

# FAME

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## AN ADAPTED GUIDE TO FINANCIAL AND MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH NGOS



**FAME**

Unlocking Financial & Marketing Strategies Training Course

## A ROADMAP TO SUSTAINABILITY

AWESOME PEOPLE

 PROJEKTA MALTA



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UNLOCK CROSS-SECTORIAL  
COOPERATION

# INTRODUCTION

Youth NGOs navigate a landscape full of opportunities, and constant challenges. From securing funding to reaching young people effectively, organisations must balance passion with structure, creativity with strategy, and mission with sustainability.

This guide was created to support that journey.

It is an adapted and simplified version of a more extensive resource developed within the Erasmus+ project *Unlock Cross-Sectorial Cooperation*, implemented by Awesome People (Sweden) and Projekta Malta (Malta).

The original publication contains detailed theories, extended tools, and in-depth analysis.

For the FAME Training, we selected and redesigned only the most practical, hands-on elements, the tools that youth NGOs can apply immediately, even with limited time, funding, or staff.

This version focuses on:

- understanding your organisation's real situation
- strengthening financial sustainability
- improving marketing and outreach
- developing stronger partnerships across sectors
- identifying new revenue opportunities
- engaging young people more effectively

This guide is designed to be practical above all, easy to use, easy to understand, and easy to apply. No matter your NGO's size, experience, or starting point, you will find strategies here that move you forward.

Let this guide be your starting point for building a stronger, smarter, and more sustainable organisation.

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01

**Assess Where You  
Are Right Now**

# 01

## Assess Where You Are Right Now

Most youth NGOs run from project to project without ever stopping to ask: How stable are we really? This chapter is your pause button. It helps you understand your NGO's financial reality so you can make smarter decisions with less stress.

It's about understanding three simple things:

1. Where your money comes from
2. How dependent you are on one source
3. What would happen if things change

Example: An NGO thought they had 5 income sources. When they listed them, they realised 70% came from just one Erasmus+ project. One rejection would freeze the entire NGO.

### Why Self-Assessment Matters

Before planning new ideas or applying for more funding, you need to understand your current reality:

**Where are we strong?** Maybe you have a solid partner, a reliable grant, or a programme that always works.

**Where are we vulnerable?** Maybe 80% of your income comes from only one source.

Maybe you rely too much on volunteers. Maybe you don't have stable income between grants.

**Why does this matter?** If you know your strengths → you can grow them.

If you know your risks → you can protect yourself early. Youth NGOs often operate on hope. This chapter helps you operate on information.

### Map Out Your Income Sources

Look at every place where money comes from:

Grants (Erasmus+, local municipality, foundations), Donations, Fundraising events, Workshops, training fees, merchandise, CSR or business support, One-off payments or small projects.

When you list everything, you see patterns you normally ignore.

Some NGOs discover they have only one real source. Others realise they have more variety than they thought.



# Dependency Ratio Analysis



Perform a **Dependency Ratio Analysis** to see how much of your total income comes from one source.

Income Source	Annual Income	% of Total Income	Remarks (e.g., reliability, sustainability)
Erasmus grant	€30,000	80%	High dependency, renewal uncertain, needs diversification

## STEPS

01

Fill in the annual income from each source. E.g., grants, donations, fundraising events, memberships, workshops, merchandise, consulting services. If you have one-off income (like a one-time donation), ensure it's included separately from recurring income.

02

Add the exact annual amount received from each source in the "Annual Income"

03

Calculate the percentage of total income for each source:

$$\text{Percentage of Total Income} = \left( \frac{\text{Source Income}}{\text{Total Income}} \right) \times 100$$

04

Analyse any source exceeding 50%-70% as a risk. These sources should be flagged as high-risk, as losing them could significantly impact your organisation. Write remarks about diversification strategies.

# Scenario Analysis



Scenario analysis is not about fear or fantasy. It helps you think ahead so your NGO won't be shocked when things change: positively or negatively.

Scenario	Description	Impact on Income & Programmes	Response Plan
Worst-Case Scenario	E.g., Major funder withdraws support	80% of funding lost, potential programme cuts	Diversify funding sources, increase fundraising efforts, reduce costs
Best-Case Scenario	E.g., New Grant	Additional €30,000 for expansion	Scale up successful programmes, invest in capacity building

Examples:

## ✓ Worst-case

Your main funder pulls out.

