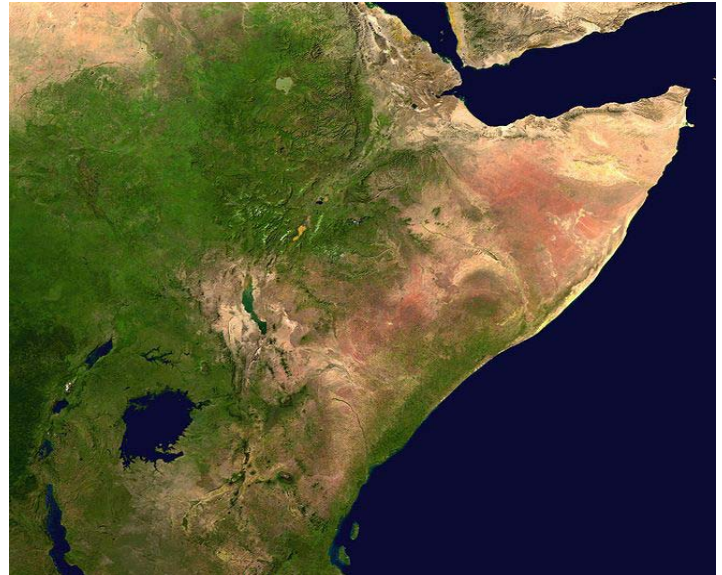


Five-Year Strategic Plan for the American Relief Agency for the Horn of Africa 2011-2016



Global Public Policy Capstone Project

Khadra Abdi
Yasin Alsaidi
Rachel Carr
Karlygash Karamanova



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Background and Context

The American Relief Agency for the Horn of Africa (ARAHA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the humanitarian needs of the communities in the Horn of Africa. The organization has been in existence for 10 years and is working to “alleviate the suffering from hunger, illiteracy, disease and poverty in the Horn of Africa, as well as helping the East African Community in Minnesota.” ARAHA is based in Minneapolis, Minnesota and serves communities in eight countries in the Horn of Africa with a particular focus on Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan. These countries have emerged as the primary targets because of political instability, the emergency need for relief services, and large numbers of internal refugees.

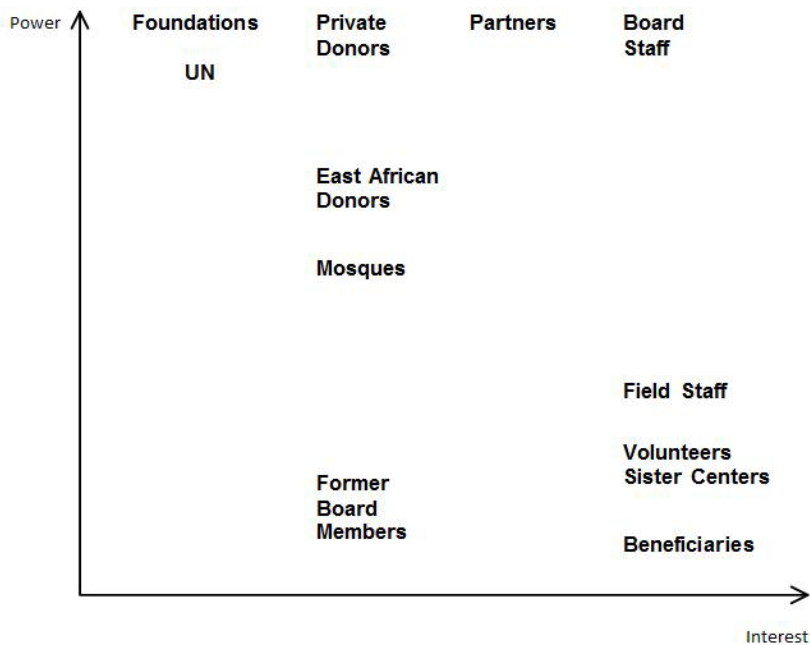
As part of our Global Policy Capstone project, we served as consultants for ARAHA and assisted the organization’s board and the staff in developing a five-year strategic plan focused on moving ARAHA, its programs, and its services toward sustainable development.

Our team worked closely with ARAHA to answer questions about the organization’s greatest priorities and objectives. Taking ARAHA’s goals and potential future projects into account, the final product of our collaborative work will provide both goal-oriented recommendations and detailed implementation strategies. It is our hope that these changes will fit organically, without causing ARAHA to undertake any major structural or organizational changes.

Over the course of the last several months, seven goals for the 2011-2016 strategic plan have been identified: 1) the diversification of funding streams, 2) strategic marketing aimed at telling the “ARAHA story” better, 3) an internal and external focus on innovative solutions, 4) the initiation of ARAHA as a resource engine, 5) the creation of a stronger volunteer program, 6) the development of a local community program, and 7) the creation of a project monitoring and evaluation mechanism. In our **Recommendations & Implementation** section, reasons as to why these goals are critical to ARAHA’s transition from relief to sustainable development will be introduced.

Identification of Stakeholders & Power-Interest Grid

Before beginning to think strategically about an organization's future, it is important to understand the entities that the organization currently affects and the environment in which it operates. To that end, an analysis of stakeholders is needed. This analysis assists in the identification of current stakeholders, as well as other entities that should be better engaged. It is then helpful to place these stakeholders in a grid that compares their power and interest. A Power-Interest Grid for ARAHA can be seen in the diagram below.



In ten years ARAHA has offered assistance to a great number of people – nearly half a million by the organization's own estimate. Because of the great and immediate need, ARAHA provides services and programs in an area that has many different agencies, private actors, and organizations performing similar work. The result is a wide-range of stakeholders.

- **Beneficiaries:** ARAHA's main stakeholders are the people receiving the organization's assistance. For some of them, survival depends solely on the services provided by ARAHA – water wells, food, and medication, for example. For others, it is the continual hope for a better future. Some important projects aimed at ARAHA's beneficiaries have included an all-girls' high school that was built in a refugee camp, the development of much-needed computer labs, and the gifting of goats and other livestock to provide families with both food and a source of income.

Through ARAHA's work, especially in the area of development, the beneficiaries will

eventually be self-sufficient and can then assist the organization in helping others in need. These efforts will allow ARAHA to shift this group to high-interest and high-power on the grid.

