

# THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERISM IN CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CUBAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

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Until recently, it was virtually impossible to identify a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Cuba, aside from the Catholic Church and some other religious groups. Most of Cuba's so-called NGOs are government-sanctioned; therefore they are not truly independent and are not directly accountable to local communities. In the last few years, however, Cubans have challenged the government by founding and developing independent organizations. New autonomous organizations and associations, including independent libraries, political dissident groups, and faith-based NGOs, receive support from like-minded U.S.-based NGOs, but are relatively few and in their infancy. Many within this network face harassment and imprisonment.

It is this fledgling "Third Sector"—NGOs providing non-profit activities ranging from social and health services, religion, and the arts, to education, research, fraternal, civic, and advocacy organizations—that can be central to recovery. Economist Jeremy Rifkin sees the Third Sector as the "cultural sphere" necessary for building social trust that is crucial for trade. He reflects that as companies rushed into the fallen Soviet Union, many businesses failed because there was not enough social trust or "social capital." Rifkin says: "The result is that business agreements were difficult and even impossible to arrange and commercial contracts ... were often unenforceable."

Cuban NGOs, like other emerging organizations throughout the world, lack the skills needed by successful modern enterprises: organizational development, strategic planning, proposal writing, project

development, management, and financial accounting. They are unable to effectively access financial and technical assistance and training from sister institutions in developed countries such as the United States, Japan, Canada and those in the European Union function.

At local and national conferences on Cuba issues, particularly in Florida, the role that Cuban American NGOs and volunteers can play in a transition has seldom been raised. Yet volunteers and non-profits in the U.S. traditionally play a major role in the social and economic development of institutions throughout the hemisphere. In Florida, the largest Cuban Diaspora waits. The potential of Cuban-American NGOs to contribute to the transition is unrealized.

## VOLUNTEERING AND PHILANTHROPY IN THE UNITED STATES

Volunteerism does not thrive without: (1) government encouraging local and national volunteer advocacy institutions, ensuring the right to serve, removing legal barriers to participation, and providing financial incentives; (2) business facilitating participation by its employees and contributing financially to community development; and (3) NGOs advocating volunteerism and enabling individuals to connect with matching interests and needs.

Volunteering is big business. According to Independent Sector (IS), the nation's leading NGO advocacy group, 44 percent of U.S. adults volunteered in 2001. That is nearly 84 million volunteers, the equivalent of 9 million full-time employees. IS esti-

mates the value of volunteer time in 2003 at \$266 billion. The almost 1.23 million charities, religious organizations, and social welfare organizations in the United States represent assets of \$500 billion.

Volunteering is a fundamental building block of NGOs. It strengthens communities, promotes self-reliance and accountability, identifies problems, vocalizes solutions, and buttresses governmental services. The most effective volunteer programs are well managed, with specific volunteer performance measures and criteria for recognition as well as termination. Volunteers bring not only time, skills and energy, but financial contributions and long-term support for the communities they serve.

Charitable giving in the United States has been estimated in excess of \$200 billion annually. According to the U.S. Department of State, \$4 billion in charitable donations found their way to developing countries in 2000. America's charitable nonprofits derive about 20 percent of their support from these private contributions from individuals, corporations, and philanthropic foundations, according to IS's *The New Nonprofit Almanac In Brief*.

#### **THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEER EXPERTS IN U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE**

The United States is the world's largest bilateral donor to the developing world. While many donors provide economic assistance, the United States provides resources both to foster economic growth and strengthen security. Congress appropriated \$17.1 billion to support these activities in fiscal year (FY) 2002, and another \$23.7 billion in FY 2003 (including the supplemental appropriation). Food aid figures are not included in this total.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) maintains a registry of U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs) qualified to receive government funds. Five hundred and thirty-three PVOs are recognized. USAID's list does not include organizations that seldom use volunteers, or U.S.-based organizations without international activities. One such USAID-registered PVO that exemplifies volunteer technical assistance overseas is the Florida Asso-

ciation for Volunteer Action in the Caribbean and the Americas (FAVACA).