Your key partner changes priorities.

Your project doesn't get approved.

Ask: What would we do? Who would be affected?

## ✓ Best-case

You get a new grant.

You get a sponsorship.

You launch a successful paid activity.

Ask: How would we grow? What would we invest in?

This is not about predicting the future, it's about being prepared.

# A Youth-NGO Reality Check

This chapter helps you answer three simple but powerful questions:

1. What keeps our NGO alive today?
2. What could damage us tomorrow?
3. Where can we realistically grow?

Most small NGOs discover one of these:

- They depend on one project cycle
- Their income stops between grants
- They have no “backup” plan
- They actually have more potential income sources than they realised
- Their strengths are bigger than they thought (e.g., networks, skills, community trust)

Understanding where you stand today is the first step toward building a stable, resilient NGO that can grow without fear.

## REFLECTION

- What income sources surprised you when you listed them?
- Which risks feel realistic for your NGO?
- What is one new income idea you could explore next year?

Clarity gives you power. Once you understand your NGO’s reality, you can finally start building the stability and freedom you’ve always wanted.



# Assessing Your Human Resources (HR)

## Building Capacity for Growth

Youth NGOs often run on passion, multitasking, and good intentions - but rarely on clarity. This chapter helps you take a realistic look at who is actually doing what, where your team is stretched, and what skills you need to grow sustainably.

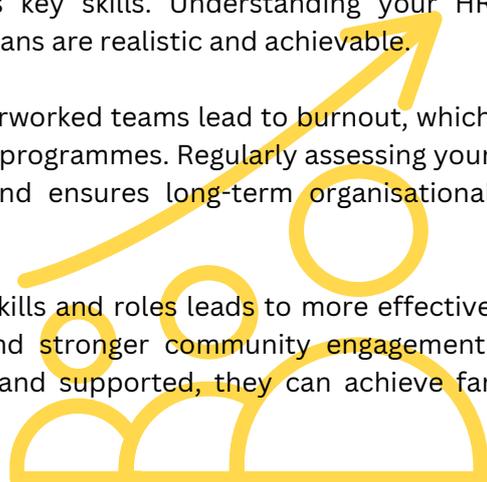
This is about understanding your real capacity so you can make smarter decisions without burning anyone out.

### Why This Step Matters:

**Align Resources with Growth:** Financial sustainability alone isn't enough if your team is overworked or lacks key skills. Understanding your HR capacity ensures that your growth plans are realistic and achievable.

**Prevent Burnout and Turnover:** Overworked teams lead to burnout, which can cause high turnover and disrupt programmes. Regularly assessing your HR structure helps prevent this and ensures long-term organisational health.

**Maximise Impact:** The right mix of skills and roles leads to more effective programmes, better fundraising, and stronger community engagement. When your team is well-organised and supported, they can achieve far more with the resources available.



# Map Out Your Current Team Structure

List everyone who contributes to your NGO - staff, volunteers, board members, interns, freelancers, mentors, and trainers. If they spend time supporting your work, they belong here.

Hrs per week							
Type (Staff/Volunteer)							
Role							
Name							

# Individual Role & Responsibilities Assessment

Use this worksheet to assess individual roles, responsibilities, and development needs. Consider workload, missing skills, and areas for improvement.

**Name**

---

**Role**

---

**Type (Staff/Volunteer)**

---

**Hours dedicated per week**

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**Primary Responsibilities** (List main duties)

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**Secondary Responsibilities** (Additional tasks or contributions)

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# Individual Role & Responsibilities Assessment

Is this person managing too many tasks? Are any key responsibilities missing from their role? Are there tasks they should delegate or receive support for? Does s/he possess key skills for their role?

## Missing Responsibilities

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## Areas of Overlaps or Gaps

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## Skills Assessment

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## Action Plan

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## Group discussion: Volunteers - Yes or No? Why?



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**Think about how you can remove barriers that slow down your team and keep volunteers engaged from the start.**

**Volunteers are essential to your NGO's success, but inefficient onboarding processes can drain staff time and lead to volunteer drop-off. By streamlining how new volunteers join and get up to speed, you reduce the workload on your core team while ensuring volunteers are ready to contribute quickly and confidently.**

### **Example: Streamlining Volunteer Onboarding**

Your youth NGO relies heavily on volunteers, but getting them up to speed takes time—sometimes too much time. Some volunteers lose interest before they even begin. Sound familiar?

