E-Learning Success Stories in the Not-for-Profit Sector

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Introduction

Worldwide, it is estimated that the civil society or not-for-profit sector[1] constitutes a roughly $1 trillion industry that employs close to 20 million people[2]. While civil society leaders are increasingly turning to e-learning to enhance internal managerial and technical skills, the use of e-learning in this sector goes well beyond just staff training. Innovative organizations are designing and implementing e-learning and blended learning programs to educate clients and donors, train volunteers, and develop new sources of funding.

From large projects such as the American Red Cross' new online first aid training program to smaller programs educating families about multi-racial adoption, civil society organizations are using learning technologies to improve service, increase volunteer effectiveness and provide broader and more economical access to educational resources. Likewise, universities, foundations and technical assistance providers are offering online programs to enhance management effectiveness and improve the skills of non-profit workers.

This paper is based on research by the author and Bill Tucker[3] which led to the publication of the first best practices report[4] in the e-learning industry focused exclusively on the civil society or not-for-profit sector. The paper begins with a discussion of the four principal contexts in which e-learning is being used in the not-for-profit sector, and of the four key issues and opportunities faced by civil society organizations implementing e-learning. The paper then provides tangible examples of how leading civil society organizations have overcome challenges and focused resources to achieve real success with various types of e-learning.

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[1] For purposes of this paper, the not-for-profit sector includes most institutions and organizations that are neither government nor business. Other names used around the world include the nonprofit sector, the third sector, charitable organizations, the independent sector, the philanthropic sector, the voluntary sector and the social sector. Outside the United States, nonprofits are often called nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or civil society organizations. Within the United States, nonprofits are also known as 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 organizations. In this paper, we use the terms "civil society sector" and "not-for-profit sector" interchangeably.

[2] Source: Center for Civil Society Studies, Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies.

[3] Chief Learning Officer of Isoph Corporation, a US firm focused on the development of online learning and collaboration applications exclusively for the nonprofit community. See www.isoph.com .

[4] "Making E-Learning Work in the Nonprofit Sector" (February 2003), available from brandon-hall.com. See http://www.brandonhall.com/public/publications/nonprofit/ .

How Not-for-Profit Organizations Are Using E-Learning

We have identified four current and emerging models underlying civil society organizations' use of learning technology.

I. Internal Staff Management and Technical Training

As in other sectors, not-for-profit organizations use online learning to train staff in a more accessible, cost-effective manner. The largest North American and international organizations are implementing online learning programs to train staff in distant chapters or international field locations.

II. Communications and Advocacy

Online learning and reference tools will become essential to effective advocacy and communications campaigns, allowing organizations to quickly and coherently educate and inform stakeholders about campaigns, issues, their significance and the organization's positions. Already, a few organizations are starting to experiment with rapid e-learning or "campaign briefings" to send updates to dispersed activists and volunteers. These short briefings and Web conferencing tools are quick and easy to use, but provide richer interaction than simple e-mail or Web sites. For example, an organization advocating for an environmental issue could provide (and record for later use) a briefing with charts, graphs, pictures and audio to motivate activists, complemented by application activities to ensure consistent understanding of key ideas.

III. Educational Service Delivery

For organizations with an educational component to their mission, online learning can offer a scalable new medium for public awareness and educational campaigns. For example, the Autism Society of America is dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families and the professionals with whom they interact. The Society makes it easy for parents and caregivers to learn more about autism via an online course. Other organizations profiled in this paper, like Adoption Learning Partners and Forum EMPRESA, similarly use e-learning as a key vehicle for delivery of high-quality learning opportunities to a far-flung clientele.

IV. Volunteer Education and Retention

Online orientations, training and reflection sessions offer a whole new way to train and support volunteers. Used in conjunction with strong volunteer management practices, these tools can greatly expand an organization's potential pool of volunteers by providing more accessible training and support, and hence more opportunities for development of valuable competencies. One example of an online

learning program that enhances training and offers ongoing support is The National Mentoring Partnership's "Learn to be a Mentor" program.

Some of the most promising projects cut across various categories, such as the American Red Cross' new $10 million initiative to provide online health and safety training. The project allows learners to register and complete courses online, but also tracks CPR certification performed at local chapters. Not only can the Red Cross deliver training to learners in an accessible, cost-effective manner, but the system also allows the organization to maintain contact with millions of training recipients for certification updates, volunteer opportunities and donor events.