Established in 1982 by Governor Bob Graham, FAVACA ([www.favaca.org](http://www.favaca.org)) has conducted capacity-building programs, and provided training and technical assistance, to government agencies and non-profit institutions in 29 countries in Central America and the Caribbean. More than 1,300 volunteer consultancies, reaching over 35,000 individuals, have been fielded. FAVACA's Florida International Volunteer Corps, with authority under Sec. 288.0251 Florida Statutes, has received legislative appropriations annually since 1986. FAVACA generates up to four dollars for every state dollar invested.

Volunteers have developed capacity-building materials in English, Creole, and Spanish, and training seminar curricula for civil society organizations and government institutions in Panama, El Salvador, Honduras, Venezuela, Haiti, Jamaica, and Nicaragua, among other countries. This capacity building training has included financial and strategic planning, accounting, emergency management, detection of money laundering, website design, fundraising, human resources management, and marketing.

FAVACA has an extensive database of experts that have volunteered throughout Central America and the Caribbean, and collaborates with the 11 public universities and several private universities in Florida, including Miami Dade College and the University of Miami. Many of FAVACA's volunteers originate from Florida state agencies. Often these agencies allow their employees to volunteer without using their annual leave and at times contribute state resources to further the goals of partner organizations.

FAVACA's volunteers reflect Florida's ethnic diversity: Salvadorans, Haitians, Jamaicans, and Dominicans, volunteer on FAVACA missions regularly. Not infrequently these specialists, notably Haitian Americans, provide volunteer service in their countries of origin. Cuban American volunteers routinely assist governmental and non-governmental institutions in countries other than their own.

Volunteer specialists instruct their counterparts in small business development, agriculture, health and

social programs, education, environmental conservation, disaster mitigation, and more. The Corps' common-sense approach to knowledge-sharing—colleagues training colleagues—provides a proven successful model. These short-term missions are not concluded after the training, and instead they become long-term partnerships that have economic as well as humanitarian payoffs for our state.

### DIASPORA COLLABORATIONS: VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT IN ONE'S COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

#### Florida Models

#### The Florida-Jamaica “Building Bridges” Project:

An initiative created by U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica Sue Cobb in 2003, Building Bridges is a one-year program of events developed in collaboration with Jamaica's Investment and Trade Promotion Agency (JAMPRO), the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ), and the American Chamber of Commerce of Jamaica (AmCham). Building Bridges includes specific pilot programs, seminars, and exchanges that match Jamaican and Florida public and private sector entities that share similar interests and objectives.

The program's primary objective is to foster development opportunities and knowledge sharing to strengthen links between the public and private sectors of Jamaica and Florida by enhancing and coordinating innovative programs in areas of mutual interest. Economic development is a key component of the following activities:

- **Volunteerism:** Support and outreach in volunteerism and philanthropy' knowledge sharing in the fields of health and education.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility:** A year-long collaboration including corporations and organizations such as Grace Kennedy, Western Union, the Jamaican Ministry of Education, USAID-Jamaica, and the U.S. Embassy, mobilizing U.S. and Jamaican public and private resources in support of primary education.
- **Building a Secure Business Environment:** Facilitating a U.S./Florida/Jamaica collaboration designed to expand and strengthen communica-

tion and information sharing in the fight against transnational crime and narcotics.

- **Building A Prosperous Region:** In joint orientation fora presented by JAMPRO, the USAID-sponsored Trade Briefing Room, and the PSOJ, members of the Jamaican business community in preparation for the Americas Business Forum and Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) Ministerial in Miami.
- **Collaborative Dialogue:** The research and collation of deportee statistics by University of the West Indies and University of Miami scholars. The goal is to provide a factual basis for broader sociological research, constructive bilateral dialogue and mutual understanding.
- **Mutual Understanding:** Coordination of events such as the Fulbright-Humphrey Forum and Founder's Night featuring Dr. Thaddeus Foote, Chairman Emeritus of the University of Miami, and Mrs. B. Fulbright Foote (daughter of Senator William J. Fulbright); Fulbright and Humphrey Scholars and Friends, coordinated by the U.S. Embassy's Office of Public Affairs.