Instead of lengthy training sessions, you create a simple, interactive onboarding toolkit volunteers can access online. It includes short videos, downloadable guides, and a checklist of essentials they need to know. Volunteers complete the onboarding at their own pace, and when they show up, they're ready to dive in.

### **Why It Works:**

By cutting down onboarding time, you free up staff capacity and keep volunteers engaged from day one. It's faster, smoother, and ensures everyone feels prepared and valued.

### **Pro Tip:**

Create micro-learning modules—bite-sized lessons that volunteers can access on their phones. This allows learning to happen anytime, reducing the need for in-person sessions.

# IDEAL EMPLOYEE .....

## ROLE

DESCRIBE THE IDEAL PERSON FOR THIS ROLE . NOT TO HIRE NOW, BUT TO KNOW WHAT SKILLS AND QUALITIES YOU NEED IN THE FUTURE. WHAT SPECIFIC SKILLS, TRAITS, AND EXPERIENCES WOULD YOUR IDEAL EMPLOYEE BRING TO EACH POSITION TO DRIVE SUCCESS AND ALIGN WITH YOUR ORGANISATION'S MISSION?



Technical Skills (e.g., grant writing, creative design)  
Soft Skills (e.g., teamwork, adaptability) Experience Level (e.g., years of experience, past projects)  
Personal Qualities (e.g., reliability, initiative)

# HR Reality Check

## REFLECTION

HR Reality Check:

- Are we expecting one person to do the job of three?
- Are volunteers doing tasks that require staff?
- Are we training people properly or just hoping they figure it out?
- Do we have the skills we need to grow next year?

This helps NGOs move from reflection → action.

Your people are your biggest asset. When roles are clear, workloads fair, and skills recognised, your NGO becomes more stable, more effective, and more joyful to run.

02

**Operating a  
Youth NGO Like a  
Business**

# 02 Operating a Youth NGO Like a Business

Running a youth NGO with passion is powerful - but passion alone doesn't create stability. To grow sustainably, your organisation needs some of the tools and habits that successful businesses use: planning, measuring, reviewing, and improving.

“Operating like a business” does not mean acting like a company. It means borrowing the tools that help organisations stay focused, organised, and effective.

This chapter gives you practical tools to:

- focus your energy
- make smarter decisions
- track your progress
- improve continuously
- communicate impact to funders and partners

These are small shifts that create big results.

## Applying Business Principles

Work with clarity, not guesswork

Businesses know their goals, numbers, and progress. Your NGO can too - in a simple, youth-friendly way.

**Make decisions based on real information.** Data helps you decide:

- What's working?
- What's not?
- Where should we focus our time and energy?

**Improve step by step, not all at once.** You don't need a huge plan. You just need small, regular improvements.

**Use your team strategically**

Clear roles, responsibilities, and KPIs ensure your limited time and team capacity are used wisely.

