal attacks.

If we can’t measure it, it won’t get done.

Respect the facilitator’s requests.

If we make a mistake, we will fix it.

ethics code and values statement will play an integral role in this development. A value statement about communication and managing conflict can help guide the organization, its staff, and volunteers.

Mediation

While one would hope that individuals having a conflict would be able to meet and work out their differences, this doesn't always happen. Power relationships, formal and informal, may prevent an honest conversation from happening. In addition, people may not be comfortable meeting alone with someone with whom they are in conflict. A mediation process can assist the organization and individuals to resolve the conflict.

In a mediation process, a neutral third party assists the parties in conflict with their communication. There are many methods of mediation and while this handbook offers one example, the organization may want to consider other models. The mediator may be internal to the organization, from the stakeholder group, or a professional mediator. This will largely depend on the size of the organization and need for mediated conversations.

The primary goal of mediation is for the parties to come to an understanding of each other's point of view and agree to move forward in a way that will not result in escalated conflict. In general, participation is voluntary by all parties, although there may be consequences if individuals refuse (such as the refusal being noted in a more formal grievance process).

Grievance Policy

While hopefully rare, sometimes conflict escalates to the level that the organization needs to take action to hold individuals accountable for their behavior and protect the integrity of the organization. Policies should be put in place that protect the organization but also provide due process for individuals and protect them against spurious charges or misunderstandings.

Depending on the size and structure of the organization, there are a variety of forms that a grievance procedure can take, but all should begin with an agreed upon list of inappropriate behavior and clear understanding of the consequences of engaging in such behavior. The method then may involve a system similar to the judicial system with a person bringing charges and a body reviewing the charges, hearing the defense and deciding the verdict. A tribunal system may allow anyone in the organization to bring charges against another and then a tribunal consisting of people in the organization (or the Board of Directors) rendering the verdict. A bureaucratic system may simply assign points for infractions and then automate discipline (including termination) based on point-totals (similar to driver's license revocation) but allowing the individual to appeal the consequences.

Whatever method is chosen the process must strive for transparency, consistency, and fairness. People involved in the process, from accusation to deliberation, should receive training and support. It is this arena that informal networks can be most damaging as friendships and social networks may create inconsistent methods of dealing with grievances and behavior.

Suggested Reading

Hoffman, Elizabeth (2005) *Dispute Resolution in Worker Cooperatives: Formal Procedures and Procedural Justice*, *Law & Society Review*.



Community Engagement



Your station may be required to include a Community Advisory Board (CAB) in its governance structure. CABs typically give feedback on the station's adherence to programming policies but may also be less formal. You can read about how eight different stations are using advisory boards – some required, some not - here: <http://www.srg.org/governance/CAB/CAB.html>, a compilation by the Station Resource Group.

But a CAB alone does not constitute “engaging” the community. Unless those CAB members seek out the opinions of others, they can only represent their own views. Even this can be only a listening forum unless structured otherwise.

To truly engage community members, your structure and actions must allow them to contribute in ways that CHANGE THE STATION. Allowing the change may be uncomfortable for staff or long-serving volunteers. But whether a CAB, tabling event, or survey, if the feedback from the community does not influence your station's choices, then it is merely symbolic, inauthentic, and an ineffective use of time.



Community Engagement Exercise #1: Why Bother? (3 min per person)

Because they are not owned by corporations, we may take it for granted that community radio stations are inclusive and accessible. But the term “community” is so broad that individuals even within your own group may be interpreting it differently. For some it may simply mean that on-air programmers are volunteers, or that it's intrinsically “community” because it's a not-for-profit. For others, authentic community control may mean that people who *aren't* on the air are the ones who elect the board and choose a manager. Understanding your group's perceptions of community as well as your collective perception of the station's community or communities will lay a solid foundation for your efforts.

In a go-round, ask each person to answer the question below. Don't debate each other's responses.



“In your opinion or life experience, why is it important for a radio station to involve the community in some way?”

What is your personal response to this question?

What are the responses of your co-organizers?



Case Study: WORT Madison, WI

WORT went on the air in 1975. They not only ask for input but also use systems to be sure to follow up on that input.

Feedback tools used by WORT:

- Comment area on pledge cards
- Comment area on donor envelopes
- Community meetings
- Surveys
- Tabling at community fairs to sell CDs and solicit input.
- Log in which to write comments from callers and visitors
- On-air forums during which staff and Board members respond to caller questions and comments.



The log is read aloud at staff meetings and Programming Committee. WORT also recently overhauled their website in direct response to feedback they collected through a mailing. Their “Megaphone” webpage lists numerous no-cost ways to make announcements through the station: www.wortfm.org/?page_id=999

Example: WFUV



WFUV is the station at Fordham University. Its CAB meets quarterly and is composed of people who are “reasonably representative of the diverse needs and interests of the communities served by WFUV.” It does not supervise station staff but rather evaluates the impact of programming goals, community service and significant policies.