E-Learning Considerations and Opportunities in the Not-for-Profit Sector

The civil society sector is a unique industry with its own culture, language and processes. Just as in any industry, successful e-learning development in this sector requires a nuanced approach adapted to the sector's distinct characteristics. In our research so far, we've identified four key e-learning issues and opportunities specific to the not-for-profit sector:

Working Within the Civil Society Culture

Civil society organizations' focus on their mission — not profit — results in a unique cultural environment and organizational structure. The complex interactions among staff people, volunteers, board members, donors, clients, audience member and community stakeholders require a much more collaborative process than does the traditional business environment. Consequently, decision-making occurs more slowly and leadership is more dispersed. Carol Remz, an e-learning consultant who has worked with both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, concurs. "Nonprofit culture is consensus-driven and inclusionary. Everybody gives their feedback and it is addressed and honored."

Consensus and coalition-building are therefore essential for an initiative's success, even in the largest of these organizations. Many national and international organizations have a chapter or affiliate structure resulting in a high degree of autonomy for the local chapters. Training expenditures tend to follow this pattern of autonomy. Local chapters of national or even international organizations make their own decisions about both internal staff training and external community training programs, often without a centralized plan. To be successful, leaders of e-learning initiatives must convince stakeholders (including donors) throughout the organization of the value of online learning. While this process can be time-consuming, the payoff is an initiative that is much more closely aligned with the real needs of the organization.

Dealing with the short supply of sector-specific content

The not-for-profit sector's unique nature affects content choices and content development in a number of important ways. To begin with, generic or "off-the-shelf" content is less likely to be useful. A number of functional areas in these organizations require specific content, such as fundraising, financial management, governance, advocacy and social marketing. Likewise, many nonprofits need content that is related to their specific niche, be it the environment, social services, health care or the arts.

While many content areas cut across both the corporate and civil society sectors (e.g., computer networking or employee legal compliance), even such content may need modification to be effective. Donna Walters, program director with Altruvest, a non-profit that provides training for Canadian charities, agrees. "Vision, language and terminology are all very important." She describes how a not-for-profit advisory group building an online module on human resources for boards of directors asked their corporate consultant to reframe issues such as performance review and evaluation.

In addition to its technical and management training challenges, the non-profit sector offers a wealth of opportunities for e-learning on challenging human issues and problems that have a strong emotional or affective component. While some corporate business skills e-learning does wander into the domain, we expect that the best examples will come from the not-for-profit sector in the future. This paper describes at least one excellent example of this type of content.

Because the sector values inclusiveness, leaders of civil society e-learning initiatives should also pay close attention to issues of access. Organizations that serve an economically and culturally diverse population may need to modify content to reflect educational levels or cultural appropriateness (see the "Technology for All" example). Section 508-compliant content (accessible for persons with disabilities) and low-bandwidth solutions can help make content accessible for a wide range of potential end users.

Exploiting Opportunities for Collaboration

Because of the many similarities in content needs and the inherent scalability of e-learning, organizations can work together to develop industry-specific and issue-specific content. For example, an online course on mentoring children could be applicable to literally thousands of grassroots community-based organizations. Given e-learning's relatively high capital but low marginal costs, it is cost-effective for organizations to share the expenses of online learning projects.

Collaboration can help everyone reach their goals, but it can be difficult to achieve. Despite the collaborative nature of the non-profit sector, organizations do compete for funding. In addition, many civil society organizations do not have the staff or financial resources to undertake the difficult

coordinating role – especially if funding for the project is uncertain. Foundations and other funders have a role to play in providing the structure and resources to enable collaboration among organizations. The learning consortium approach used in the corporate sector is another option to consider.

Additional opportunities for collaboration result from the significant overlap which exists between government agencies and not-for-profit organizations in a number of content areas, especially in the health and social services fields. In fact, a few groups in the US have already developed collaborative networks that allow non-profit staff people to sit in on government training programs. E-learning offers the potential to greatly expand these collaborative training opportunities. As a whole, the government sector will be a strong area of growth for e-learning in the next several years. Given the strong presence of government agencies in the funding of non-profit training and education initiatives, we expect that the growth of e-learning in the government sector will also help accelerate the evolution of non-profit e-learning.