- **Staff and Board Members:** ARAHA is a relatively small non-profit when compared to other relief organizations in the region. It has a four-member staff and ten board members, with an annual budget of \$619,405 for 2010. Some of the current board members were a part of the organization's establishment, and the entire staff has been very committed to its mission. This group of stakeholders has high-interest and some power.
- **Former Board Members:** ARAHA has maintained its connections with previous board members. They remain active in raising funds and connecting the organization with East African and Muslim communities in the Twin Cities.
- **Field Staff:** One of ARAHA's greatest strengths is its ability to facilitate relief in remote and war-torn areas. This success is attributed to the intimate knowledge of the region by both the staff and board, but also through ARAHA's continued presence in the area. ARAHA has operated field offices with local staff to increase the likelihood of successfully implementing services and programming in the affected areas.

As ARAHA moves toward development, field staff will witness their mission change from the facilitation of relief services to managing development practices. This will increase their ability to help and, in turn, increase their power.

- **Volunteers:** Because of ARAHA's size and staff capacity, strong volunteers are needed to assist with different parts of the organization. ARAHA can benefit from attracting more volunteers to help with small-scale projects and events, or take on interns to assist with more technical projects requiring specific expertise. Moving volunteers upward on the grid will be beneficial to ARAHA in the near- and long-term.
- **Mosques:** A good portion of ARAHA's funding is dependent on its relationship with the mosques in the Twin Cities area. The organization's history is tied to the charitable work of mosques, and one of the founders is an Imam. One of the pillars of Islam is tithing (Zakat) and ARAHA has been a beneficiary of these donations. Additionally, during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, the mosques collect resources for the needy and, in turn, ARAHA can facilitate food distribution to those who are most in need in the Horn of Africa.
- **East African Donors:** Minneapolis hosts one of the largest East African communities in the United States, and this community remains connected to its roots in the Horn of Africa. Although members of the community send direct assistance to their families overseas, they have also been generous in supporting ARAHA through various types of donations. These communities have a vested interest in ARAHA's success, so keeping a strong connection with them is essential.

- **Private Donors:** ARAHA has depended on individual and private corporate donors for the majority of its funding. The organization needs to continue soliciting private donations, even as it seeks to diversify funding streams.
- **Foundations:** Although ARAHA is not currently funded through foundation grants, *there is* funding available through these foundations for organizations doing relief and development work in the Horn of Africa. As a potential stakeholder, foundations are very interested in ARAHA's work and mission, and ARAHA needs to engage foundations more actively.
- **The United Nations (UN):** The UN has both the presence and the resources to dedicate to the Horn of Africa. However, as the organization is quite large, the UN is not always nimble, culturally aware, or well-connected in the region. As both ARAHA and the UN have missions dedicated to dealing with the poverty and hunger in the Horn of Africa, the two can benefit from a strategic relationship.
- **Partners:** ARAHA works with many different partners in a variety of ways. Some of ARAHA's partners include Life for Relief & Development, Zakat Foundation, Southwest High School, Healing Bridges, and Bait-ul-Maal.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

To understand where ARAHA’s strengths and weaknesses lie, a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (S.W.O.T.) Analysis was performed. Each characteristic was examined individually, and both internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats were identified. The chart below provides an easy-to-understand, overall representation of each of these identified factors. A more in-depth discussion of some of the broad themes follows.

STRENGTHS <i>(Internal)</i>	WEAKNESS <i>(Internal)</i>
Volunteers Community Dedicated & open staff Generation of private donations Programming in the region/tenure Working within means Agents in the region Process improvement Systematic approach Personal experiences & knowledge Diversity Experience working in the region Low administrative costs Motivated Limited focus Size & ability to focus “Little Engine That Could”	Donation dependent Organization’s size & limited visibility Public relations Limited focus & reach Lack of strong partnerships Reinventing the wheel Relief gets in the way of development Forecasting Preventative measures Staff capacity
OPPORTUNITIES <i>(External)</i>	THREATS <i>(External)</i>
Growth Climate & new energy sources Services & innovative solutions Collaboration with similar organizations Grant money Other new funding sources Provide information about the region broadly Financial stability ARAHA as a resource for other organizations ARAHA as a resource for governments Prevention	Climate & catastrophes Other organizations doing similar work Loss of donations & the economy Political climate locally Political climate in the region Difficulty implementing projects Lack of knowledge about HoA in the West Media often ignores the region ARAHA “under stress” Generation of income & funding difficult

- **Strengths:** ARAHA’s greatest strength lies in its ability to provide a wide array of relief and developmental services with a fairly small and donor-dependent operating budget. ARAHA is able to do so through extremely low administrative costs (totaling

only 4% of its total expenses in 2010), a dedicated, diverse, and knowledgeable staff, and the organization's limited focus. Equally important, ARAHA has systematically improved the delivery of its programs and services over the last ten years, and has successfully expanded the number of projects implemented. The organization relies heavily on committed private donors and has been able to continually grow its funding base in the last decade.

- **Weaknesses:** Some of ARAHA's internal strengths highlighted above can also be viewed as weaknesses. As the organization is donation-dependent, for example, it is not currently capitalizing on grant or federal funding opportunities. An economic downturn could severely affect the number of private donations ARAHA receives. To ensure the continuation and growth of programs and services, the organization should attempt to diversify its funding streams.

Another important weakness is ARAHA's size and staff capacity. Though its current size allows it to respond quickly to emergencies or unexpected natural disasters, growth in development programs and relief services cannot be successful without the necessary growth in staff and a dedicated, skilled volunteer pool.

- **Opportunities:** Taking into account ARAHA's desire to shift its focus to sustainable development projects and to increase its funding and programmatic budget, there are many opportunities available to the organization within the next five years. To better assist ARAHA's target population in the Horn of Africa, the organization should utilize diversified funding streams to explore new innovative solutions and potential energy sources. Further, ARAHA should implement projects in the region that are self-sustainable and income-generating.

Because of ARAHA's small size and specialized focus, coupled with its staff and board's personal experiences and understanding of the Horn of Africa, the organization has the potential to be an important resource and wealth of knowledge for government and other organizations. One of the reasons this area of the world is often ignored is that the West is particularly uninformed about the history, cultures, and current happenings in the region. ARAHA can play an advocacy role for the "voiceless" local populations.