# Stakeholder Mapping

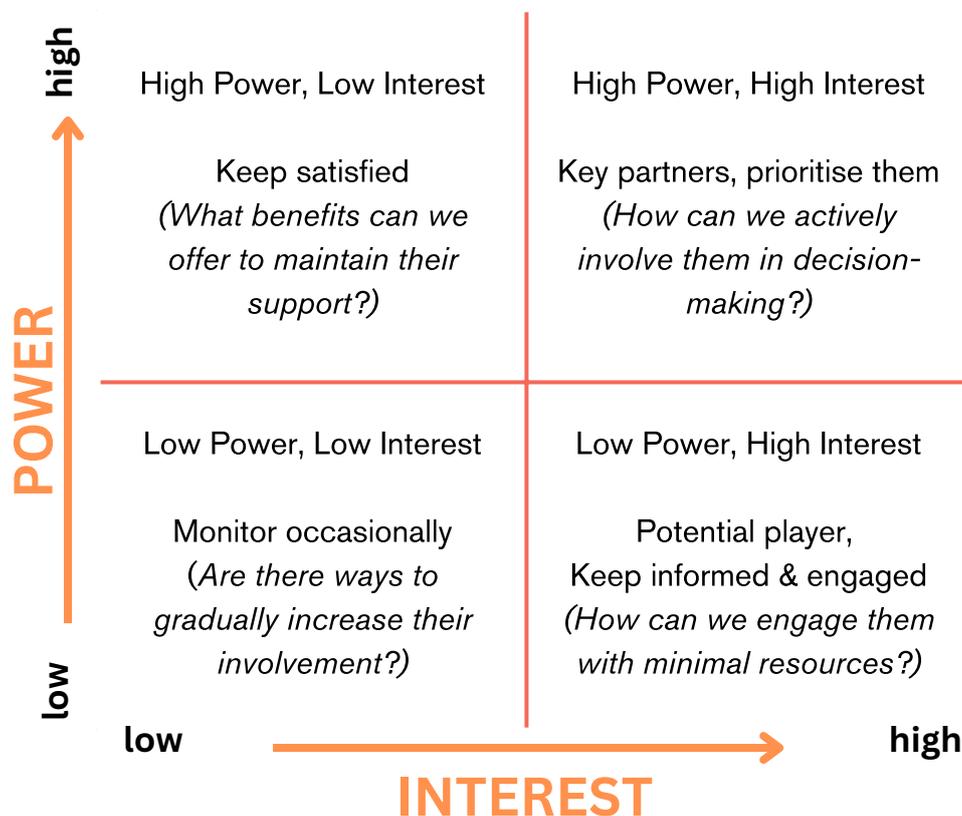
Strong stakeholder relationships are essential for an NGO's success. Stakeholder mapping allows organisations to identify, categorise, and engage with key individuals and groups effectively. By understanding their influence and interest, NGOs can prioritise engagement efforts and build long-term support."

## Identify Your Stakeholders

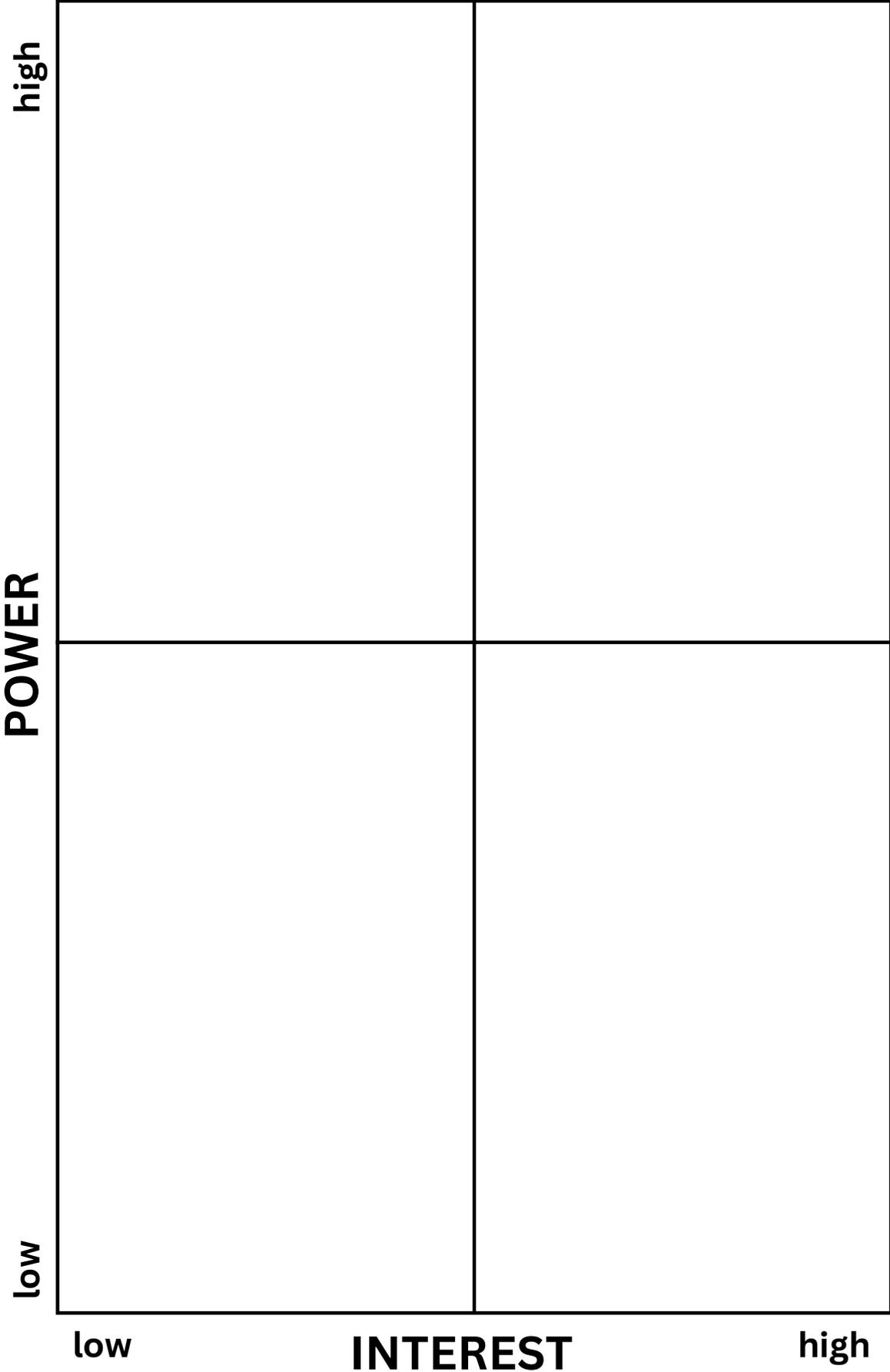
- who has influence
- who has interest
- who you should keep informed
- who you should work closely with

