

Governance & Disclosure Practices

Learning Series for Voluntary Organisations, Vol.-II, Issue - II, 2013-14

Understanding and Preparing Vision & Mission Statement



A joint initiative of Credibility Alliance & Oxfam India



**CREDIBILITY
ALLIANCE**

Improving Governance Building Trust

Governance & Disclosure Practices

Learning Series for Voluntary Organisations, Vol.-II, Issue - II, 2013-14

Understanding and Preparing Vision & Mission Statement

*Advisory Support * :*

B. N. Makhija, Advisor, SOSVA

Dola Mohapatra, President, Childfund India

Jagadananda, Chairperson, Credibility Alliance

Mathew Cherian, CEO, HelpAge India

Nisha Agrawal, CEO, Oxfam India

Noshir Dadrawala, Chief Executive, CAP

Pushpa Aman Singh, CEO, Guide Star India

S. P. Selvi, Executive Director, Credibility Alliance

Subhash Mittal, Secretary, SRRF

Principal Author :

Dr. Manoj Fogla

A joint initiative of Credibility Alliance & Oxfam India



**CREDIBILITY
ALLIANCE**

Improving Governance Building Trust

* The Advisory support members have contributed to the document, however, the entire content is not necessarily the opinion of the advisory group.

The word "Foreword" is written in a green, elegant cursive font. The letter "F" is significantly larger and more decorative than the rest of the word. The text is positioned on a light green, triangular background that points towards the top-left corner.

Foreword

Any Voluntary Organisation's values, Vision and Mission are its compass. They guide every decision an Organisation makes and every action it takes. Putting into writing the values, vision and mission of an organisation is one of the first steps that is to be undertaken when an organisation is formed. These statements will direct the rest of the activities and journey of an organisation and also communicate to the stakeholders what it stands for.

An Organisation is more likely to be successful when its leaders agree on its core values, share a powerful vision for change and establish a clearly defined mission. Conversely, an Organisation without clear values, vision and mission lacks a moral compass to guide its decisions. Without a clear vision, it will struggle to inspire others to join. Without a clear mission, it will lack focus and direction. Such an organization will likely find itself engaged in projects that have little connection to the community it seeks to serve.

Such being the importance of having a clear Vision and Mission of any organisation, it is needless to say that developing an apt and effective Vision and Mission Statement is equally important.

In this Issue of CA Learning Series, we discuss about how an Organisation should develop its Vision and Mission statements that will guide its work and enable achieve its objectives. This will build a sense of ownership and responsibility in any Organisation.

CA is grateful to all its Advisory Panel Support Members and the author, for their active, prompt and valuable inputs in fine tuning this Issue.

S. P. Selvi

Executive Director,
Credibility Alliance



Content

1.	Introduction to Vision & Mission	01
2.	Vision or the Aspirations	01
3.	Characteristics of a Good Vision Statement	02
4.	Mission or the job at Hand	03
5.	Characteristics of a Good Mission Statement	04
6.	Who should prepare the Vision & Mission Statement	05
7.	Internalising Vision and Mission Statements	05

Understanding and Preparing Vision & Mission Statement

Introduction to Vision & Mission

- 1.1.1** A mission statement provides the purpose of an organisation's existence, it tells about the current and potential activities of the organisation. It is like a yardstick for guiding the organisation. On the other hand a vision statement talks about the distant dreams of the organisation. It lends the ultimate goal and purpose to a mission statement. For example, the vision may be to see each and every child in the country happy and healthy. The mission can be to provide nutrition and medicines to one million children every year. **A vision statement normally inspires and motivates and a mission statement reminds of the incomplete journey and the immediate steps to be taken.**
- 1.1.2** It should also be remembered that a vision statement is a static and unwavering statement or a resolve taken by an organisation. On the other hand, a mission statement is something non static, live, flexible and realistic steps or strategy towards the vision. A mission statement may be revisited depending on the changing reality and circumstances. However, a vision statement normally does not change until it is accomplished.

Vision or the Aspirations

- 1.2.1** The vision of an organisation reflects the dream or the aspirations, it is about the horizon or the distant goal which the organisation is longing for. For example, an organisation may have a vision that nobody should sleep hungry on this earth, or it may have a vision that everybody on earth should have access to clean and hygienic water.

