

It is frequently noted, either as an accusation or an excuse, that many NGOs have to operate with very inadequate resources. It has also been noted that where NGOs possess equipment it is either

- out of date producing low quality results and requiring much manual work
- modern and expensive, producing high quality results quickly, but because of its excellence remains unused for most of the work.

from the Social Work Advisory Service Study

king week.
 The logical solution to this problem is to seek some means of sharing facilities and equipment in order to benefit from the best equipment. Such centres exist in Geneva and New York (and planned for London) where a number of organizations have offices in the same building, but there is no emphasis on shared office services. It is therefore interesting to note the following extract from « A Study into the Feasibility of Establishing an Administrative Centre for a Group of Voluntary Organisations » (November, 1970), produced under a contract to the Social Work Advisory Service in London :

- « For a number of years a major private Foundation which has supported a wide range of voluntary charitable organisations with substantial sums of money has been becoming increasingly concerned with a failure to maximise the capital resources and income at their disposal through the use of unsatisfactory accommodation, the employment of unskilled staff in certain crucial spheres, and from ignorance or rejection of modern management concepts. »
- « The feasibility study confirms that considerable economies could be effected if a group of small to medium-sized voluntary organisations (in terms of office requirements) were to be housed centrally, sharing a number of common services. The figures based on a sample of 69 voluntary organisations (not necessarily representative of all voluntary organisations) demonstrate that sharing certain administrative staff, accommodation and equipment would all contribute to savings and increased efficiency. »
- * On the basis of a 40 hour week, between 5 and 8 organisations could share a book-keeper, and 8-16 a salaries / wages clerk. In the same way other professional staff could well be employed by several organisations. »
- - Another possibility for dramatic savings would be on pooled use of equipment. For example, 54 of the 69 organisations in the study owned 1 or more duplicators each, whereas it would be necessary to have only 3 machines for a combination of between 14 and 30 organisations — a savings of at least 27 machines. 31 of these organisations (nearly 50 %) own or hire photocopiers whereas 1 medium capacity machine, with an output of 8 copies per minute, would be sufficient for their combined uses. The same theory applies to postal franking and other machinery. »
- < Although the study was based on a group of national organisations, the principles could equally well be applied in any major centre of population, and at a time when the local authorities are establishing their own unified personal social service departments, it is especially impor-

(*) SWAS, 26 Bloomsbury Way, London, WC1.
 Price: £ 1.00 (Study performed by Freelance Services, 20 Manor Mansions, London NW3 4NB).

tant for the voluntary sector to re-appraise its own organisation and structure. » These conclusions apply equally well to the offices and facilities of international nongovernmental organizations. It may be expected that NGOs receiving subventions from IGOs and foundations will at some stage be placed under pressure to group themselves physically in order to reduce their overhead costs.

The survey suggests that a unit of approximately 2140 square metres would be viable under the particular conditions studied in London in 1969-1970 for not less than 14 organizations and not more than 30 — when the maximum staff per organization did not exceed 15. A larger number of organizations (including larger organizations) could be accommodated if the total area could be increased in a larger centre. Other combinations could be envisaged if lower rental cost and higher administrative savings were possible — notably in other locations. An average of 15.3 square metres per person, including meeting and other facility rooms, is envisaged. The calculations are based on evidence that the cost of administration per square metre of space occupied falls from \$ 478 per square metre for organizations with less than 47 square metres to \$ 111 per square metre for organizations with more than 1000 metres. Overhead costs per staff member fall too : from \$ 5700 per staff

member in offices with 1-2 people to \$ 3640 per person when 16 or more are employed. Thus it is the smaller organizations (under 10 staff) which would benefit most from sharing premises.

The study showed that 63 % of the organizations employed a staff « accountant »; professional services used were auditors (91 %) lawyers (91 %), architects (61 %) public relations (34%), fund raisers (25%), and medical services (33 %). Perhaps the UN could facilitate (a) greater inter-NGO coordination, which it has so frequently asked for, by recommending the creation of such centres — and (b) greater NGO-UN interaction, by accommodating some of its own national and information offices in such centres.

The tables on the following pages have been prepared from many - tables in the SWAS study. Grouping the information in this way, often by converting to percentages, gives a convenient overview but prevents inclusion of the qualifying remarks present in the original report — which we would encourage interested readers to obtain. Sterling figures have been converted into dollars (2.60 rate) and square feet into square meters, to facilitate wider comprehension. SWAS cannot of course be held responsible for any errors arising from this reinterpretation of their study. Whilst the study is based on organizations in London, many of the figures would apply to other cities and conditions. Although the basic ratio of rent to total administrative and salary expenses (22 % for the London study) would be different in other cities, it is highly probable that similar conclusions as to the viability of such a centre would emerge.