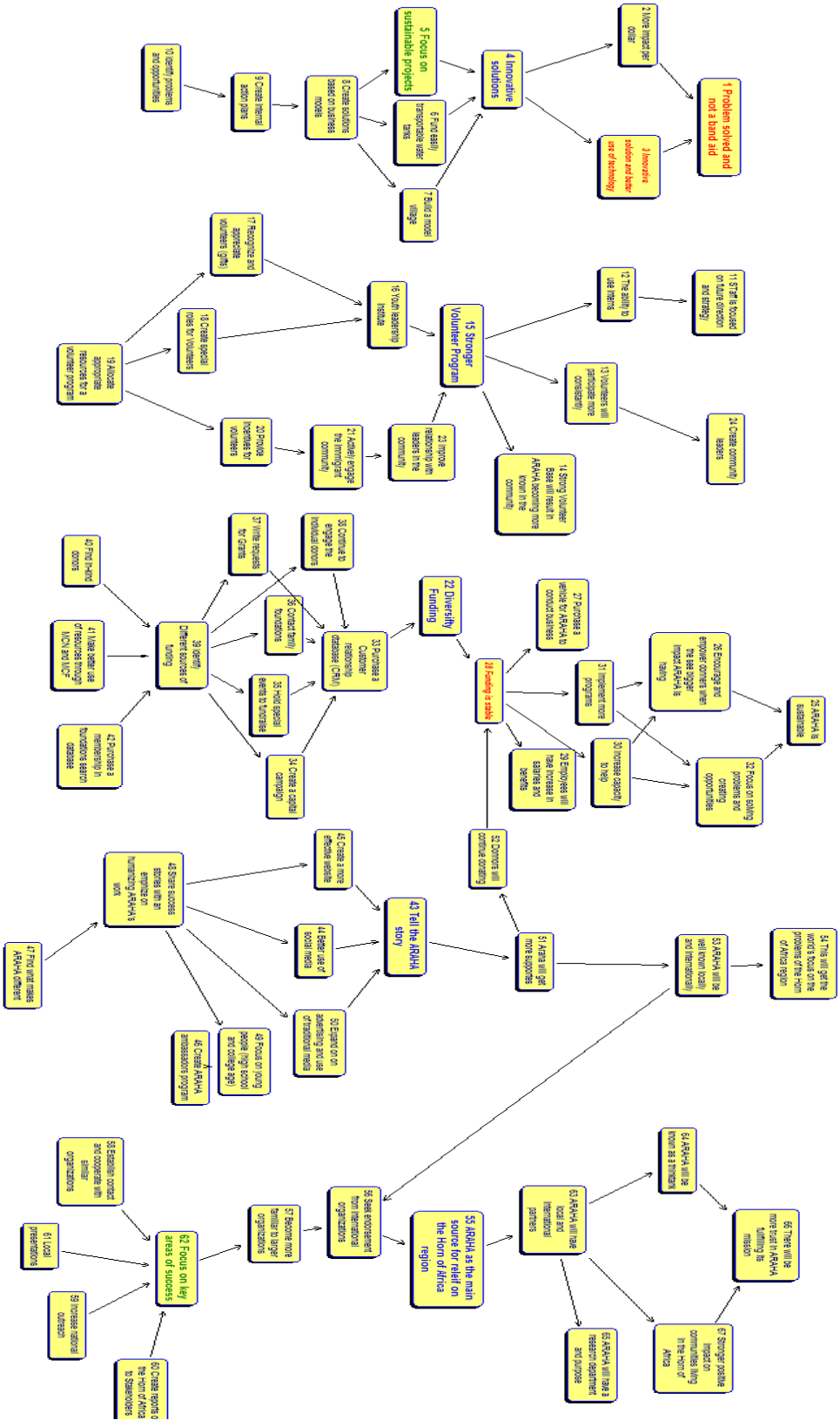
- **Threats:** One of the greatest threats facing ARAHA is the climate in the Horn of Africa and the potential for natural disasters and catastrophes. As the organization continues to shift its focus from offering relief and basic-needs services to development projects in the region, harsh weather, cyclical droughts, and the possibility of war or in-fighting can conceivably impede upon these new projects. The organization will have to devise strategic action plans for these types of unpredictable catastrophes.

Causal Mapping Exercise & Analysis

After meeting with ARAHA's staff and board, we were able to clearly identify a number of goals for the organization. From this list of goals, action items, priorities, and an "ultimate" goal and subsequent results needed to be identified. A causal mapping exercise assisted in the identification of these items.

ARAHA's staff was then asked to identify the *most important* result of achieving its goals, and *develop lasting solutions to the problems in the region* was chosen. This is ARAHA's vision. The staff also identified *create a stable ARAHA* and *utilizing innovative solutions* as the next two main goals in terms of importance. This is ARAHA's mission.

The action items leading to the organization's goals have guided the development of this strategic plan. The diagram on the next page is a visual representation of the causal mapping exercise.



Recommendations & Implementation

IMPERATIVE: Create a financially stable organization that can continue to provide and expand its services and programs far into the future.

RECOMMENDATION: Focus more time and resources on the diversification of funding streams.

ARAHA currently runs all of its programs and covers its administrative costs entirely through private donations. The organization's desire to expand programming and services will require it to diversify its funding sources. Compared to receiving grants from foundations or funding from the government, ARAHA sees its sole reliance on private donations as a strength: dedicated private donors will continue to fund the organization, regardless of fluctuations in the economy; federal funding and grants from foundations are not flexible and can be terminated; and grants are currently especially competitive, as many non-profit organizations are struggling due to the economic recession and tightened purse strings.

However, the heavy dependence ARAHA places on private donations is not sustainable in the long-run, nor is it a particularly safe method for ensuring the continuation of its programs and services. Private donations are not ensured, and the amount donated can be heavily influenced by the economy. ARAHA, for example, experienced a drop in individual contributions from \$540,000 to \$300,000 between the 2010 and 2011 budget years. Similarly, in-kind donations decreased from \$2,000,000 to \$1,000,000 over the same time period.