Creative Funding of Projects and Initiatives

For the non-profit sector, adequate funding is a constant battle. And while the sector has increased its investment in professional development, educational funds are still limited. E-learning consultant Carol Remz points out that "the system does not allow non-profits to spend dollars on staff." In the public eye, funds spent on staff development or training issues are deemed administrative expenses – not direct program expenses. Even though most not-for-profit work is entirely dependent on the skills of the organization's staff and volunteers, longer-term investments in human capital are difficult to justify in the face of immediate community needs. "Training and development are always the first things to get cut if there are budget issues," says Altruvest's Donna Walters. This is not a constraint, however, for e-learning ventures that focus on an external clientele.

The nature of the non-profit sector's funding system – reliance on single-year grants or government contracts, little ability to issue debt, relatively few hard assets – makes it difficult for organizations to take risks on the upfront costs of e-learning. Even if an e-learning investment could save money over a three-year period, single-year funding makes it almost impossible for organizations to consider capital investments. While many e-learning projects are launched as part of a foundation or government grant that covers the capital cost of program development, promotional and marketing expenditures may be overlooked.

That being said, there are promising developments in a variety of funding sources for civil society e-learning. Grantmakers in the government sector, for instance, are beginning to understand the economics of e-learning and, as a result, are providing longer-term funds. Those grants also place

considerable emphasis on evaluation, requiring that a significant slice of the budget be used to measure the effectiveness, impact and "worth" of the e-learning investment. Let us hope that this is a trend, because the smart use of evaluation can have positive effects on the quality and popularity of e-learning in the sector. Private-sector funding for non-profit e-learning also appears to be on the rise. For example, in the last few years, several US banks have provided millions of dollars to non-profit organizations willing and able to develop online learning on personal financial education to help address issues of financial illiteracy. Similar developments are taking place in other critical skill areas.

Example 1: Adoption Learning Partners—Filling a Need for Thousands of People Touched by Adoption

As one of the oldest and largest adoption agencies in the United States, The Cradle has a long history of providing preparatory training for adoptive families in the Chicago area. It has also long been realized that many families and adoption professionals in areas outside of major cities have no access to high quality adoption education. Online adoption communities and other information resources provide part of the solution for some, but many are left without easy-to-use learning resources.

Because adoption education clearly targets personal rather than work-related learning goals—for the majority of the audience in any case—busy lives and schedules also prevent many individuals from participating in available courses, even if they live in urban areas where face-to-face learning programs are available.

In response, The Cradle founded Adoption Learning Partners (ALP) in 2000 and as a reward for undertaking this challenge, has quickly won itself many fans for its e-learning programs. From its launch in July 2002 to February 2003, over 1,900 individuals enrolled in ALP's first online course on the challenges of transracial adoption, "Conspicuous Families: Race, Culture and Adoption", with another 1,800 enrolling in two other courses now available. Learners hail from all US states and Canadian provinces. One adoption expert called ALP "a vibrant, needed resource that is a breath of fresh air."

The "Conspicuous Families" course, which was honoured with a Bronze Excellence in E-Learning award at Online Learning 2002, was developed by ALP staff in collaboration with Lake Point Interactive, an Illinois firm with roots in Northwestern University's Institute for Research on Learning. It helps users think about the prejudices, stereotypes and attitudes that are a part of our society. Then, in a series of guided interactive scenarios, participants respond to intrusive comments and learn ways to help their children respond to these situations. This course helps parents and extended family members learn how to honor a child's ethnic heritage, so that he or she can develop a positive self-image without feeling set apart from the family.

A reviewer of "Conspicuous Families" on the RainbowKids.com web site had this to say: "Before even completing this course, I knew I must write an article extolling the virtues of having something like this readily available to those who are adopting a child of a different race than themselves and to those who have already. The presentation and content are first class. BRAVO!" The program is on the whole much appreciated by learners, and exceeding many expectations:

- 90% would highly recommend the course (survey of over 1,000 learners)

- 90% would take another course from Adoption Learning Partners

- 87% of learners completed the course (179 online survey respondents)

One of the remarkable aspects of "Conspicuous Families" and other ALP programs it that they have achieved such popularity with virtually no dollars having been spent on marketing. The adoption community, professionals and families, heartily welcomed this initiative and spread the word amongst themselves. Endorsements have come from many highly respected adoption professionals and organizations; an increasing number of agencies are requiring enrollment as part of their own parent training programs; and the recommendations via listservs, newsletters and chatrooms have brought still more learners to the ALP site. This is an excellent example of using collaboration to achieve success in not-for-profit e-learning.