(N.B. The sign --> is used to indicate where an average is taken over several columns and points to the column in which the figure is located).

TABLE I

Total square metres of floor space occupied	9-18	19-47	47-93	94-187	188-467	468-935	935 +
Office area (excl. corridors, etc.) % of organizations with given total floor area	8.2	10.2	28.6	18.4	1	8.2	4.1
rooms per organization	1.5	2.5	3.8	8.1	22.5	25.0	—
square metres per room	9.4	13.1	16.8	17.7	17.0	23.5	—
most frequent room size		(27 square metres)	\$37.5	\$67.0	17.9	\$37.5	—
Charges per square metre					\$55.5		
rent, rates, repairs							
London commercial rents							
. ratio : rent /admin. costs (%)	—>	\$475	\$306	\$278	\$278	\$139	\$111
		25		16	20	27	—
Income range of organization (\$'000)	2.6-13	13-130	130-260	260-650	650-1300	1300-2600	2600-6500
Number or organizations in given income range (%)	6.8	22.7	31.8	18.2	9.1	4.5	6.8
H.Q. administrative salary costs as % of total income	46	73	76	76		37	20
Printing /stationery costs as % of total income	16	6	9	6			
Publicity /fund-raising costs as % of total income		11	8	3			

TABLE II

Full-time staff per organization	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-50	50 +
Organizations of given staff size (as % of total of 67)	28	33	9	7.5	12	4.5	6
Number of rooms per organization	4.5	6.0	—>	10.5	15.7	30.0	32.1
Rooms per worker	1.5	0.75	—>	0.68	0.62	0.74	0.51
Square metres per organization	39.7	92.5	—>	171.0	362.0	397.0	—
Square metres per worker	13.2	11.6	—>	11.0	14.2	9.8	—
Visitors per day							
— by appointment	1.6	3.0	5.2	<—	<—	<—	<—
— casually	2.3	4.0	3.6				
Letters received				(average of 150 letters per week)			
Hours per week (on tasks not using a professional accountant)							
— bookkeeping	5	8	8	(including accountants' time : all organizations 10 hours)			
— salaries / wages	2.5	5	4	(including accountant's time : all organizations 9 hours)			
— subscriptions	5	3	4	(including accountant's time : all organizations 19 hours)			
— publications sales	4	1.5	0	(including accountant's time : all organizations 18 hours)			
Professional fees per year							
— accountants /auditing	\$0.	\$130.	—>	\$174.	\$314.	\$570.	\$755.
— legal and other	\$0.	\$320.	—>	\$468.	\$247.	\$1300.	\$1410.
Meetings per year (more than 10 people)	19	24	31	—	—	—	—
— average number of people	28	23	20	(most less than 50 people; 50 % for 10-29 people; 50 % for 30-50 people)			
— non-conference meeting size	(84 % hold less than 20 meetings /year — of which 60 % were for less than 50 people — averaging 5 meetings / year;						
Outside meetings							
— number / attendance							
— expenditure (all meetings)	18 % held a few meetings (or 200-500 people; 50 % of the meetings were for less than 200) (\$2780, although for the 59 % spending less than \$1560, the average was \$545.)						
— expenditure (small meetings)	(\$605 for those attended by less than 50 people						
Office equipment (% of organizations using)							
— internal telephone	47.5	82.6	—>	87.5	75.0	100.0	100.0
— external telephone (3+)	—	34.8	—>	37.5	100.0	66.7	75.0
— duplicator	63.2	91.3	—>	87.5	100.0	100.0	100.0
— photocopier	15.8	34.8	—>	75.0	87.5	100.0	100.0
— addressograph	42.2	56.5	—>	50.0	62.5	0.0	100.0
— calculator	15.8	43.5	—>	25.0	75.0	66.7	100.0
— dictaphone	36.9	26.1	—>	75.0	75.0	100.0	75.0
— vehicle	(21.8 % of organizations, with 2.7 vehicles per organization)						
Office equipment usage expected							
— telephone (calls / day)	35	61	65	<—	<—	<—	<—
— duplicator	90	180	350	—	—	—	—
no. of jobs (average 11 pages)	1000	2000	4000	—	—	—	—
output	(approx. average of 60,000 per annum)						
— photocopier	1400	3200	2600	—	—	—	—
— addressograph	(modal average of under 50 runs per year with 200 -1000 addresses per run)						
— calculator	(average of 9 hours per week per machine)						
— dictaphone	(average of 19 hours per week per machine)						
— franking	(average of 445 letters and 12 parcels sent per week)						
Expenditure on printing, stationery, telephone and post per full-time staff member	\$910	\$630	\$435	<—	<—		