Youth NGOs often spend too much time on low-influence stakeholders and not enough on high-impact relationships.

Action Step: List at least five key stakeholders relevant to your NGO's mission.



# Stakeholder Mapping



### Compare Your NGO with Others Using the Funding Competitive Matrix

You've identified your NGO's strengths and weaknesses, now take the next step by comparing your position with organisations similar to yours. This helps you understand where you stand in the funding landscape and where small improvements can create big gains. This is not about competition. It's about clarity.

Use the table below to rank your NGO and two other organisations (or groups you often "compete" with for grants, opportunities, or partners). For each category, choose High (H), Medium (M), or Low (L) based on what you know.

This quick comparison helps you identify:

- One area where you are already strong (and should build on), and
- One area where you can realistically grow in the next 6–12 months

That's all you need for a simple, strategic funding improvement plan.

<b>Funding Criteria</b>	Your NGO	Competitor 1	Competitor 2
<b>Programme Impact (Scale &amp; Effectiveness)</b>			
<b>Funding Capacity &amp; Growth</b> (Recent grants, donor engagement, new funding opportunities)			
<b>Funding Diversification</b> (Donor mix: corporate, grants, recurring donations)			
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b> (Donor & Partner Relations)			
<b>Innovation in Fundraising</b> (New Strategies, Digital Campaigns)			
<b>Public Visibility &amp; Reputation</b> (Media presence, recognition, credibility)			

### **Develop a Funding Improvement Plan**

Now that you understand how your NGO compares to others, choose one strength to leverage and one weak area to improve. Keep your plan simple, realistic, and achievable, even if your team is small.

#### **Step 1: Choose One Strength to Build On**

Example:

Strength: Strong community presence or strong programme results

Action: Use this strength to approach 1–2 new partners or expand a successful project

Deadline: 2-3 months

Responsible: Project lead / volunteer

#### **Step 2: Choose One Weak Point to Improve**

Example:

Weak Point: Low funding diversification

Action: Identify 1-2 new small grants or CSR opportunities and send applications

Deadline: 3-6 months

Responsible: Team member responsible for funding

Small steps → Less pressure → Steady growth.

### **Review Your Progress Regularly**

Funding environments change quickly. A short, regular review helps you stay adaptable and avoid surprises.

A simple rhythm you can actually follow:

- Every 3 months: Update your Funding Competitive Matrix - what improved?
- Every 6 months: Check if you've reduced any major risks
- Once a year: Choose one new strength and one new improvement area

These small reflections help your NGO stay strategic, stable, and confident.



# Key Performance Indicators

KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) are the numbers that show whether your NGO is moving in the right direction. They help you understand progress without guessing.

Good KPIs don't need to be fancy. They just need to be:

- Clear
- Relevant
- Measurable
- Realistic

## Understanding Baseline and Target Values

- **Baseline:** Your starting point - where your NGO currently stands.
- **Target:** Your goal - what you aim to achieve within a specific time.