Grants and funding streams from foundations and governmental agencies are often secure and renewable, and ARAHA as an organization will be attractive to funders. ARAHA has existed for over a decade, has continually expanded its reach and services, and has always worked within its means. Also, as the organization starts to pursue self-sustaining and income-generating projects - like the creation of a dairy farm to fund the administration of a local school - it will be very appealing to potential donors, and a front-runner for various grants. Locally, for example, The Margaret A. Cargill Foundation's Kenya Initiative, The Minneapolis Foundation, The Minnesota Community Foundation, and The McKnight Foundation's East Africa Program are all seeking grant applicants for projects that will not require continual donor support far into the future. These foundations want to see more self-sustaining projects, and ARAHA will be a perfect fit.

If ARAHA does not swiftly seek to diversify its funding streams, continued growth and expansion of services and programs will not be sustainable. Donation dependency can be appropriate for a small organization with limited focus and reach, but as an organization grows in scope and size, it is important to have a wider array of funding sources to ensure its longevity.

Contact information for the foundations highlighted in this section are found below. Please be aware that several of these foundations *do not accept* unsolicited grant applications. ARAHA should draft introduction letters and set up meetings with foundation board members so that the foundation becomes more familiar with ARAHA, the organization's importance, and its services.

- The Margaret A. Cargill Foundation
Email: info@macfoundation.org

- The Minneapolis Foundation
Address: 800 IDS Center, 80 South 8th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402
Grant Contact: Paul Verrette or Andrea Porter
Phone: (612) 672-3836 / (612) 672-8663
Email: grants@mplsfoundation.org

- The Minnesota Community Foundation
Address: 55 5th Street East, Suite 600, St. Paul, MN 55101
Phone: (651) 224-5463
Email: inbox@mncommunityfoundation.org

- The McKnight Foundation
Address: 710 South 2nd Street, Suite 400, Minneapolis, MN 55401
Phone: (612) 333-4220

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

As diversification of funding is essential for programmatic growth, ARAHA should focus its time and resources most heavily on accessing new funding sources and growing its funding base. An increase in funding is necessary to achieve all of the organization's other goals. There are several strategies ARAHA should undertake in order to successfully diversify its funding sources.

First, the identification of different funding sources is essential. ARAHA obviously should not begin to ignore its current private and corporate donors and must continue to facilitate a strong relationship with these habitual donors. However, ARAHA's staff should shift more of their energy and focus to cultivating new relationships with different types of donors. This consultant team suggests that ARAHA follow these steps to ensure that new funding sources are located and secured:

- **Purchase a membership to a foundation search database:**
 - The Minnesota Council on Foundations (MCF) provides an extensive online database of regional grantmakers that includes private family foundations, private independent foundations, corporate foundations and giving programs, community and public foundations, and other associate members. The database allows users to search by "area of giving," application deadline, and grant type,

providing its users quick access to important information. MCF's website can be accessed at www.mcf.org.

- Access Philanthropy is a Minneapolis research agency that directly assists non-profit organizations with grant applications. The knowledgeable agency staff also makes personalized recommendations about specific grant opportunities, based on a non-profit's mission and strengths. Access Philanthropy has one of the most comprehensive databases of foundations and corporate donors in the country. Access to this database can be purchased for a membership fee through the agency. See Access Philanthropy's website at www.accessphilanthropy.com.
- Foundation Center is the most up-to-date online foundation database. It is a valuable resource, as it provides users with direct foundation contact information and also lists recent grantees. Foundation Center can be found online at www.foundationcenter.org.
- **Identify realistic grant opportunities:** There are various types of grants available, many of them renewable annually. ARAHA should focus its energy on identifying grant prospects that will support its programmatic and operational objectives. The search engines highlighted above will provide a gateway for pinpointing potential grant opportunities. Grants through federal and local government should also be researched.
- **Devise a strategic capital campaign:** To be successful in securing grants to support its programmatic goals, ARAHA must take on a capital campaign with a focus on the organization's unique qualities and past achievements. The capital campaign should have a definite beginning and end, with a sufficient timeline to dictate each action item. The campaign could include obvious grantseeking activities - approaching foundations, for example - but could also include special fundraising events such as a charity ball, concert, food drive, or 5k run/walk.
- **Make direct contact with foundations:** Because of the economic downturn and tightened purse strings, many foundations - especially family foundations - are not accepting unsolicited grant proposals. These foundations continue to give to the same organizations year after year, as long as objectives are being met. If ARAHA identifies a grant that is particularly fitting, even if the foundation is not taking any new letters of inquiry or grant applications, the organization should still take steps to contact that foundation directly. ARAHA is not known in the grantmaking community, simply because the organization does not receive any grants. Introducing the organization to a wide array of family and private foundations and highlighting the long list of ARAHA's past successes and current endeavors is an essential step. This can be done over the phone or via mail or e-mail, but face-to-face meetings are always the best tactic. ARAHA's staff should go into these meetings with a business-like mindset: sell the organization!
- **Write letters of inquiry for desirable grants:** A letter of inquiry (LOI) is most often a foundation's first application requirement for grantseeking organizations and non-

profits. Because it may be the sole introduction of an organization and its mission, it is extremely important that the LOI is strong, well-written, and unique.

- Each LOI requirement is different, but the following are suggestions for thinking strategically about writing ARAHA's LOIs.
 - What makes ARAHA different? What are some of the organization's greatest successes? Does ARAHA have any programs that are unique to the organization?
 - ARAHA should most heavily stress its self-sustaining and income-generating projects, as well as focusing on innovative solutions.
 - Most importantly, talk about all that ARAHA has already done! Frame it in a way that makes the foundation see that the organization is an indispensable resource for the people in the Horn of Africa. Make them want you!
- **Use a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system:** A CRM will allow the organization to easily keep track of all donors, whether a large family foundation that has granted thousands of dollars or an individual who has made a single donation to the emergency drought relief fundraiser. This system will assist ARAHA in mass mailings and correspondences, as well.
- **Keep donors and grantmakers informed:** One of the biggest mistakes grantseeking organizations make is that the staff does not actively follow up with donors and grantmakers. One solution is to produce newsletters on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. The newsletters need not be pages and pages long, and should include a brief summary of what the organization has been working on and a message from the Executive Director or a board member. Funders appreciate having an understanding of what grantees are doing with the resources provided. ARAHA can save money on printing and postage costs by sending PDF files via email - perhaps just to "smaller" donors.

Please see the **Grant Writing Toolkit** in the **Addendum** of the strategic plan for an introductory lesson and overview on grant writing.

IMPERATIVE: Make ARAHA and its mission, as well as its services and programs, known more broadly, both within the United States and globally.