Members past & present of WFUV's community advisory board.

Example: Boston Free Radio



Tabling is one way to hear from a more random listener rather than a vocal minority.

Example: WSKG (Online form for seeking input) www.wskg.org/more/community-advisory-board-input

What are the most important issues and/or needs in your community?:

What do you think is unique and special about your community?:

Does WSKG programming reflect and address the important issues and needs in your community?:



Community Engagement Exercise #2: Intentional Listening (1 hour per meeting)

Who will you engage and how?

Meeting 1 of 2

Which community stakeholders would you like to engage?

Design your method:

A.

Who will talk to each group?	Group's name	How? (E.g., casual conversation, interview, survey)	How will each organizer bring that info back to the group? (E.g., photos, maps, words, quotes, video, audio)
<i>Olivia</i>	<i>Neighborhood association</i>	<i>Attend the association's monthly meeting</i>	<i>Audio recording & written quotes</i>

B. What does your organizing group want to know from these people?

Meeting 2 of 2

Share results with one another after your forays into the community.

Prioritize 2-3 methods of future engagement. Choose just one or two next steps for each method. Put them on your timeline or work plan.

Top-Priority Methods of Engagement	Next Steps
A	1)
	2)
B	1)
	2)
C	1)
	2)

Community Engagement at **Your** Station

Some radio stations call themselves community stations because they are run by local volunteers. Local residents who are not directly involved with the station have no influence over the station or its activities.

Other radio stations conduct outreach activities to interact with the local public and thus provide opportunities for residents to give suggestions and feedback to the station. However, station staff and the Board still hold the ultimate authority over the station operations.

Some stations include local organizations or residents who are not programmers or staff in the governance of the station. These stations can be held accountable by the community through that governance role.

Community Engagement Exercise #3: Community Engagement at **Your** Station (35-45 min.)

What do you want the role of “community” to be at this station? Is it enough for the station to be a good citizen? Do you want the station structure to give community members certain authorities or require the station to seek community input?

1. Each person sketch a line like the one on the following page, or print out the page.
2. Without discussion, each person mark on the line where you envision your station to fall on the continuum of community engagement.
3. For any mark falling to the right of “simply listen,” jot down your ideas (below the line) on how the station can interact and *with whom* in your particular community.
4. On a white-board or large paper, combine all the individual responses on to one continuum.

5. Note whether the individual opinions fall close to one another or are spread apart. Regardless, do a quick go-round (max 1 min each) to explain to one another how your preferred level of community engagement relates to the station's mission.

At this point, your next steps will depend on how much alignment is in your group as well as on how your group is making decisions (e.g., by consensus, majority vote, etc.) You may need to have more than one discussion in order to reach agreement on questions such as whether your station structure will give rights and responsibilities to non-volunteers or staff, and how many resources to dedicate to community outreach. Be realistic about how many activities your organizing group can handle.

An example of some “hows” and “whos” are shown on the continuum after the template page.

Community members who are not programmers simply listen.

Community members are asked for input and sometimes see change as a result of that input.

Community members hold governance rights & responsibilities.

Who will this engage?

How?

Who will this engage?