- 1.2.2** Another way of defining vision is the articulation of the changes which the organisation wants to bring to the world. For example, an organisation may have the vision that the child mortality rate should be reduced to zero, one day.
- 1.2.3** A vision may also be idealistic in nature, for example, an organisation may have a vision of a truthful world where the crime rate is zero.
- 1.2.4** An organisation may also have a relatively modest vision. For example, it may have a vision of 100% literacy in five districts of its operation. **When a vision becomes more modest and realistic, it comes closer to the mission of the organisation.**
- 1.2.5** A vision statement is like a realistic utopia for the organisation. It is the proverbial point where the organisation will attend its actualisation or the ultimate goal.

Characteristics of a Good Vision Statement

- 1.3.1** A vision statement is like a painting where the viewer should be in a position to see the dream and aspiration of an organisation. Therefore, it should be short and specific in the sense of clarity. A vision statement should not be totally unrealistic and at the same time should not be too modest. For example, having a vision about a world where there is no distinction between rich and poor everybody is having absolutely equal share of everything is too idealistic and unreal in nature. On the other hand, having a vision that, all children in a locality should have access to computer education, is too modest in nature.
- 1.3.2** A vision statement should be broad enough to incorporate various changes in the mission statements which might be required in the course of its existence.
- 1.3.3** A vision statement should be holistic and should share the vision of all the stakeholders. It should generate a collective value and inspiration amongst all the stakeholders involved in the process.
- 1.3.4** Vision statement should be inspiring in nature, it need not necessarily be a objective indicator of the aspirations.
- 1.3.5** Some examples of vision statement are as under :
- The vision statement of Credibility Alliance is *“A Voluntary Sector, which is responsive to the needs of the society, is democratic and transparent in its functioning and accountable to all concerned.”*
 - The vision statement of Give India is *“A strong “giving” culture where Indians donate 2% of their income every year to give the poor a chance. A*

vibrant “philanthropy marketplace” to ensure that the most efficient and effective nonprofits get access to the most resources.”

- The vision statement of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is “ICRC is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.”
- The vision statement of Lions Club International is “to be the global leader in community and humanitarian service.”

Mission or the job at Hand

- 1.4.1** A mission statement provides the purpose of an organisation’s existence, it tells about the current and potential activities of the organisation. It is like a yardstick for guiding the organisation. A mission statement should explain why and what for an organisation is existing.
- 1.4.2** A mission statement articulates the steps which the organisation is taking to realise its vision. A mission statement is more practical, objective and current in nature.
- 1.4.3** A mission statement should provide an outline of how the NPO proposes to serve its beneficiaries, stakeholders and reference community.
- 1.4.4** Mission statement provides the broader contour of the organisation’s journey reminding the management, continuously, what they are supposed to do. In other words, it crystallises the purposes of the organisational acts, therefore, it also defines what not to do.
- 1.4.5** The mission is further segregated into specific objectives/activities., for example, when a shooter is aiming to hit 100 out of 100 shots at an Olympic event, the objective is to hit 100 out of 100 shots in all the practice as well as actual matches, however, the mission is to win a Olympic Gold Medal for the Country. The vision could be to make India one of the top sporting nation in the world.
- 1.4.5** To sum up, the mission helps the organisation to remain focussed on its vision and keeps on propelling it towards the vision in a pre-determined and well conceived road map to the destination.

Characteristics of a Good Mission Statement

- 1.5.1** A mission statement is like a road map where the traveller should be in a position to see the immediate and ultimate journey of an organisation. Therefore, a mission statement should be short and focussed about the purpose of existence and steps to be taken.
- 1.5.2** A mission statement need not be specific in terms of numbers or target.
- 1.5.3** A mission statement should always be very realistic, objective and achievable. A mission statement needs to be broad based and internalised from the perspective of all the stakeholders.
- 1.5.4** The mission statement is not static in nature like a vision statement. It is live and organic in nature. In other words, a mission statement should be responsive to the internal and external environment. For instance, the mission of an organisation may be to bring about legislative changes for the benefits of its target group. Then such mission statement may have to be reworked with the changes in the legislation of the country.
- 1.5.5** A mission statement should be revisited by the management every 3 to 5 years, to assess its relevance and appropriateness in context of the vision and the changing environment.
- 1.5.6** Some examples of mission statement are as under :
- The mission statement of Google is *“to make the world’s information universally accessible and useful.”*
 - The mission statement of Lions Club International is *“to empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding through Lions clubs.”*
 - The mission statement of Akshaya Patra Foundation is *“to reach out to 5 million children by 2020”*
 - The mission statement of Give India is *“GiveIndia’s mission is to promote an efficient and effective giving culture that provides greater opportunities to the poor in India.”*
 - The mission statement of Credibility Alliance is *“To build the credibility of the Voluntary Sector through creation and promotion of Norms of good Governance and Public Disclosure”*