Making a human, emotional connection

Given the very human nature of the subject matter in ALP courses and the expected resistance from some learners to a perceived "technocentric" learning approach, ALP designers wisely infuse their designs with the human touch. Several such strategies were used in "Conspicuous Families", and reports from users confirm that these achieved their aim of making learners feel "accompanied" while also supporting explicit learning objectives.

For instance, at the start of the course, users select one of four different Guides to take them through the course. Choosing a Guide that they view as a peer, or as similar to their adopted child, helps personalize the course for them. Interestingly, some learners believed that each guide presented a different version of the course—in fact, only the voice varied!

Secondly, authentic stories are used to further "humanize" the program. To achieve its goals this course must have an emotional impact and personal resonance with users. Life stories from adult adoptees make skills and knowledge personally relevant, and help overcome pre-conceptions. Stories are arranged by storyteller or topic, indexed to key steps within the course, and are available at the moment the story is most relevant.

Using Imagination and Persistence to Fund Development and Operations

Making and selling a business case for e-learning development projects is difficult enough in the private sector. In the non-profit sector, financial issues are even more difficult to handle. However, organizations like Adoption Learning Partners are showing the way, identifying and securing diverse

sources of funds to support initial course development, and coming up with innovative ways of generating revenue to support e-learning operations. The Cradle received two large grants for the initial design and launch of Adoption Learning Partners. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services provided a two-year grant of $330,000 to this project, and ALP expects to receive funding for two additional years. In a new funding initiative, The Butler Family Foundation committed a three-year grant of $150,000. Adoption Learning Partners also applied for funding from the Adoption Opportunities Program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. While this initial application was not successful, this source of funding is still being pursued. Specifically, HHS funding could support the development and evaluation of additional online courses specifically targeting foster families who are considering or undertaking adoption. (This is a key objective of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families legislation, signed by President Bush in January 2002.) Additionally, a significant portion of HHS funding would be used to design and implement an extensive evaluation plan.

ALP is also pursuing targeted funding for a course on Medical Issues in International Adoption, and have enthusiastic support from the American Academy of Pediatrics section on Foster Care and Adoption. This influential organization is also helping ALP findr a corporate sponsor.

Adoption Learning Partners also helps people in the adoption community meet a variety of new and ongoing training requirements set forth by the federal and state governments and by professional licensing associations. While ALP course are available to anyone free of charge, these training requirements have created an opportunity for revenue generation to help cover the costs of further development and of ALP e-learning portal operations. Upon completion of each course, learners are able to apply for a certificate of completion, in exchange for a $25 processing fee.

Example 2: Forum EMPRESA—A Global Learning Community for Corporate Social Responsibility

Forum EMPRESA, a Santiago, Chile-based nongovernmental organization (NGO) focused on corporate social responsibility (CSR), is using the Web to expand its learning network. With its recently

launched eForum, the organization created a virtual learning community for CSR associations in a password-protected environment. Members can share best practices, access valuable resources and training opportunities, and collaborate on projects.

Forum EMPRESA and its member organizations located throughout Latin America, the United States and the United Kingdom work with more than 2,000 affiliated companies. Their goal is to make it easier for these companies to understand social responsibility issues, standards and best practices. The organization facilitates education and information exchange, provides networking and collaboration opportunities and offers technical assistance.

The organization's affiliated members have combined revenues that account for more than 20 percent of the gross domestic product of the western hemisphere. Good communication, knowledge sharing and learning among this group have the potential for producing major impact. But, like many NGOs, EMPRESA has limited resources. So the organization turned to technology to extend its reach. To create the eForum, EMPRESA worked closely with Seattle-based e-learning specialist BrainOxygen to improve the efficacy and efficiency of their knowledge-sharing activities. They identified 18 categories of knowledge to be provided in three languages in nine countries and then brought in Isoph, a Chapel Hill, North Carolina-based firm, to create the entire Web environment. The eForum offers threaded

discussions, text chat, online surveys and polls, e-learning courses, a live meeting space and an online library of document and links (to which members can add).

