

## Facilitation: A growing practice

Sometimes even the best organizations struggle with group dynamic issues when attempting to "get there from here". Often it helps to have an independent voice and expertise to draw out ideas, strategies and solutions from the boards, committees or departments engaged in such struggles. This is the role that the MAS facilitator plays when working with a MAS client. MAS has 70 highly skilled Volunteer Consultants [VCs] of which the Facilitation Practice currently has 14 and is the team that responds to client requests for some form of facilitation.

In 2009 the practice dealt with 34 projects representing about 25% of total requests for assistance received by MAS. The number of requests is steadily increasing and in response, the Facilitation Practice is working to increase its capacity by attracting additional trained facilitators. To that end, ICA Associates Inc are making known to their graduates that MAS is keen to engage the volunteer time of those graduates in support of MAS' clients.

As a result of that recruiting effort we are pleased to say that two new VCs have joined MAS and others are currently in discussion with us.

▶ Barbara Jaworski joined us a few months ago and has already accepted several projects. Barbara has her own consulting firm specializing in Talent Management Solutions, Research and the Best Employers Award for 50 Plus Canadians. She is the author of KAA-Boom – How to Engage the 50 Plus Worker and Beat the Workforce Crisis.

▶ Thomas Plant joined MAS in December 2009 and is the Senior Manager of Strategic Planning for the City of Vaughan. He is the author of "Strategic Planning for Municipalities: A Users' Guide" (2008) and "Roadmap to Success: Implementing the Strategic Plan" (2010).

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### **A RECORD YEAR**

2009 was a record year for MAS with 150 projects. Top practice areas included:

Facilitation with 34 projects  
Strategic Planning with 26 projects  
Governance with 21 projects  
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## Helping youth groups deliver programs



Chris Govern engages the group in a discussion

The Youth Challenge Fund (YCF) has brought together government and privately-matched funds in a common purpose: to improve opportunities for Toronto's young people, particularly in the city's 13 priority neighbourhoods.

The grant recipients are all young people who are in the early stages of developing their organizations to

effectively deliver the programs for which they are funded. In December the YCF hosted a meeting of these youth in order to introduce MAS and show what MAS might be able to do to assist in this development.

Chris Govern provided information about MAS and Fred Simons facilitated a workshop that asked the question: "What are the issues and problems you are dealing with in developing your programs?" From the responses it was clear that help would be welcomed in a number of areas but particularly planning and governance.

It was a successful session with a very impressive group of committed people. There was a lively discussion and attendees were very positive about the event.

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## President's corner

The year 2009 was a very successful one for MAS. By year's end we had reached our goal of 150 projects for the year. Thanks to the support of our dedicated volunteers, partners and others, we completed a record number of projects for clients. However, there is no time to rest on our laurels. Like many of our clients, the MAS Board, Volunteer Consultants and our Program Coordinator, Lisa Cunningham, we are working on an exciting plan for 2010.

Over the past several years, we have focused on ensuring that MAS has the people and processes in place to handle a larger number of client agencies and projects. Great progress has been made, particularly with the addition of Lisa to our office staff. This year will see a shift in focus – we will be paying more attention to marketing the services of MAS, to ensure that potential clients know more about the services MAS can provide. And we will be introducing new consulting services and modes of service delivery in response to changing client needs.

Because we recognize the need, realizing that many non-profits in the Greater Toronto Area and further afield could benefit from MAS, our goal in 2010 is to increase the number of projects to 210. To help accomplish this objective, we plan to build referral networks with client agencies, particularly small ones, to assist more of them. We will also be working with networks and umbrella organizations, such as the Youth Challenge Fund, in an outreach program to reach more potential clients.

MAS has succeeded in recruiting some great new talent for our VC roster and recruiting will continue with a focus on those service areas where we have gaps in qualified VCs. Our review of internal processes will continue with particular focus on project evaluation. Based on positive client response to the two successful workshops undertaken last year, new client events are being planned.

I wish you a healthy, happy and successful 2010.

Ed Monahan

## Careers in nonprofits

A survey conducted by DECODE and Brainstorm Consulting of 16,688 students at 50 post secondary institutions across Canada showed substantial interest in careers in the nonprofit sector, according to HR Council, which subscribed to the survey.

A total of 1,732 students (10%) indicated an interest in a nonprofit career (identified in the survey as "Nonprofit Sector: A possible career choice"). When asked which one type of organization they would prefer to work for following graduation, 988 students (5.9% of the total sample) chose "nonprofit/charity/social enterprise", identified as Nonprofit Sector: A preferred career choice.

### MAS offers services in the following areas

- Information Management
- Governance
- Marketing
- Strategic Planning
- Human Resources
- Finance
- Mentorship
- Fund Raising
- Leadership Coaching

### How can you help?

#### **Volunteer**

Call us if you have experience in one of our service areas and you'd like to make a difference

#### **Refer a client**

Call us if you know a nonprofit organization that could benefit from some assistance at no charge

#### **Donate**

Help us to help even more organizations

### 3 MAS Volunteers help AboutFace

In March of 2009, AboutFace reached out to MAS for help. They wanted to support an overall goal of increasing efficiency and productivity, and asked for assistance with the following:

1. The creation of an IT plan for future growth;
2. The development of a performance management process for staff; and
3. Coaching and support for their ED.

