NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONAL LIFECYCLES

GRASSROOTS – Informal structure; all or primarily volunteer driven; few or no board members; no formalized internal administrative or operations systems in place.

START-UP/INCUBATION – More formal structure is in place; one or two simple programs have been initiated; founder's vision primarily drives the organization; still mostly volunteer driven; small board; a few formal operational systems in place; forming an informal management infrastructure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

ADOLESCENT/GROWING – Organization is building their reputation and visibility; demand is growing and is often greater than organizational capacity; beginning strategic division of labor; has hired some staff; board expanding beyond "family and friends" or those closely connected with the organization; further development of internal operational system; more emphasis on strategic planning and growth than just trying to stay afloat.

MATURE/SUSTAINABILITY – Operational systems and policies are in place; has reliable and diverse funding streams; more fundraising and staff support (not just volunteer driven); focus on revenue generation, cash reserves and long-term sustainable funding; formal communications are in place (marketing plan; fundraising plan; strategic plan; annual report)

STAGNATION/RENEWAL – Poor planning; well-developed systems are not consistently followed; no real marketing or community relation building; falling behind on financial obligations; insufficient funding sources; decreased demand for your services; reacting to one crisis after another

DECLINE/SHUT DOWN – major disagreements between board and staff; focusing primarily on crisis management instead of programming; major funders withdrawing or threatening to withdraw; negative rumors in the community or bad press; services are no longer effective.