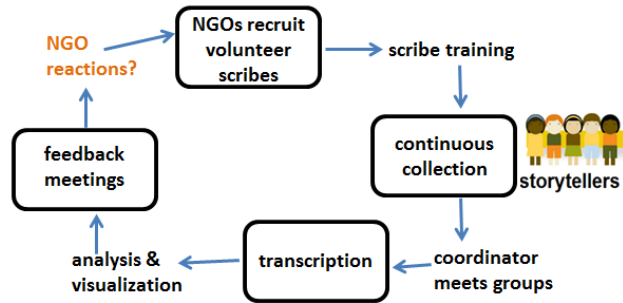**Capacity Development: We know it's important, but how do we measure its outcomes?**

*"Tell us about a time when a person or an organization tried to
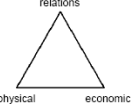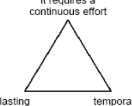change something in your community."*

GlobalGiving is an online marketplace that connects individual and corporate donors with close to 2,000 non-profit organizations in 120 countries. Our vision is to see unleashed potential of people around the world to make positive change happen. To do this, we need to do more than simply link organizations that need resources with donors that have resources. Instead, we must go a step further to both help organizations build their own capacity and to measure that capacity and growth over time.

In 2009, we started experimenting with the use of storytelling as a way to measure capacity and performance of organizations in the field. We asked an open-ended prompt: *"Tell us about a time when a person or an organization tried to change something in your community."* Local volunteers gathered tens of thousands of short narratives from people in Kenya and Uganda over a period of 18 months. People in these communities told stories – both good and bad – that mentioned over 1,000 organizations in 510 locations throughout Kenya and Uganda. Using a combination of information provided by the storytellers and sophisticated analytical tools, these stories are analyzed and aggregated to provide additional information on which organizations are perceived as high and low performers in their communities, and which appear to be meetings the needs of the local communities.

1 The Story Collecting Cycle

Over time, this method can provide valuable data on how organizations are growing in their ability to meet community needs and to provide the services beneficiaries find most valuable.
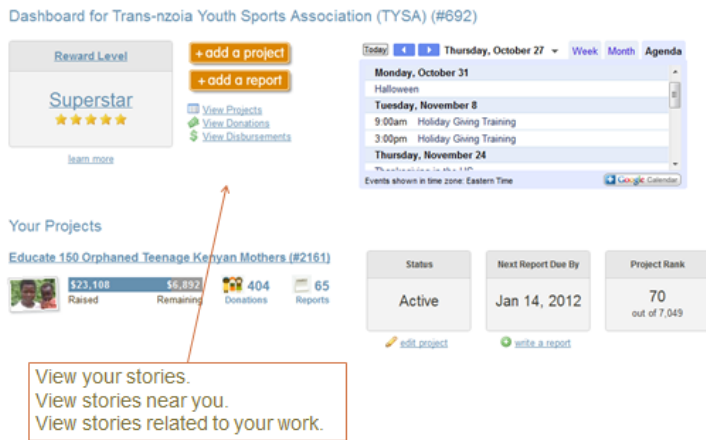
The Full Story Survey Form:

We are working to build tools and processes both to feed these stories and analysis back to our partners in Kenya and Uganda, but also are working on developing scalable tools to allow our 2,000+ partner organizations to analyze their performance and capacity development themselves through the stories collected. On the process level, our team has provided one-one-one analysis of organizational performance and discussion with partners on a local level. Additionally, larger community-based meetings to analyze communities as a whole and local organizations' capacity to meet the needs of the community have also taken place.

Plans for more scalable collection and analysis of stories are also taking place. Many of these tools have already started the development process. We have developed a book for DIY story collecting and have begun building the tools to allow any organization in the world to enter these stories into an overall database for matching and comparison. We've also laid the groundwork for more scalable self-analysis tools as tools. We've recently begun linking stories about organizations to their specific projects on the GlobalGiving.org site. This allows organizations themselves and donors to better understand the organization's capacity and success on the ground. The next steps for this will be to bolt more self-analysis tools into each organization's account on GlobalGiving. The screen shot to the left shows a current organizational dashboard. Stories about a particular organization will eventually show up when they log in to their account, with some simple self-analysis tools so that they can both analyze their own performance against their past performance, but also against the performance of similar organizations. We welcome comments, suggestions and collaboration for further development and adaptation of this methodology for measuring capacity development.

Additional Resources
- GlobalGiving story resources: www.globalgiving.org/stories
- Additional story tools: http://www.globalgiving.org/story-tools/
- Sample story collection form: http://www.globalgiving.org/img/stories/StorytellingForm.pdf
- Stanford Social Innovation article:
  http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/amplifying_local_voices1/

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