RECOMMENDATION: Tell the “ARAHA story” in a more unique and attractive way through the utilization of new marketing techniques and the development of the ARAHA “brand.”

One of ARAHA’s greatest goals is to draw the world’s attention to the problems in the Horn of Africa. This necessitates that ARAHA is well-known at both the local and international levels and that the organization builds a strong reputation. Creating a global ARAHA “brand” will be helpful as the organization seeks endorsements from larger organizations and agencies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- **Publicize ARAHA’s intention to shift its focus from relief to sustainable development:** Understanding the contributions that ARAHA has made as a relief agency is the first step to widely publicizing its new focus. Though ARAHA originally intended to undertake development projects early after the organization’s founding, donors seemed to prefer to contribute to relief services that provided more immediate results. This influenced ARAHA’s eventual recognition as a relief-based agency.

Now that ARAHA’s staff and board have decided to focus more of the organization’s resources on development projects, the critical transition from relief to long-term and sustainable projects needs to be well-publicized.

- **Focus on positive images, past achievements, and success stories:** Africa is often associated with poverty, disease, insufficient aid, and war. Therefore, ARAHA should widely disseminate accurate information and success stories. An effective strategy is to focus on ARAHA-specific stories. For example, the organization is currently using the story of Beatrice Biira who was able to attend higher education in the United States, simply because of two goats. Effective story telling in the same vein will highlight the impacts of ARAHA’s projects. Some examples of organizations that have used effective storytelling are Oxfam (www.oxfam.org) and Heifer International (www.heifer.org).
- **Create a more effective website:** A useful website will help ARAHA deliver important information to a larger audience, as a website is often the first place people go to get information about an organization’s work. To create an “effective” website, consider some of these ideas: 1) Ensure that ARAHA is using recent pictures that reflect current programs and projects, 2) Ensure the functionality of all links. Currently, on the webpage that provides a snapshot of current programs, not all links are “clickable.”. This creates ambiguity about whether these projects are no longer active or if the

webpage creator has neglected it. 3) Review the website for the effective use of the English language through consistency and descriptions. 4) Eliminate the names of the picture files in the Media Gallery (i.e. suffering1, suffering2, etc.) or add an appropriate description, and 5) Add new and interesting content and information regularly.

- **Use traditional media for more extensive advertisement:** This will ensure that people who do not often use the Internet will still be aware of ARAHA's existence.
- **Utilize social media sites like Facebook and Twitter:** This will provide those interested with up-to-date information, introduce ways in which one can become engaged in the organization, and allow them to connect with others who are actively involved in ARAHA's work. They are also a great resource, as they are cost-free and easy-to-use.
- **Focus on the younger generations through the creation of an ARAHA Ambassadors Program**
- **Integrate the organization's new focus into its name:** After allocating the appropriate resources and implementing more development projects, consider changing ARAHA's name to reflect the organization's new focus.

IMPERATIVE: Create both a sustainable and well-run organization, as well as sustainable and long-lasting development projects.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop and utilize innovative solutions, both internally and externally.

For many years, ARAHA has placed great importance on innovative solutions as a way to solve problems in the Horn of Africa. For example, in 2010 alone, ARAHA built 46 shallow wells to provide clean drinking water to an estimated 50,000 beneficiaries and their livestock. These wells will be operational for 12 or more years, helping people in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya be more self-sufficient - one of ARAHA's ultimate goals.

In 2010 the organization also authorized the delivery of almost 200 pairs of goats to families in the region as part of its dairy cow-goat program. This is an innovative program because it is not simply providing a family with milk or food; the goats and cows help the families earn extra income from the sale of milk and offspring, and they empower women because they provide them with important collateral for borrowing.

For ARAHA, *innovative solutions* cannot only mean tools and programs to ensure self-sufficiency of the people in the Horn of Africa. *Innovative solutions* must also be internal to the organization itself: How can ARAHA increase operational and administrative efficiency? How can the organization better facilitate its programs? How can ARAHA increase its programmatic budget?

To continue to be innovative, ARAHA must start to dedicate more of its resources to examining the structure, size, capacity, and operational processes of the organization.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

As with any organization, innovation is not something that can be implemented through a step-by-step process. It is something that needs to be embedded within the culture of the organization. For ARAHA, there are a handful of ways to address the use of innovative solutions.

Internally: The first is through the organization's internal processes. ARAHA is a small organization that has managed to accomplish a lot with limited resources. In order to do more work effectively, ARAHA needs to look at process-improvement practices and set goals for efficiency. Most non-profit organizations look at a measurement of their administrative costs versus the resources dedicated directly to the mission.

ARAHA has kept administrative costs at a minimum, but perhaps dedicating more resources to the day-to-day work will have a greater impact. For instance, having a staff

member solely dedicated to fundraising, grant writing, and development could yield greater positive returns for the organization as a whole than the cost of a salary for that individual.

Additionally, according to the Board of Directors, ARAHA's true source of strength is its small size. It has made the organization extremely nimble and able to implement processes more quickly than relatively larger organizations. If ARAHA determines that it needs to increase its staff capacity to better serve the population in the Horn of Africa, an increase in the overall size and scope of the organization will surely follow. Being innovative in the structuring of the organization, as well as using technology and strategic action plans will allow ARAHA to continue tackling problems quickly.

Externally: The other way ARAHA can use innovative solutions is in dealing with the problems facing its beneficiaries in the Horn of Africa. As stated earlier, the region deals with periodic draughts, poverty, and political instability. ARAHA's main objective calls for long-lasting solutions – not emergency steps that have a short-term effect (though difficult, as the immediate needs seem pressing).

ARAHA can work with other organizations, inventors, and service providers to create a synergistic partnership in implementing innovative solutions.

ARAHA is well connected with the people living in the region. Using local solutions and improving upon them by utilizing modern materials or machinery can create longer-term solutions.

IMPERATIVE: Draw greater attention to the current problems in the Horn of Africa and disseminate information about how best to provide relief services in the region.

RECOMMENDATION: Initiate ARAHA as a resource engine for both local and international governments and organizations.

ARAHA is unique in that the staff and board members all possess an intimate knowledge of the Horn of Africa – one of the reasons for the organization’s many successes. ARAHA’s consistent efforts to serve in the same area make the organization an incredibly effective resource engine. For example, ARAHA’s board and staff speak the languages of the region and share an understanding about the local cultures, geography, and religions. This expertise is an invaluable tool, and it is fitting that ARAHA serve as a resource for others doing similar work in the Horn of Africa.