**The Florida-Haiti Initiative:** Florida's late Governor Lawton Chiles launched The Florida-Haiti Initiative when he visited Haiti in May 1995. The governor traveled to Haiti, at the invitation of United States Ambassador to Haiti William Swing, for meetings with Presidents Aristide and Preval. These meetings led to ongoing relationships with a number of government and private organizations in Haiti that partnered with the Florida Association for Volunteer Action in the Caribbean and the Americas (FAVACA) to provide training and technical assistance. Governor Chiles initially secured funding for the Florida-Haiti Initiative. Support for the Initiative continues following Governor Jeb Bush's June 16, 2004, visit to Haiti with the USAID Administrator and the establishment of the Governor's Haiti Advisory Group.

FAVACA emphasizes creating linkages between Haitian and Haitian-American communities. Over 220 volunteer consultancies have been sponsored by FAVACA since 1986. More than 161 projects involving

almost 2,500 participants have been implemented. Governmental and non-governmental institutions in Haiti make requests for technical assistance and training in diverse program areas. FAVACA identifies and recruits a Florida expert in that field and sponsors his/her short-term consultancy to provide the service. An example, in 1998, the Northern Association of Haitian Mayors, local Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and FAVACA convened a workshop on economic development and the role of mayors in promoting public and private sector partnerships. Haiti's Acting Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, then a World Bank consultant, trained thirty mayors, representatives of national and international financial institutions and local businesses in strategic planning. In 2000, representatives of Haiti's Office of Civil Protection participated in Florida's 14th Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference. Other activities included the following. In January 2003, FAVACA coordinated a conference and outreach event in Miami with the Haitian Diaspora for U.S. Ambassador to Haiti, Brian Curran, and USAID/Haiti director, David Adams.

With the support of USAID/Haiti and Development Alternatives Inc., FAVACA organized the Haitian Business Linkage Seminar in Miami in June 2003. The seminar brought together Haitian entrepreneurs, importers, and Florida city and county officials to exhibit the Haitian products and services, including fresh and frozen produce, textiles, art and tourism, and form strategic alliances between buyers and sellers.

In May 2004, FAVACA in collaboration with Haitian-American Nationalists for Democracy (HAND) organized a conference in Miami for USAID's Deputy Administrator, Adolfo Franco, to consult with Haitian-Americans on efforts to rebuild Haiti to mobilize additional human and financial resources for development projects.

**Other Initiatives:** Institutions that work with groups from diverse Diaspora communities, such as the Miami-based Cuban American National Council must also be included. The Cuban American National Council is one of the most respected not-for-profit, nonpartisan organizations working on Hispanic

and Cuban issues in the United States. Founded in 1973, the Council's mission is to service individuals in need from all racial and ethnic groups, and to help Cuban Americans and Hispanics adjust to life in the United States and become productive citizens. CNC is a de facto example of a successful NGO with multiple programs, active citizen participation, and sound fiscal and management systems. Best practices and lessons learned from organizations such as the CNC must be carefully studied and implemented.

#### **Other Diaspora Collaborative Efforts in the United States**

**The Transnational Development Initiative:** Immigrants in the United States from Latin America and the Caribbean are sending \$32 billion a year to their countries of origin. In recognition of the tremendous contribution to the economies of the region, the Transnational Development Initiative of the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) ([www.padf.org](http://www.padf.org)) links U.S.-based immigrant groups that wish to focus on economic and social development projects with training, matching funds, and other resources. The purpose of this initiative is to increase incomes, generate jobs, and provide sustainable opportunities for families and communities in immigrant's countries. This initiative was launched through a USAID-sponsored pilot project targeting El Salvador, Haiti, and Mexico.