Dan Gertsacov, who oversaw implementation of the eForum for EMPRESA, makes the point that "the Internet and e-learning are incredibly important tools to help us accomplish our work; they, however, are just tools, and, just as a hammer or a screwdriver, can only be as effective as the people who are utilizing them." With that point in mind, Gertsacov made sure to involve the staff as well as the leaders of EMPRESA's member organizations in the development of the eForum. Using an early version of the eForum, EMPRESA surveyed major stakeholders for feedback and used the responses to guide further development. They then tested the beta version of the eForum for usability with various members before launching.

EMPRESA was also careful to make the eForum a part of face-to-face events. "Technology has provided an access to information and resources that was once unimaginable," says Gertsacov, "but this will never replace the importance of personal relationships and leadership." The eForum was incorporated into EMPRESA's spring 2002 meeting in São Paulo, Brazil, so members could familiarize themselves with it fully in the company of peers. EMPRESA was also careful to involve members of its network in ongoing roles related to the eForum. This is a very good example of working within the non-profit culture, one of the important challenges outlined earlier in this paper.

Focus on the Mission and the People Who Use the Technology

Sharing knowledge is central to Forum EMPRESA's mission. The eForum is intended to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of knowledge management within the CSR network and offer new opportunities for learning. To achieve this goal, EMPRESA was careful to align the features of the eForum with mission-critical activities.

Mission Critical Activities	eForum Features
Information exchange	Communication and community building tools
Network for ideas	Organic sharing of content throughout network "nodes"
Support to build organizations	Online training opportunities
Clearinghouse for CSR information	User-friendly interface to find content

Part of the ongoing evaluation of the eForum is to map usage of the features back to these mission-critical activities. In addition, EMPRESA created specific, ongoing roles through which its members could help ensure effective use of the eForum. These include the following:

- The **administrator** is responsible for the smooth functioning of the platform, overseeing use of the platform (pruning content or adding items as necessary), learning new features, and responding to questions from users. This role is formally assigned and communicated to all the users.

- "**Evangelists**" develop a minimum level of knowledge about the eForum platform and convey that knowledge to other members of their organization. They collect and communicate success stories of how the eForum has been helpful; gather feedback for the eForum administrator; and, most importantly, are active and enthusiastic eForum users. There should be at least one evangelist per member organization, and they should be formally invited and accept these responsibilities.

- **Facilitators** oversee discussion boards, resources and link areas to make sure there is relevant content. There should be at least one facilitator per resource category with multiple assignments possible. These roles should be formally assigned (providing positive recognition) but can be fluid in how they evolve.

Each of these roles is formally communicated throughout the network, and in each case specific incentives have been developed. For instance, a monthly poll may determine the most useful contribution to the site and publicly recognize that person, organization or contribution on the site.

Getting True Buy-In Is Harder than Getting an "Amen"

Users quickly understood how the eForum could improve the quality of their work by making sharing knowledge easy (and even fun, particularly in online meetings), improving their productivity (e.g., allowing everyone to learn from the question of one person), and significantly reducing costs, especially compared with international phone calls and travel. The enthusiasm for the eForum was also high because the design was driven by user needs rather than available technology.

Advantages aside, there were (and continue to be) a number of obstacles to overcome. A lack of microphones or sound cards that allow full participation in virtual meetings, one of the most popular features, prevents some members from experiencing the true potential of the eForum. In some cases, member organizations have local policies that prohibit the use of multimedia applications.

Even when they have access to the right equipment and applications, many members of the NGO network are not familiar with technology. They are reluctant to drop the familiar, if less efficient, ways of doing things, even though they understand the potential benefit. Luiz Augusto Siqueira, EMPRESA's communications coordinator, describes the initial reaction to the eForum as overwhelmingly positive. "Everyone said it was fantastic; they recognized that it was powerful and interactive and would save some money. But from theory to practice has been a long way."

The Importance of Sustained Leadership and Momentum

The most significant obstacle for the eForum was an organizational issue. Shortly after launching the eForum, EMPRESA headquarters were moved from São Paulo, Brazil, to Santiago, Chile. The top management (who were driving the use of eForum) and the technical staff changed. Even though the new management is enthusiastic about the eForum, the change means the project has lost some momentum as the new staff goes through the learning process.