Because ARAHA has an “insider’s” knowledge about the specific needs of the people of East Africa, the organization can provide the most useful types of assistance without adding to the administrative costs. For example, the ARAHA field staff uses their regional knowledge and established networks to navigate through the local governing bodies. They also ensure that the relief supplies go directly to those in need. This direct, on-the-ground approach is critical in politically unstable places like Somalia.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- **Share ARAHA’s successful methods of resource distribution with other organizations:** These methods are more efficient and effective in some countries than others due to the political climate and instability. ARAHA should utilize online collaborative efforts to contribute to information sharing. This will allow the organization to work with others on issues of common interest. ARAHA could also use online resources to exchange goods and services and evaluate ideas and resources.
- **Create opportunities for international governmental and non-governmental agencies to organize around issues related to the Horn of Africa:** This opportunity will build ARAHA’s reputation more broadly, and open more doors for the organization. ARAHA will then have more influence and can more strongly advocate for specific policies that will positively impact the region.
- **Strengthen ARAHA’s partnerships with other relief and development organizations**
- **Provide education and improve understanding about issues common to the Horn of Africa**

For more information on this topic, please see the article entitled *From Preparedness to Partnerships: Case Study Research on Humanitarian Logistics* by Rolando M. Tomasini and Luk N. Van Wassenhove.

IMPERATIVE: Ensure that ARAHA has the internal capacity to continue providing strong programs and services.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a stronger and more useful volunteer program.

Considering ARAHA's small staff and its intense involvement in routine activities and tasks, ARAHA should aim to: (1) use its human resources more efficiently to focus on the organization's future direction and not dealing with routine activities, and (2) create community leaders. These goals are important for they will allow ARAHA to hire long-term interns tasked with completing routine activities. This will also create a pool of engaged volunteers so the organization will not have to constantly spend time and valuable resources recruiting new volunteers. A stronger volunteer program will give ARAHA greater visibility locally and will also help the organization establish a stronger relationship with the East African and broader Twin Cities communities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- **Create a youth leadership institute:** This "leadership institute" will provide interested youth with the skills and resources necessary to assist ARAHA in its many activities. It will simultaneously provide participants with an opportunity for professional development.
- **Assign specific roles for volunteers:** In order to ensure effective engagement, it is important to recognize that volunteers are donating their time and energy. They should be appreciated for all that they do. If volunteers feel appreciated, they are more likely to continue doing meaningful work for the organization.
- **Engage the immigrant community, as they are more aware of the conditions and problems in the region:** In the case of Somalia, Minnesota's unparalleled immigrant community plays an indispensable role in sustaining life back home. Somalia's remittance system is one that has attracted global attention – exceeding \$1 billion, according to the Department of State. Because of this connection, the immigrant community has the power to effect great change and development in the Horn of Africa.
- **Allocate appropriate resources to ensure the continuation of the volunteer program:** An awareness in advance of the amount of work that is done by volunteers and the necessary resources to complete tasks will help ARAHA prepare for worst-case scenarios, i.e. an unexpected shortage in donations.
- **Consider students of the University of Minnesota, Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and other area colleges for volunteer and internship opportunities**

IMPERATIVE: Active engagement of the immigrant community in Minnesota with the purposes of fostering deeper transnational connections.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop local community programs with international reach that will improve the lives of those in Minnesota and in the region itself.

It is also important for an organization to be a good citizen within its community. ARAHA has benefited greatly from the East African community, as the organization has received both donations and volunteer support. Having local programs will assist ARAHA in honoring this responsibility.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- **Ask the local community about its needs:** ARAHA is already well-connected with the East African community in the Twin Cities. The organization has offered English language courses as well as financial literacy programs. Surveying the community for a list of their needs would be a good first step, and will also foster a greater sense of partnership with ARAHA. In turn, this will translate to more support from the community.
- **Assign priorities for those needs:** ARAHA is acting at capacity facilitating relief in the Horn of Africa. When beginning to develop local programming, ARAHA will need to assign priorities to programs that will help the organization achieve its own goals. For example, programs that will add to its volunteer base or those that will be beneficial to ARAHA's operations in the region.
- **Find ways to make programs self-sufficient in the long-term**

IMPERATIVE: Develop projects and services that are complimentary with the goal of sustainability in the long-term.

RECOMMENDATION: Create a project monitoring and evaluation mechanism (M&E) to measure the existence of the long-term impact.

Monitoring and evaluation activities are essential to ensure that development projects are both progressing and impacting the target population. M&E serves to improve decision-making processes and to monitor the progression of the work.

As the organization shifts from relief to sustainable development, ARAHA needs a better understanding of its efficiency so it can provide this information to funders, commissioners, and investors. ARAHA will also need to communicate its achievements to a wider public. As a predominantly donation-based organization, ARAHA has been in compliance with federal regulations and best practices for relief organizations working abroad. The M&E will take these efforts a step further by encouraging ARAHA to measure the impact of each of its services. These impact-measuring tools will allow the organization to be more transparent and accountable for its projects. M&E will force ARAHA to ask itself the following questions: Did the project work? Are completed projects still working and having the desired impact? Was the target population served as intended? Overall, it is essential for ARAHA to ensure that earlier projects are still having the intended impact.