**Transnational Community Development Fund:** Another component of the PADF initiative is the Transnational Community Development Fund, a matching grant fund supported by private sector, foundation, and government donors who recognize the important role that immigrants can play in a country's development. The fund leverages committed remittances and is available to immigrant organizations on a competitive basis.

Along with financial resources, grants to groups include technical assistance training materials on conducting needs assessments, project design, strategic planning, fundraising, project management, institutional development, and evaluation skills. Grantees also receive information on networks of government and private resources, and technical assistance providers.

### Building Partnerships

The initial project includes three groups: the DC-based National Organization for the Advancement of Haitians (NOAH), working with local farmers (COREM and CODEVA) in Haiti to develop fruit tree grafting and seedling projects; Virginia-based United Salvadoran Civic Committee (USACC), working with local agricultural cooperatives, and the Confederation of Agricultural Reform Cooperatives (CONFRAS) in El Salvador to produce and process organic fruits and vegetables for local and international sale; and the California-based Organization of Migrants from Ayoquezco (MIGPAO), working with their hometown in Oaxaca, Mexico, and the Foundation for Agricultural Productivity (FUPROCA) to cultivate, process and market nopal, a cactus commonly used for foodstuffs.

These organizations are examples of hundreds of immigrant outreach hometown associations (HTAs) and other South American, Central American and Caribbean groups, that are contributing to transnational economic human capital flows by collectively raising money and volunteering time for social and economic development projects in their home countries. Additionally, PADF has developed a business model with Unibank, an important Haitian financial services institution, which makes a financial contribution per remittance transfer from the New York City area toward select development activities. USAID/Haiti has provided matching funds for a pilot activity, which supports the reconstruction of a rural school in Haiti. Other private foundations and institutions throughout the world have also supported these efforts.

These existing Diaspora models need to be studied and could be adapted to the Cuban situation once a transition to democracy begins.

### FLORIDA-BASED NGOs WORKING IN CUBA

As with other Diaspora communities, Cuban Americans, particularly in Florida, will play a major role in Cuba's social and economic development. Countless Cuban American NGOs carry out political and apolitical activities throughout Florida.

The following are a few examples of Florida-based Cuban American NGOs. Some work with dissidents and faith-based institutions inside the Island, others are planning to begin operating once the political situation changes, but most depend on the support of volunteers to carry out their activities.

#### Grupo de Apoyo a la Democracia

Grupo de Apoyo a la Democracia (GAD)/Support Group to Democracy in Cuba, Inc. ([www.gadcu-ba.org](http://www.gadcu-ba.org)) was established on December 10, 1994, and incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in March 1995 in the State of Florida. GAD's main objectives are to provide material support to the growing number of dissident groups, and independent NGOs in Cuba, for the purpose of assisting with the organization and development of the different levels of the emergent civil society, a basic requirement for a peaceful and orderly transition to democracy. The material support given for the past seven years has been in the form of medical supplies and equipment, food, eyeglasses, office and electronic supplies such as speaker-phones, short-wave radios, faxes, word processors, video cameras, tape recorders, photographic cameras, clothing, and informational materials in the form of books, magazines, periodicals, and videos.

GAD's activities inside Cuba have resulted in the creation of an infrastructure encompassing all fourteen Cuban provinces and the Special Municipality of Isla de la Juventud. Supplies are handled by *bona fide* and widely recognized members of dissident groups, NGOs, and/or ex-political prisoners. More than 150,000 pounds of supplies have been successfully delivered to the Cuban dissidence and independent NGOs since the beginning of the program of humanitarian aid to Cuban democratic activists.

#### Cubonet

Founded in 1994, Cubonet ([www.cubonet.org](http://www.cubonet.org)) is a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization that promotes free press in Cuba, supports its independent sector and the development of a civil society, and provides information on Cuba's reality. Its principal function is to serve as an informational vehicle for journalists and independent groups in Cuba. Through its website, Cubonet provides comprehensive, on-line coverage of Cuba's independent journal-

ists reports on Cuban human rights and economic issues.