Who should prepare the Vision & Mission Statement

- 1.6.1** The Board of the organisation should be the primary body responsible for preparation of Vision and Mission statement. However, the vision and mission statement being the most important declaration on behalf of all the stake holders, it is desirable that preparation of Vision and Mission statement should be a joint exercise including the Board, CEO, key staff and if possible even the beneficiaries - in other words all stake holders.

Internalising Vision and Mission Statements

- 1.7.1** The board of the organisation should make conscious efforts to internalise these statements at all level of the organisation. It should not remain a statement on paper, it should become a part of the passion and values of each and every stake holder of the organisation. It is often noticed that Vision and Mission statements become more like logo or slogan of the organisation without really having the involvement of the functionaries and employees. It is also noticed that there are many NPOs who engage in activities which are in contradiction to their Vision and Mission.
- 1.7.2** In other words, Vision and Mission should be a real and honest statement by the organisation and the board should periodically review that it is actually practiced in its true spirit.

About Credibility Alliance

Credibility Alliance (CA) is a consortium of Voluntary Organizations committed towards enhancing Accountability and Transparency in the Voluntary Sector through good Governance. Registered in May 2004 as an independent, not-for-profit Organization, CA emerged as an initiative from within the Sector after an extensive consultative process over a period of two years involving thousands of VOs all over India. As an Organization, CA aspires to build trust among all stakeholders through improving Governance within the Voluntary Sector. As an initiative whose hallmark has been the participatory approach, CA has developed suitable Norms through wide-ranging consultation with and participation of diverse Organizations within the Sector by developing a large membership base.

With the mission 'to build credibility of the Voluntary Sector through creation and promotion of Norms of Good Governance and Public Disclosure', CA's core programme areas comprise of: Accreditation, Capacity Building, Networking and Information Dissemination.

- I. **Accreditation:** Accreditation of Voluntary Organizations refers to the certification of upholding of the quality of an organization, which adheres to the minimum norms or desirable norms set by Credibility Alliance. The main purpose of the Accreditation exercise is to develop a cost effective mechanism of periodic evaluation of VOs in the country.

'Minimum Norms' are the Norms that all VOs should follow. It is mandatory for all the Accredited Members of CA to comply with the Minimum Norms or give an undertaking that they will do so within an year, whereas 'Desirable Norms' are the next level of Norms for good Governance and public disclosure. These are the practices that are at present not mandatory and some Organizations may require time to adopt such practices.

- II. **Capacity Building:** Credibility Alliance focuses on the Capacity Building process to maximize its potential and sustain its work by adopting the existing best practices. CA plans the Capacity Building initiatives for the Voluntary Organizations by identifying and outlining the gaps in the Sector, assessing the needs and finally instituting the programs to address those needs.
- III. **Networking:** Credibility Alliance facilitates interaction between experts in different areas and promotes the sharing of ideas and information between the Voluntary Organizations and the experts. CA helps VOs to seek issue-based information in the Sector that they are working in, which helps in building the professional capacities of VOs through training, thereby enabling them to increase institutional capacities.
- IV. **Information Dissemination:** Credibility Alliance sensitizes, spreads awareness, assists, educates and appraises on the recent developments, responsibilities and other critical issues pertaining to Voluntary Sector by disseminating vital information periodically to all VOs.



CREDIBILITY ALLIANCE

401, DDA Building No. 1, District Centre, Janakpuri,
New Delhi - 110 058. www.credibilityalliance.org

Send your feedback to :

selvi@credibilityalliance.org
mfogla@yahoo.com

Governance & Disclosure Practices aims to provide relevant informations and guidance on Voluntary Organisations Governance, Management and Disclosures. The informations provided are correct and relevant to the best of the knowledge of the author and research panel. It is suggested that the reader should cross check all the facts, law and contents before using them. The author or the publisher will not be responsible for any loss or damage to any one, in any manner. Copyright with the Author. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, without permission in writing of the Author.