ARAHA can and should use a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for these key purposes:

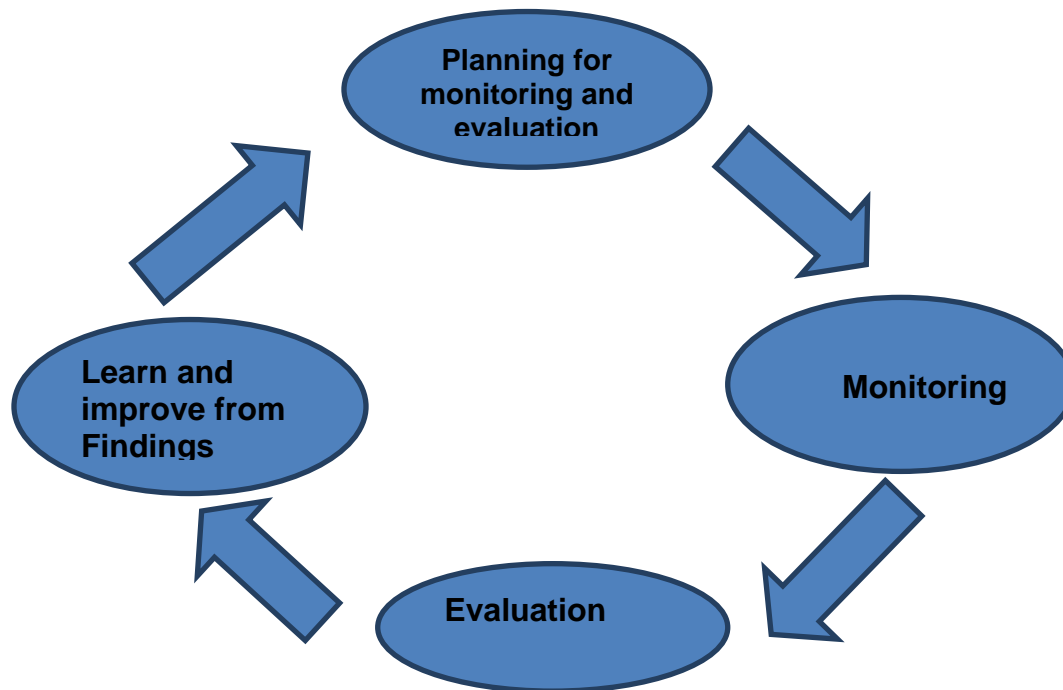
- **to learn** about its own activities and subsequent results to support internal planning and development
- **to be accountable** to its stakeholders
- **to ensure** that the development projects serve their purposes and to learn about its intended and unintended results (outcomes and externalities)
- **to use** the feedback from M&E in designing further development projects and integrate necessary changes

The Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle for ARAHA

There are four key phases in the monitoring and evaluation cycle:

- planning for monitoring and evaluation
- monitoring
- evaluation
- using the findings to learn and improve

The diagram on the next page illustrates the M&E cycle.



ARAHA should use this cycle for each project and service that it provides. For example, field staff should monitor the impact of the wells. There should be a system in place to ensure that the wells will continue to function for the next five years and that the necessary maintenance mechanisms are available. With a proper M&E, field staff can then answer the question: What was the impact of the well? (This could potentially include the changes in sanitation, changes in the level of waterborne diseases, number of people served and number of people intended to serve.)

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- **Dedicate funds to perform the monitoring and evaluation of ARAHA's projects and programs**
- **Hire consultants from the communities ARAHA serves to fill out simple questionnaires about specific projects:** Regular data collection by community members will create a cumulative impact evaluation and this will serve as a path toward development for ARAHA. It is important to use both male and female interviewers and evaluators, to ensure open and honest responses from both genders.

- **Utilize the World Bank's tools, methods, and approaches:** For more information about how to structure M&E specific to ARAHA's goals, download the World Bank's M&E handbook at <http://www.worldbank.org/oed/ecd/tools>.

ADDENDUM

- (1) Financial Snapshot for the Next Five Years**
- (2) Roles & Responsibilities Matrix Template**
- (3) Grant Writing Toolkit**
- (4) How to Create an Internship Program**

Financial Snapshot for the Next Five Years

ARAHA works hard to ensure that nearly all of the funds it receives go directly into the hands of the people. Currently, ARAHA's administrative costs are only 4% of its annual budget. This is a very small amount, and unusually low administrative costs can oftentimes be counterproductive for an organization. This percentage will increase if ARAHA decides to directly allocate funds to conduct M&E. In terms of financials, there are several other things the organization should be aware of over the next five years.

- **Develop a dedicated budget for both relief services and development work:** Currently, ARAHA develops a yearly budget with a few line items and uses money throughout the year when needed for various projects and services. So, for example, if the organization chooses to undertake extra food distribution – and there are funds still available in the budget – ARAHA will proceed with the food distribution project. This method of budget management might work for a smaller organization that only takes on a few projects a year. ARAHA, however, will not be able to continue to use budgeted funds this way, especially as the organization continues to focus more heavily on development projects.

The reason for this is that if only one budget exists for everything ARAHA decides to do over the course of a year, emergencies (droughts, disaster relief, water shortages, etc.) will impede upon the successful implementation of development projects. Imagine that ARAHA continued to develop its budget the same way it has over the last ten years. Imagine, also, that the organization has decided to undertake the development of another high school in a different location. What would happen if an unexpected and widespread water shortage occurred? The organization would potentially have to “steal” away funds from the school development project to purchase and deliver water and supplies to the population in need. If this happens to occur near the end of the budgeted year, the funds to finish building the school may no longer exist.

The solution is to create two separate budgets: one dedicated to relief services and similar projects and one budget dedicated solely to development work. This will require some foreword thinking on ARAHA's part to ensure that both development and relief receive the appropriate funding for the fiscal year. It may take several years to do this, but it will be beneficial for the organization in the long-run if it truly wants to focus on development work.

- **Increase staff capacity to tackle development projects:** At this point, it seems obvious that implementing the recommendations presented in this strategic plan will require more time and energy from each staff member. ARAHA must face the fact that spending less money on staff equates to more work for each person. This increased

pressure on the individual limits the organization's potential and ability to implement new ideas. Therefore, ARAHA should invest in development projects by bringing on professional consultants for specific jobs, hiring a new employee or employees, or attracting knowledgeable interns.

- **Create emergency action plans:** Though not every emergency can be predicted within the Horn of Africa, there are some that are "semi-predictable." Emergency preparedness and strategic action plans will ensure that the organization is not wasting resources or spending unnecessary funds to provide relief services. Droughts are known to occur about every two years, for example, and the region is currently experiencing one of those droughts. Caught unprepared, ARAHA had to divert its resources and attention from developing other projects to fundraise for emergency relief. The organization should take time to evaluate what it is doing right now (both what it is doing well and what could use improvement) and create action plans for future droughts. This will ensure that staff members know the appropriate steps to take during emergencies and that ARAHA is not wasting time or resources.
- **Reconsider certain expenditures and examine administrative costs:** Every organization has to think about the necessity of purchases at some point in time, and ARAHA is no exception. While reviewing project reports and expenditures, this consultant team recognized the extra expense for individualized banners, for example. A simple cost-saving solution would be to create one non-specific banner that can be brought to each development site. Though it may seem like an inconsequential cost, it will continue to add up with the more projects ARAHA undertakes. One of the organization's goals should be to cut down on *project administrative costs* and not necessarily *program administrative costs*.