### **Acción Democrática Cuban**

Acción Democrática Cubana (ADC)/Cuba Democratic Action ([www.adcuba.org](http://www.adcuba.org)) is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan organization, formed in 1996 with the purpose of supporting and strengthening Cuban internal opposition and the development of a civil society that promotes a peaceful change toward a democratic society. The ADC's Democracy Project sponsors three fundamental programs that:

- Encourage visits to human rights groups in Cuba by members of international human rights organizations, journalists, academicians, artists and representatives of democratic governments, in order to build the necessary relation between the Cuban civil society and their counterparts in the world.
- Provide equipment to human rights groups and activists in Cuba (fax machines, typewriters, computers, paper, pens, and pencils) and informational materials on democracy and free enterprises.
- Give humanitarian and medical assistance to groups and dissidents inside Cuba, primarily to political prisoners and their families.
- Use the Internet to denounce violations of human rights in Cuba.

### **Miami Medical Team Foundation**

The non-profit Miami Medical Team Foundation ([www.mmtf.org](http://www.mmtf.org)), founded in 1983, is a group of physicians who volunteer on missions to help victims of epidemics, local wars, and natural disasters. They are not working in Cuba at this time. Volunteers for the Miami-based foundation pay for their own travel expenses, and for medications that they distribute, and operate on a bare-bones budget. The group has volunteered in 20 countries, including all the nations of Central America, many Caribbean nations, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Paraguay, Angola, and the countries of the former Soviet Union. The group has also treated Cuban and Haitian refugees at the U.S. Guantanamo Bay naval base in Cuba, as well as vic-

tims of the 1992 Hurricane Andrew in South Florida.

In addition, several educational institutions in Florida have been providing assistance and information—with support from the USAID-Cuba Program, whose objective is to increase flow of information on democracy, human rights and free enterprise, to, from, and within Cuba. The following are some of the Florida-based institutions that have received grants from USAID-Cuba:

**University of Miami:** “Developing Civil Society,” facilitated access to information and training for Cuban NGOs and individuals. “Cuba Transition Planning,” analyzes challenges that will face a future transition government in Cuba, including: legal reform, political party formation, privatization and foreign investment, combating corruption, education reform, economic policy reform, international donor coordination ([www.miami.edu/iccas](http://www.miami.edu/iccas)).

**University of Florida:** “Measuring Public Opinion,” estimated public opinion, knowledge and attitudes in Cuba through interviews with recent Cuban migrants, helping to monitor USAID program impact ([www.uf.edu](http://www.uf.edu)).

**Florida International University:** Through the project “Journalism Training,” the FIU International Media Center (IMC) trains Cuba’s independent journalists to help improve their professional skills; and “NGO Development,” trains Cuban NGO leaders in management and delivery of social services ([www.fiu.edu](http://www.fiu.edu)).

### **INDEPENDENT NGOs IN CUBA**

Organizations that are acting as community development and humanitarian assistance institutions in Cuba include CARITAS Cubana (the Catholic Church), the Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba (Cuban Council of Churches—Protestants), the Masons, the Catholic Archdiocese in Pinar del Río, and the Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea (House of the Hebrew Community).

Founded in 1953, the Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea, for instance, serves as a community center that provides assistance to its members through donations

of medicines, food, and clothes. It also sponsors activities for youth, women and senior citizens, in addition to supporting religious services at the synagogue. They are very interested in providing computer-training courses, but lack the appropriate equipment. The Casa houses a 14,000-book library that includes Hebrew literature and religious publications, in addition to other educational materials.