AboutFace is dedicated to helping individuals with facial disfigurements and their families to find courage and confidence to participate in society. AboutFace's mission is to provide emotional, social and peer support, information and educational resources to help them integrate effectively into society. AboutFace also focuses on helping to change public attitudes about facial differences. ([www.aboutface.ca](http://www.aboutface.ca))

MAS assigned three volunteer consultants to AboutFace—one for each area of support—and launched all three projects in the fall of 2009. Currently, work on each project continues and many milestones have been realized along the way.

### Helping youth groups deliver programs

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MAS volunteers Nevin McDairmid and Jim Campbell also attended and had an opportunity to meet with many of those present. Several organizations have already approached MAS for assistance and there are projects underway



Fred Simons facilitates a group session with YCF

In addition to the creation of an IT plan and a performance management program, including employee handbook, MAS has implemented a defined, results-oriented Leadership Coaching process, supported with assessment tools. This Leadership Coaching process provides support for the ED on a bi-weekly basis and is designed to focus on challenges in the following areas:

- Interpersonal relationships;
- Meeting organizational objectives;
- Building and leading a high-performing team; and
- Adapting to change.

Both MAS and AboutFace look forward to continuing their relationship in 2010 and beyond.



As the result of discussions and requests, MAS is developing an approach to assist these organizations with governance issues. Our approach will be developed with the participation of some of the YCF funded groups. This is an exciting way that MAS can make a difference in the city and help these organizations become sustainable in the longer term.

**Did you know that Youth Challenge Fund works with 111 youth led initiatives?**

***Want to learn more about Youth Challenge Fund?***

**Visit online at:**  
[www.youthchallengefund.org](http://www.youthchallengefund.org)

## **Facilitation: A growing practice**

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A typical planning project could involve participant numbers ranging from 15 to 40, in order to involve all stakeholders' interests in the planning process, though both smaller and larger numbers are not unusual. Prior to the planning workshops there is usually information gathering etc to inform the workshop participants. Each workshop calls for the participants to develop an agreed response to a focus question, such as: "What do you want your agency to look and feel like in 2/3 years".

That workshop process will take between 3 to 4 hours and is followed by three further workshops, each responding to a focus question to determine, the Obstacles to be dealt with, strategies for dealing with those obstacles and then a detailed action plan for the next 6 months. The four workshops can be scheduled to suit the client either during the working day, evenings or over a weekend and would usually be spread over about one month, though a single weekend dealing with all four workshops is possible.

This process has the effect of recruiting all participants to the achievement of the agreed future for an agency and steps needed to get there. It is also an opportunity for productive involvement of board, staff and volunteers and is a strong contributor to team development.

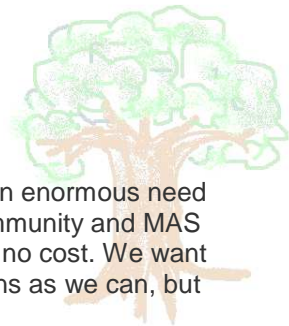
To illustrate how varied the facilitation processes need to be to meet the needs of the client, a recent project resulted in agreement between two boards for their organizations to move toward amalgamation. This process took 3 hours to achieve agreement on a common mission statement, the clients to be served and product to be delivered plus identification of the steps to achieve the eventual amalgamation as well as responsibility for action. That exercise took place in one evening and used the same underlying principles described above and of course built on prior discussions between the two agencies and their goodwill toward each other.

In 2010 the Facilitation Practice expects to grow to at least 20 consultants so that we are able to continue responding the ever-growing demands from our nonprofit clients.

In doing so the MAS Volunteer Consultants expect to derive great personal satisfaction from working with clients who are in turn working to meet the needs of our fascinating and diverse community.

**Fred Simons**

### **The MAS Helping Tree**



As you are aware, there is an enormous need for help in the non profit community and MAS provides such assistance at no cost. We want to help as many organizations as we can, but many do not know about us.

We would like to invite you to join our 'Helping Tree' by adding 2 branches. A branch is simply the name of someone at another organization that is doing work you feel really good about. We then mention your name to make an approach to that agency and offer our assistance.

MAS has worked with approximately 1000 clients in the GTA. If each of those clients joins the helping tree and creates two branches this year, we would be able to reach 2000 new non profits. Please email your branches to [info@masadvise.ca](mailto:info@masadvise.ca)

### **Need help with your financial strategy?**

MAS has helped hundreds of Toronto nonprofits to develop a financial plan. Our volunteers have extensive experience and knowledge in this and many other areas. So, if you need help with anything from financial planning or marketing to IT review and assessment, please call us. Our consulting service is free of charge to non profits.

416-963-5792  
[info@masadvise.ca](mailto:info@masadvise.ca)

**Newsletter feedback or suggestions? We would like to hear from you:**

Contact Lisa Cunningham: 416-963-5792 or by email: [info@masadvise.ca](mailto:info@masadvise.ca)