For example, if your NGO currently provides mentorship to 100 young people (Baseline), your goal might be to reach 200 next year (Target).

## How to Choose Effective KPIs

- **Define Your Objective:** What do you want to achieve?
- **Select Measurable Metrics:** Choose KPIs with clear numerical or percentage-based targets.
- **Identify Data Sources:** Decide how you will collect and track data (e.g., surveys, attendance logs, financial reports).
- **Set a Timeframe:** Determine how often you will measure progress (monthly, quarterly, annually).
- **Assign Responsibility:** Designate team members responsible for monitoring each KPI.
- **Review & Adjust:** Regularly analyse results and refine your approach if necessary.

# KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)

KPI	Description	Baseline	Target	Time frame	Measurement Method	Responsible person
<i>E.g., Youth Mentored</i>	<i>Number of youth in mentorship programs</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>1 year</i>	<i>Surveys, Reports</i>	<i>Programme Manager</i>

# REFLECTION

Take a moment to consider:

1. What is one strength your NGO can build on?
2. What is one area you want to improve next?
3. What small action will you take in the next 2–3 months?

Small steps taken consistently will strengthen your NGO far more than big plans left undone.

# 03

**Achieving  
Financial  
Stability Through  
Partnerships  
Across Sectors**

# 03 Achieving Financial Stability Through Partnerships Across Sectors

## Grow your impact by working with others

Many youth NGOs try to survive on project grants alone. But real financial stability comes from having multiple relationships across different sectors - each offering different kinds of value. Partnerships aren't only about money.

They can bring:

- expertise, visibility, in-kind support, venues, volunteers, equipment, new audiences, long-term allies

This chapter helps you understand how to build simple, meaningful partnerships that increase both your impact and your stability.

## Why Cross-Sector Partnerships Matter

No NGO thrives alone. When you collaborate with different sectors, you strengthen your foundation and reduce your dependency on a single funding source.

Partnerships can:

- help you reach more young people, diversify your support base, make your NGO more trustworthy, open doors to new opportunities, create visibility and credibility, reduce costs through shared resources, lead to new projects or joint initiatives

Even small partnerships can make a big difference.

## Understand What Each Sector Can Offer

### **Public Sector (Municipalities, government agencies, schools)**

They can offer:

- venues
- referrals to youth
- promotional support
- small grants
- political legitimacy
- long-term collaboration

### **Private Sector (Local businesses, companies, CSR units)**

They can offer:

- sponsorship
- in-kind donations
- equipment and materials
- staff volunteers (skills-based volunteering)
- visibility through their networks
- joint events or campaigns

(CSR = Corporate Social Responsibility → companies supporting community-impact projects)

### **Civil Society (other NGOs, clubs, associations)**

They can offer:

- shared resources
- project partners
- combined audiences
- co-funded ideas
- new project ideas
- peer learning

Each sector brings something different – and most youth NGOs underuse these opportunities.

## **Find the Right Match (Shared Goals = Strong Partnerships)**

Partnerships work best when both sides benefit.

Ask: What do we offer? What do we need? What does this partner care about? Where do our missions overlap?

Examples:

- A school wants youth engagement → you can deliver workshops.
- A café wants to support the community → you can offer visibility and youth-friendly activities.
- A local company wants CSR action → you can propose a youth empowerment project.
- Another NGO wants volunteers → you can co-run training or share resources.

When your goals align, the partnership becomes easy and sustainable.

## **Start Small (Useful for Youth NGOs with Limited Capacity)**

You don't need to start with big sponsorships or formal agreements.

Start with:

- a shared social media post
- a free workshop at a school
- a donated venue
- a co-created local event
- a company sending volunteers for 2 hours
- a café offering snacks for an activity

Small collaborations often grow into bigger ones naturally.

## **Create Partner Offers (Keep It Simple)**

- Partners support you when they clearly understand: , what you do, what you need, what they get in return
- 

Make a simple “offer” tailored for each sector.

Example partnership offers:

- For schools: workshops + youth support
- For businesses: visibility + CSR impact
- For NGOs: resource sharing + joint projects
- For municipalities: programmes aligned with youth policy

You don't need a fancy brochure, a clear email is enough.