### **Evangelical Christian Humanitarian Outreach (ECHO-Cuba)**

ECHO-Cuba ([www.echocuba.org](http://www.echocuba.org)) is a non-profit, non-political institution organized for the purpose of investigating, anticipating, facilitating, promoting, supporting and providing humanitarian assistance to poor, distressed and underprivileged people of Cuba in order to improve their health care and support other non-profit activities. ECHO-Cuba's main function is to provide education, medicine, medical supplies, food, clothing and other humanitarian aid. In pursuing this mission, ECHO-Cuba supports and empowers Evangelical Protestants throughout Cuba regardless of denominations or associations.

Its main office is in Miami, and its main center of operations is in Havana City, with 16 other locations in this province. In addition, ECHO-Cuba has 12 locations in the provinces of Pinar del Río; 4 in Matanzas; 10 in Villa Clara; 4 in Cienfuegos; 5 in Sancti Spíritus; 4 in Ciego de Avila; 9 in Camagüey; 6 in Las Tunas; 8 in Holguín; 8 in Granma; 10 in Santiago de Cuba; 8 in Guantánamo; and 2 in the Isle of Youth.

### **Bibliotecas Independientes (Independent Libraries)**

Ramon Colás and Berta Mexidor, now living in exile in Miami, started this well-known organization in Las Tunas in 1998 ([www.bibliocuba.org](http://www.bibliocuba.org)). By opening the "Félix Varela Independent Library" in their home, the couple initiated an alternative cultural and educational public space that soon encouraged others to follow suit. This first library had approximately 100 patrons, "though every book passed through dozens of hands." Foreign embassies, including the U.S. Interest Section, and anonymous people worldwide sent contributions. The library grew to hold more than 2,000 books" (*The Miami Herald*, June

26, 2004). Presently, Bibliotecas Independientes has over 87 libraries in 14 cities and provinces in Cuba.

### **THE ROLE OF CUBAN AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS IN THE CAPACITY BUILDING DEVELOPMENT OF CUBAN INDEPENDENT NGOs—THE FLORIDA EXPERIENCE**

Cuba is a powder keg for Florida. To prepare for a nonviolent transition to democracy in Cuba, and to avoid a massive migration to our shores, Florida needs to plan, design and coordinate threat reduction activities that will assist in this process. This includes establishing and strengthening volunteer-based programs in Florida that will provide needed services, and humanitarian, technical assistance and training to Cubans.

Because Florida is home to the largest Cuban American Diaspora community in the United States, Cuban American NGOs and volunteers will play a dominant role in building a civil society inside Cuba. However, most Cuban American NGOs in Florida have a political focus and are ill prepared to provide humanitarian and technical assistance. The capacity to deal with the needs that will arise when Cuba starts to transition is just not there. Few of these institutions understand the difference between providing disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, and later on, economic and social development aid.

To prevent a chaotic and dangerous situation—including a massive migration to and from the Island—NGO leaders in Florida must learn how to provide aid in an efficient and orderly fashion. Before they can do that, they will need to learn how to become a tax-exempt organization, and define their mission and objectives. Once they have a clear idea of how to use human and financial resources to support a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba, they will need training on how to research and access state, federal, and private sector resources, and how to use them well. Bringing other resources into play is essential, as Florida will not be able to provide the massive financial support that will be demanded.

The economic impact of this first wave of assistance will be felt, not just in Cuba, but also in Florida; it is up to Floridians to ensure that it be a positive one.

The already strained tensions in our minority and immigrant communities will greatly increase if the situation is not managed in a timely and orderly manner. We need to look back a few years and remember how one child turned this community into an emotionally charged roller coaster. The resulting negative attention harmed Miami's image around the world.

Most Cuban exiles will not consider moving back, but they would enthusiastically share their expertise and resources with Cuba-based, emerging NGOs to strengthen the reconstruction process in their native country. Additionally, the Florida business community will profit from a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba. By accelerating the transitional process—and preventing emergency situations—Florida businesses will stand ready, before other competitors elsewhere in the country, to play a proactive role in Cuba's economic development.