While the eForum is designed to be organic and driven by grassroots activity among the members, any new initiative still requires leadership to build a knowledge-sharing culture and encourage the use of new approaches. EMPRESA's new management has plans to implement "attraction events" such as online conferences with well-known CSR leaders. EMPRESA will also help members overcome technical and organizational barriers through coaching and, of course, will set an example by populating the eForum with valuable information and resources. Once a critical mass of users across the member organizations develops the online knowledge-sharing habit, the portal will significantly enhance Forum EMPRESA's ability to carry out its mission.

Example 3: Technology for All—Scaling Up E-learning Efforts to Bridge the Digital Divide

Technology for All, a Houston-based nonprofit organization, has big plans for its online learning program. Technology for All provides technology training to the thousands of underserved communities and workers who reside on the other side of the digital divide. Its goal: to create a more diverse, better-trained workforce and help underserved people take their rightful place in the new economy.

Technology for All has a nationwide network of over 300 local Community Technology Centers (CTCs) in 42 cities. These CTCs provide computer skills, Internet access and workforce training. TFA provides the national infrastructure for the program — an online learning portal, courses and training — while CTCs work within their local communities to design appropriate support and motivation for e-learners. With a donation from the SmartForce E-Learning Foundation , TFA has access to an online platform that includes more than 1,900 online courses in business skills, computer skills, and soft skills. Through its e-learning program, TFA can serve up to 150,000 students per year.

Lessons Learned: Tailor the Program to Users' Needs

Will Reed, president and CEO of Technology for All, recommends that non-profit organizations think critically about their stakeholders' unique needs. He reflects that TFA "naively got into online learning at the beginning." At first, TFA thought they could "just put it out there and learners would come." But, as Reed notes, "It doesn't quite work that way." Despite e-learning's immediate scalability, implementing a program still takes a considerable amount of staff time and resources.

While partnerships with local community technology centers enable TFA to provide critical support for learners, these relationships have also taken time to develop. Reed notes that TFA spent more than 18 months initiating a pilot program to develop best-practice models. Urban and rural CTCs, along with educators and community technology practitioners, used and tested the e-learning platform to help TFA learn how to effectively use online learning to meet the needs of its constituents.

TFA quickly realized that even though it had the technical infrastructure to provide online courses for 150,000 students, critical elements of the program were missing. To begin with, the online courses were written for corporate customers whose education levels were much higher than TFA's target audience. Learners also needed support and encouragement to complete courses and get the most out of online training. While support and motivation are critical factors in the success of any e-learning program, these factors are even more crucial for many of the disadvantaged learners that TFA targets. TFA and its early partners developed initiatives, built models, and tested and re-tested programs. To date, TFA has developed over 400 pages of new materials to support local CTC program administrators and learners.

Through the pilot program, TFA developed a "facilitated distance learning" model in local CTCs. The model encourages and trains local community-based organizations to recruit local administrators and learning coaches to support the program. These administrators and coaches develop relationships with local corporations that can serve as sponsors, provide work acculturation experiences for students and identify the skills needed for specific jobs in the local workforce. TFA staff teach local administrators the necessary skills to properly administer a local workforce development initiative, including an understanding of the reporting and tracking tools available in TFA's e-learning platform. TFA's manager of online content serves as the super administrator. This person's duties include ongoing support of local administrators, managing technical issues such as student passwords and assigning course offerings. Local learning coaches can be volunteers or paid staff. They are not necessarily subject matter experts, but people who can support and encourage learners.

TFA is continuing its efforts to provide support and foster collaboration among local CTC partners. Through a donation from Centra, TFA is now using Web conferencing and virtual meetings to provide administrators in CTCs with additional training and knowledge. TFA will connect 15 to 20 on-site administrators in weekly online sessions to interact, learn and receive help in becoming skilled trainers and enablers of opportunity in their communities.

While it has taken time to develop TFA's "facilitated distance learning" model, Reed is confident about the program's momentum. Over the past 18 months, TFA has developed e-learning "evangelists" who have begun to realize success in utilizing the program at their CTCs. Reed strongly advises non-profits considering an online learning initiative to "put folks who are successful in using it together with people who don't know how to use it." Build peer networks that can provide informal training, encouragement and peer support to colleagues.

About the author

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