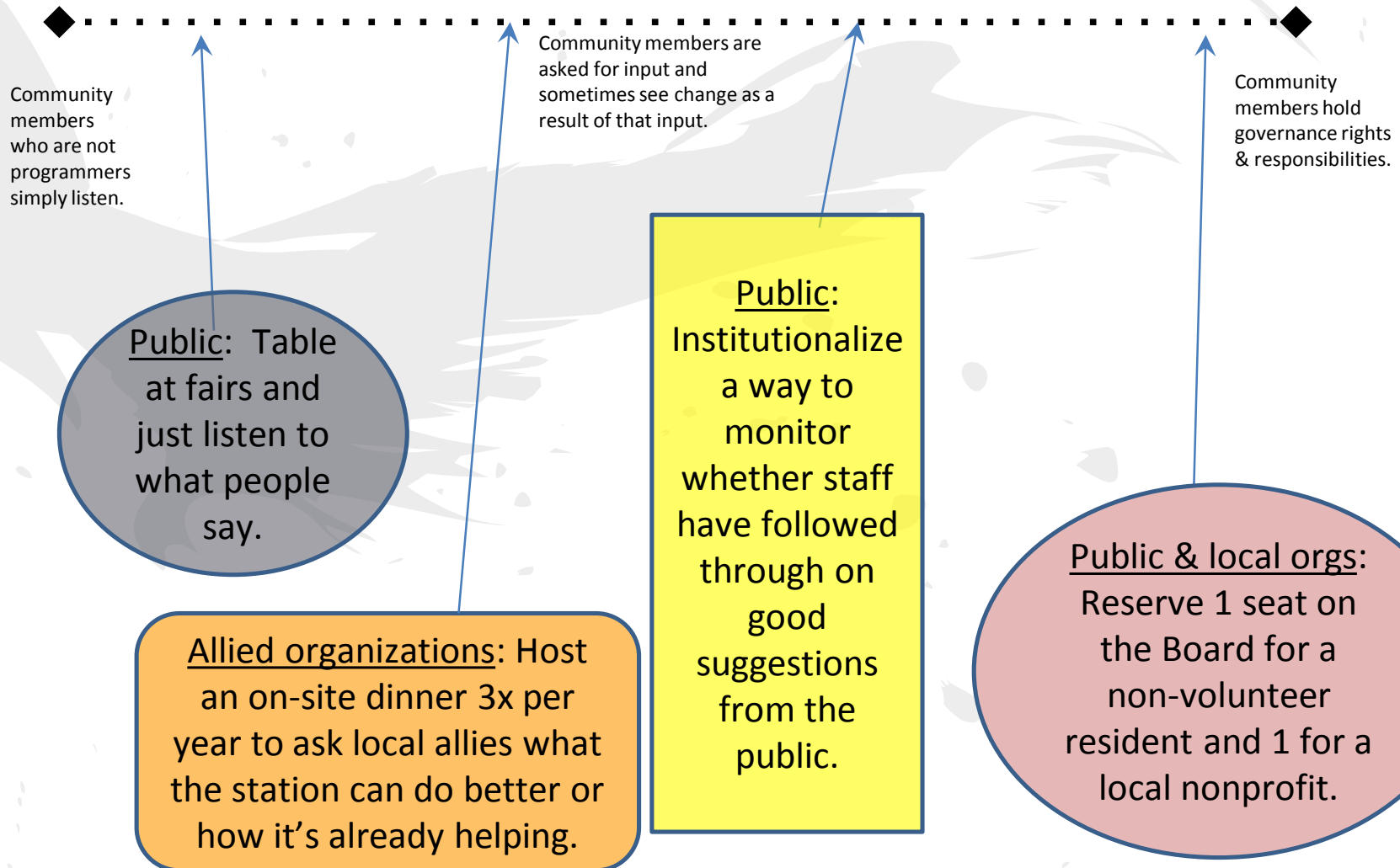
How?

Who?

How?

Who? _____
How?

Example for Exercise #3: Community Engagement at a station



Balancing Demands for Air Time

You have probably already received requests for certain programs or types of programs. There are 168 hours in a week. Is that enough to air all the varieties of programming?

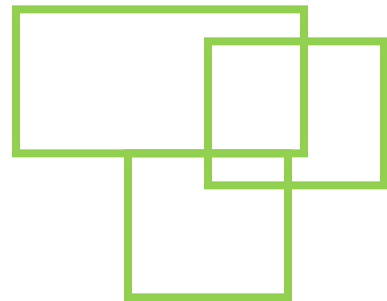
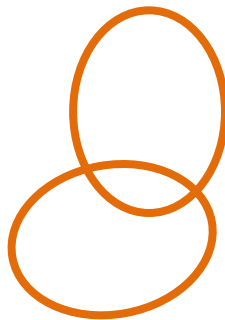
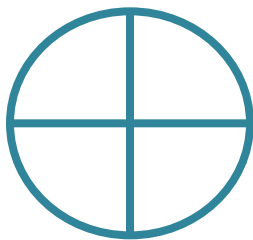
At your station, you can create policies that lay out who decides what types of programs to offer. In addition, you can designate who will select the specific programs. This may be an individual or a committee.

Regardless of the decision-makers' authority, they will likely want to understand what listeners *like* to hear. Even more than a commercial station, a community radio station requires listener and member support. How should your station balance the demand for news, music, educational, or cultural programming?

Community Engagement Exercise #4: Draw Your Balance (20 min)

1. Each person needs a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.
2. Draw how you visualize the balance of programming at the station you are organizing.
3. Label each shape in your drawing with the programming category.

Here are some prompts:



Draw how you visualize the balance of programming at the station you are organizing. Label each shape in your drawing with the programming category.

In groups of 2-3, explain to one another why you allocated the programming as you did.

Do your program areas fall neatly into one type or another?

Do any programs satisfy the wishes of multiple community groups?

The work that you do in the **Governance** and **Writing it Down** modules will help clarify **WHO** has the authority to make programming decisions and **WHERE** to document that authority.

Your findings from Exercise #2 will give you guidance on issues and topics of importance to the various members of your community. If you believe it is important for your station to refresh that guidance in the future, your group should institutionalize that expectation.

ⁱ Source: Galindo-Kuhn, R. & Guzley, R. (2002) The Volunteer Satisfaction Index. *Journal of Social Service Research*, vol. 28:1.