04

**Marketing  
Strategies for  
Youth NGOs**

# 04 Marketing Strategies for Youth NGOs

*Reach the right people. Share your impact. Grow your community.*

Marketing for youth NGOs doesn't need to be complicated or expensive. It simply means communicating your work in a clear, consistent way so the people who matter can find you, support you, and engage with you.

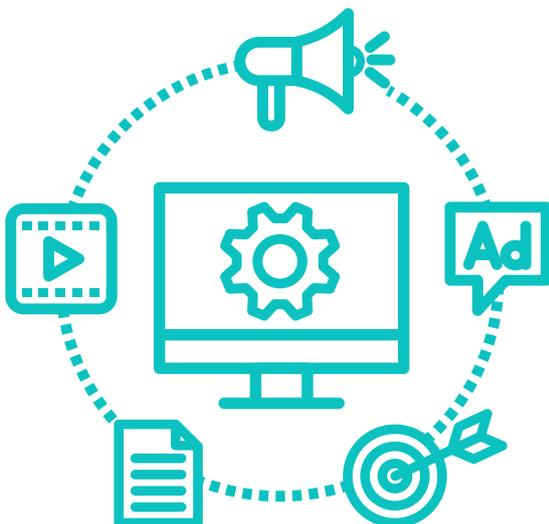
This chapter gives you practical tools to:

- understand your audiences
- communicate with clarity
- use simple marketing techniques
- increase visibility
- improve outreach
- strengthen partnerships and funding potential

All with realistic effort, even if your NGO has no communications staff.

## Digital Marketing Techniques

Digital marketing is one of the most cost-effective and impactful ways to engage young people and build awareness for your NGO. Leveraging the right platforms and content strategies will help you connect with your audience and grow your supporter base.



## Why Marketing Matters for Youth NGOs

Marketing is about connecting. Strong marketing helps you:

- reach young people who need your programmes
- attract volunteers and partners
- build trust with funders
- tell your story clearly
- increase your impact
- stand out in a crowded field

When people understand who you are and what you offer, everything becomes easier - outreach, recruitment, partnerships, funding, and community engagement.

### Know Your Audience (Who Are You Talking To?)

Many youth NGOs try to speak to “everyone,” but effective marketing begins with clarity. Identify 2–3 key audiences.

Examples:

- Young people (your main target group)
- Parents or families
- Schools or teachers
- Local community organisations
- Volunteers
- Funders or businesses

For each audience, ask:

- What do they care about?
- What problems do they face?
- What do they need from us?
- How can we reach them?

If you know who you’re talking to → your message becomes stronger and clearer.

## Craft a Simple Message (What Do You Want Them to Know?)

A strong message is:

- short
- clear
- emotional
- relevant

Use this formula:

We help [WHO] with [WHAT] so they can [IMPACT].

Examples:

- “We help young people build confidence and life skills through creative workshops.”
- “We support schools with modern, engaging youth programmes.”
- “We empower volunteers to grow their leadership while supporting others.”

This message becomes the foundation for your social media, website, flyers, and partnerships.

## Craft a Simple Message (What Do You Want Them to Know?)

You don't need to do everything. Choose what fits your capacity:

### **Social Media**

- Instagram (best for youth: visuals + stories + reels)
- Facebook (better for parents, volunteers, community partners)
- TikTok (optional, only if you have capacity for video content)

### **Email** (for partners and funders)

A simple newsletter every 1–2 months is enough.

### **Offline marketing**

- Posters in schools
- Word of mouth
- Community events
- Short presentations for teachers or youth workers

You don't need 10 tools, you need 1–2 done well.

## Tell Stories, Not Just Information

People forget information. They remember stories.

Examples of stories you can share:

- a young person's journey
- a volunteer experience
- a behind-the-scenes moment
- a successful project outcome
- a partnership that made a difference

A good story shows:

- the challenge
- the action
- the impact

These stories build trust, emotion, and connection.

## Show Your Impact Through Simple Numbers

Combine stories with simple data:

- number of participants
- number of workshops
- satisfaction rate
- number of volunteers
- improvement statistics
- number of partnerships

You don't need long reports. You just need numbers that prove your work matters.