Cuban American NGOs in Florida must prepare to participate in a transition to democracy in Cuba and they need to understand that the demand for funding from the U.S. Government and other sources will be extremely aggressive. Not only will these institutions vie for the same sources of funding, they will also compete against well-established and experienced NGOs in Washington, New York and other U.S. cities that have strong international development track records.

#### **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR EMERGING CUBAN INSTITUTIONS AND NGOs**

NGOs in the United States have provided assistance to Cuban incipient NGOs and faith-based groups for many years. This humanitarian assistance has included donations of food and medicines, educational materials, and equipment, such as computers and fax machines.

However, once the political situation allows it, institutional relationships between NGOs in the U.S. and in Cuba will need to be developed before offers of technical assistance and training are extended. This will be a tremendous challenge, as Cubans will have to learn how to function under a non-totalitarian system, be taught how to rely less on government

services, accept a different work system, and become more self-sufficient. This will involve creating networks outside the government context, making decisions about their community and neighborhood's needs, and eventually helping other local institutions build civil society and nurture democratic values. In addition to emerging NGOs, these networks will include academic institutions, labor unions, faith-based institutions, youth groups and other members of the "shadow society." Obviously, assistance from Cuban American volunteers and NGOs will become an essential component in this process, which will help build trust and confidence, and greatly encourage reconciliation and collaboration between these two communities across the Florida Straits.

Once Cuban NGOs are free to function as independent organizations, they must learn about key concepts to strengthen their organizations, such as strategic planning, proposal writing, establishing financial accounting systems, recruiting volunteers, and creating alliances with other institutions. A Cuban NGO national clearinghouse will be needed to make connections among partner NGOs overseas and needs in Cuba. Cuban NGOs will also need to expand their networks to include institutions in the United States, Central America and the Caribbean to facilitate efficient and peaceful change in social and economic development. The following are examples of needed training for emerging Cuban NGOs:

**Organizational Development and Strategic Planning:** Participants will learn the basic elements of strengthening their organizations, develop an organizational strategic plan, and gain basic knowledge of troubleshooting to deal with issues as they arise.

**Proposal Writing:** Independent NGO leaders will understand the range of assistance available and tailor proposals according to the audience or donor receiving the proposal, such as churches based in the US, the European Union, and foundations interested in international development.

**Project Development and Management:** Participants will be shown how to assess community priority needs, reach consensus among diverse opinions, and develop a program work plan and timeline. Par-

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ticipants will also learn effective program management techniques.

**Financial Accounting:** NGO leaders will develop budget, record and categorize expenses incurred while implementing projects, account for advances to personnel, and ensure accurate accounting,

**Volunteerism:** Volunteerism is a fundamental building block to supporting strong and healthy civil society organizations. NGO leaders will learn how volunteers in the U.S. and other countries will assist them in building healthy, sustainable communities that help empower people to improve their lives and solve social, cultural, economic and environmental problems.

### CONCLUSION

The Cuban people, after 45 years of repression, insularity, and apathy, will be called on to implement peaceful economic, social, and political changes necessary to build a democracy and a market economy.

Without a civil society, the risk of a violent post-Castro transition, and concomitants of long-term political instability, economic hardship, and insurrection

is high. Besides the internal consequences for Cuba, such conditions might put pressure on the United States to intervene directly with military personnel, a prospect that no one desires.

Even though Cuba's independent institutions are increasing in number and in sense of purpose, they are unprepared for the task, when the time comes, of serving as the crucial Third Sector necessary to civil society and a market economy.

A political transition in Cuba will stimulate a generous and robust response from new aid groups—many in the Cuban-American community. The economic and social impact of this transition will be greatly felt, not only in Cuba, but also in Florida.

Finally, Cuban American business leaders will play an important role—and will be the largest investors—in Cuba's future economic and social development. Once the transition to democracy begins in Cuba, it will be too late to prepare. Volunteers and Cuban American NGOs in the United States need to be ready now.

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