Roles & Responsibilities Matrix Template

A Roles & Responsibilities Matrix will allow ARAHA to easily identify which staff member is responsible for specific tasks. If implemented, it would be beneficial to create a Roles & Responsibilities Matrix for any volunteer or internship program, as well. Below is a template for one type of matrix that is particularly useful because it allows for the identification of overlapping and secondary responsibilities, as well as illustrates who is responsible for review and approval.

TASK OR ACTIVITY	STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE					
P - Primary Responsibility S - Support/Secondary Responsibility A - Approval R - Review & Comment						

Grant Writing Toolkit

**Some information adapted from The Non-Profit Guide Online and Lone Eagle Consulting*

The following will provide some basic helpful tips and ideas to keep in mind when ARAHA begins to apply for grants. More substantive advice for grantseeking organizations (as well as templates) can easily be found online, through a grant writing course, or via a consulting agency. A capital campaign and the writing of letters of inquiry and grant applications could be facilitated through the use of a knowledgeable intern or dedicated volunteer.

- **Preparation and Research:** Often an overlooked step, preparing and planning for any grant-seeking activities is vital, yet time-consuming. A foundation search database or other similar resource can save a lot of time, as they allow you to search based on “type of need.” Using whatever method is preferable to the organization, research grants that are currently being offered by foundations, corporations, and government entities. Take note of application requirements, deadlines, contact information, and the specific interests of the donor. An Excel spreadsheet is helpful for this step and ensures organization throughout the process. You do not want to waste time and resources applying for grants that do not match ARAHA’s needs. For example, some donors will not give grants that support administrative costs. Most funders have specific ideas about what their donations should be used for, so take time to ensure that you are applying for appropriate grants.
- **Brainstorming a Proposal:** Once specific grants have been identified, spend time thinking about what needs to be written in the proposal or letter of inquiry (LOI). Each grant will be different with a unique process and objectives. *Do not use the same LOI, proposal, or grant application for multiple grants.* Brainstorm ARAHA’s past achievements, successful projects, and potential future undertakings. It is often helpful to think of it from the other side: If you were giving a grant to an organization, what would you want to know about them? What makes that organization special and deserving of support?
- **Make Contact:** Before writing an LOI or proposal or filling out a grant application, contact the foundation or grantmaker directly. Ensure that the application guidelines are completely understood before applying. Sometimes the online databases are not up-to-date with correct information or application guidelines have changed, so double-check.
- **Writing:** An LOI should usually be kept to a page in length. Keep the wording simple and straight-forward. Use some of the same words that the foundation has used to describe its ultimate objectives. Present ideas in a thought-provoking way and make clear that your organization is tackling a problem with significant need. Are other

organizations doing what ARAHA is doing? If so, what is ARAHA doing that is *different*? Editing and grammar checks go a long way. Nothing looks worse than a wonderfully written LOI with a spelling error or typo. Revise, revise, revise.

- **Completing a Proposal and Application:** If invited to submit a full proposal and/or grant application, follow the same writing and editing tips highlighted above. According to *The Non-Profit Guide*, also make sure to answer all of the following in your proposal:
 - What is the project's purpose and feasibility?
 - What is the community need, and how great is it?
 - What are the funds needed?
 - What is the applicant's competence and how will they be held accountable?
 - What specific objectives will you accomplish and how?
 - How will the results be measured?

Most importantly, ensure that you illustrate how the funding request complies with the grantmaker's purpose, ultimate goals, and objectives.

- **Follow Up:** After a proposal is submitted, follow up about the status of the application. If possible, have the grantmaker evaluate the proposal's strengths and weaknesses. There is always room for improvement!

How to Create an Internship Program

**Adapted from the Technology Council of Central Pennsylvania*

Students and pre-professionals - including Humphrey School graduate students - are always looking for interesting and challenging internship positions. A knowledgeable and dedicated intern can do much to support ARAHA's activities. The following is a discussion about the creation of an internship program. Again, more detailed information can be found online and via other resources.

- **Design the Internship Position:** The position should be based around a set of predetermined goals, with a final end-product in mind. What task(s) would you like to do but simply do not have enough time? Is there a project you have wanted to develop but have not had the resources or staff capacity? An understanding of the deliverable(s) will allow you to decide about the length of the internship, hours worked per week, if the position will be paid or unpaid, and what expertise to look for in the employee.
- **Make the Position Known:** If it is a college student you are looking for, most undergraduate and graduate programs have a website or an office students can visit to get information about open internship positions. Provide the school with a job description and specific list of experiences, knowledge, or expertise that the position will require. This is also a great way to publicize your organization to a large audience and foster a relationship with the academic community.
- **Designate a Supervisor:** An internship program will never be successful unless there is ample staff capacity to support it. Designate a specific staff person/mentor to oversee the intern, provide him/her with work, and ensure the intern receives feedback on projects.
- **Make Space:** Often an afterthought, an intern will need a space to work. The organization should provide the employee with a desk, computer, telephone, and any other necessary office supplies (depending on the type of position). The intern should not have to cover costs associated to doing the work. Also, provide the intern with an in-person introduction to the organization itself. Talk about ARAHA's ten-year history, discuss past and current programs and services, and provide any other information that you feel will be helpful to the intern while he or she is performing her job.
- **Evaluate Progress:** Periodically, conduct a brief meeting with the intern to evaluate the progress made on the project. There will be instances where the original time frame will no longer seem feasible to successfully complete an assigned task, or where too

much time has been allotted. These meetings will also ensure that the intern and supervisor are on the same page throughout the process. Allow the intern to ask questions and give ample feedback on the work he or she has accomplished thus far. Make sure the needs of all parties are being met.

- **End Strong:** When the internship is coming to a close, evaluate the intern's work but also have the intern evaluate his or her experience at ARAHA. This can be done in an "exit interview"-style discussion or via a paper survey (increasingly the likelihood of more candid answers). Use constructive criticism to improve the internship experience for the next student(s). If you want quality applicants, it must be a well-run, interesting and beneficial internship opportunity.