## Keep It Consistent (Even Small Consistency Works)

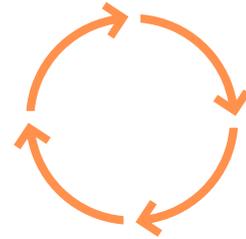
Youth NGOs often post a lot... then disappear for months. Consistency builds recognition. Practical rule:

- 1 post per week → great
- 1 story every few days → excellent
- 1 newsletter every 1-2 months → enough

Small consistent efforts beat big inconsistent campaigns.

**Reflection:** Who are the top 2-3 audiences your NGO needs to reach? What is one message you want them to remember? Which marketing action (small!) can you commit to doing consistently?

# PDCA CYCLE



Use the PDCA Cycle (Plan–Do–Check–Act) as the final step of your NGO assessment journey.

Once you have evaluated your finances, HR capacity, stakeholders, KPIs, partnerships, and marketing, PDCA helps you turn insight into action and make steady, sustainable improvements.

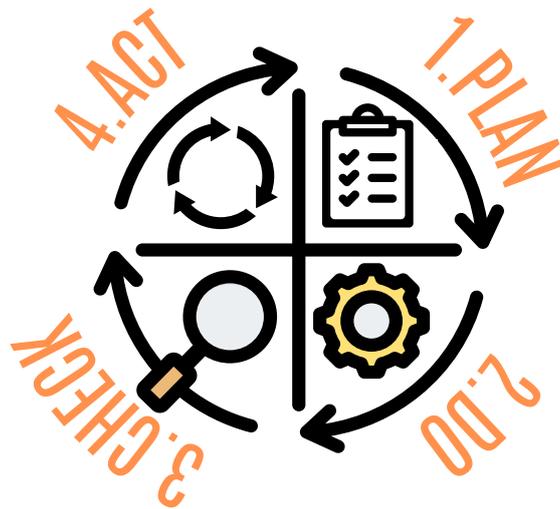
## Why is the PDCA Cycle important?

- **It turns reflection into action.** After assessing your NGO’s strengths, risks, and opportunities, PDCA gives you a structure for making improvements.
- **It prevents your organisation from staying stuck.** PDCA reveals what works, what doesn’t, and what needs to change.
- **It supports long-term stability.** Your NGO makes informed, data-driven decisions instead of relying on guesswork.
- **It builds a culture of smart experimentation.** You test small changes instead of making overwhelming big changes.

By using PDCA regularly, your NGO keeps evolving - even with limited time, staff, or resources.

# PDCA CYCLE

Use the PDCA Cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) for ongoing improvement. This method helps you try out new ideas, see how well they work, and make gradual changes to improve.



## 1. PLAN

Define what you want to improve and how you will do it.

- Be clear about the objective.
- Identify the issue or area for improvement.
- Collect relevant data or feedback.
- Create a simple action plan with steps.

## 2. DO

Test your idea on a small scale.

- Implement the planned actions.
- Assign responsibilities clearly.
- Set a timeline that keeps the process on track.

## 3. CHECK

Evaluate what happened.

- Review the data or feedback collected.
- Compare outcomes with your objective.
- Measure success using clear indicators.

## 4. ACT

Decide what to do next.

- Identify what worked well and what didn't.
- Make adjustments and refine your approach.
- Plan the next cycle to keep improving.



## CONCLUSION

Running a youth NGO is not simple, but it becomes far less overwhelming when you have the right tools. By understanding your current reality, strengthening your team, applying business-like clarity, improving your marketing, building cross-sector partnerships, and diversifying your income, you create the foundation for long-term stability.

This adapted guide has focused on the essential, practical elements taken from the full publication of the Erasmus+ project *Unlock Cross-Sectoral Cooperation*. The complete guide is available digitally for those who want to explore the concepts in more depth, but the version you hold here is intentionally concise so you can apply it directly in your daily work.

Your organisation does not need to be big to be effective. It does not need large budgets to create meaningful change. But it does need clarity, intention, and a willingness to grow step by step.

As you move forward:

- build on your strengths
- address risks early
- seek partners who share your vision
- communicate your impact with confidence
- and experiment boldly

Sustainability is not built in a day, but it is built through small, consistent actions taken with purpose. May this guide support your journey, spark new ideas, and help your youth NGO thrive.



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**UNLOCK CROSS-SECTORAL  
COOPERATION**