

Unleashing the Power of Information:

Any organization can run a hotline

A request for support to build a unique, comprehensive toolkit enabling organizations worldwide to set up & run telephone hotlines in their communities.



Open Mind Operators answering agriculture calls in Kampala from villagers in rural Uganda



The Challenge & the Opportunity

Organizations around the world have information that is useful to their target population. Currently, knowledge transfer is usually incomplete, inconsistent, ad hoc, and expensive. Examples cut across the social development sector: education organizations hiring field agents to visit area schools once a month; clinics and hospitals that share medical information only at the medical facility, but lack strong follow up; agricultural extension services, which visit farmers only once or twice a season; microfinance organizations that are dependent on sending loan officers into villages, etc.

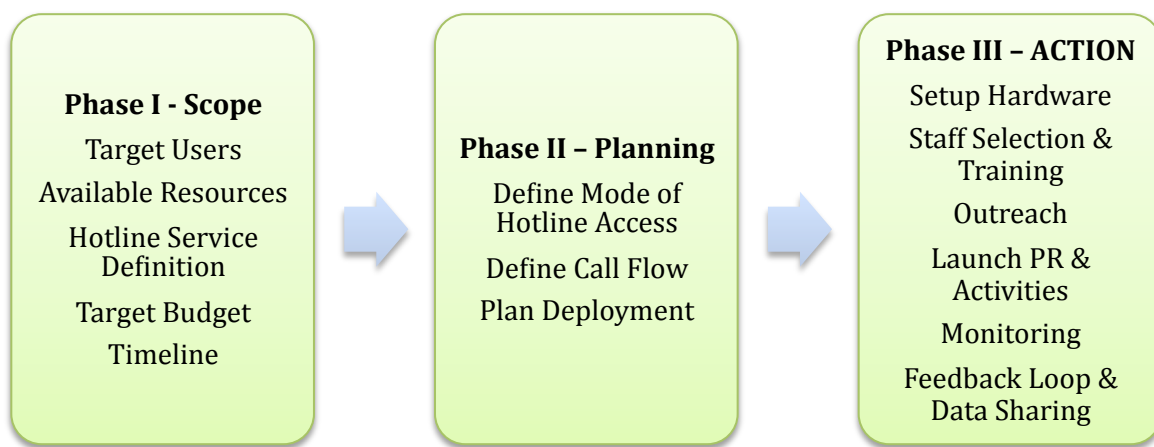
With the advent of the mobile phone & computer literacy, there is a simple and inexpensive solution that can extend the presence of all these organizations, without significant increase in costs. It is the small-scale telephone hotline.

With a small shift in thinking, many organizations could implement a hotline service connecting their population to the organization everyday, reducing dependency on field staff, and increasing population access to services.

Our Proposal

Open Mind - Question Box proposes to build a comprehensive set of tools that will enable small and medium developing world organizations to set up and run their own local hotlines. This online toolkit will walk an organization through the sets of questions and worksheets required to develop and deploy a complete, local hotline system connecting the organization and their constituents. By running a hotline, the organization will incur slight cost, and potentially savings via reduction in travel times, while increasing access and utility to their communities.

Question Box Toolkit Components for Organizations





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Open Mind's Experience

Open Mind - Question Box has been running small-scale local language telephone hotlines in two Indian states and in Uganda over the past three years. We have processed nearly 4,000 questions from farmers, villagers, traders, children, and mothers. We have worked in a variety of resource environments, testing three different modes of accessing users, and two different backend operational flows. We have experimented with SMS integration. We have run both open-ended hotlines that rely on the Internet, and run specialized agricultural hotlines depending heavily on specialized databases and third party experts. We have worked where Internet and electricity is plentiful, and where there is no Internet and frequent electricity shut offs. We have used landline and cell phone technology.

In short, Open Mind - Question Box has “field-tested” many of the ways a small organization could run a hotline. In the process, we have amassed a large body of practical knowledge. For example, valuable knowledge on how to cut costs; use inexpensive or surprising resources; and how to bring women into the system. We have developed our own unique hardware system, the Question Box, which installs in public areas and is a place where anyone can call in directly to the hotline, even if they are illiterate or lack a phone.

Our knowledge can and should be systematized and made freely available to all organizations worldwide. Our mission is to promote the simple hotline as a standard tool of development. This would be the first comprehensive system in existence to teach organizations to implement a cost-saving and impact-spreading hotline.

Support

Open Mind - Question Box needs \$30,000 to develop this comprehensive online toolkit. We can get a strong Beta version online within three-four months. From there, it will undergo continuous improvement as organizations use the system and provide feedback.

Team & Advisors (partial)

Team

Rose Shuman, *Founder & CEO*. Rose is the creator of Question Box, founding Open Mind in 2007. She is a TEDIndia Fellow, a Dasra-Social Impact Fellow, and has been featured in *The New York Times* and *UK Sunday Telegraph* regarding her work with Question Box. She holds a BA & a Masters in International Development Studies from Brown University.

Jon Gosier, *Chief Technology Officer*. Jon coordinated AppLab Question Box, an agricultural service offered in two Ugandan districts in collaboration with Grameen Foundation. Jon is Founder of Appfrica, a Ugandan software incubator, and Director of the Ushahidi Swift River project. Jon is a Senior TED Fellow.



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Rama Sundaram, *Hardware Engineering Lead*. Rama is Director of Propellex, a Pune, India hardware technology firm specializing in vehicle tracking systems. Rama has developed the Question Box hardware and supervises local Pune Question Box call operations. Rama holds an MBA from the London Business School, and an M.Sc in Economics from Birla Institute of Technology & Science.

Dr. Nikhil Agrawal, *Chair, Open Mind Trust India*. Nikhil is Director of the Europe Asia Business School in Pune, India, and a respected academic specializing in Information and Communications Technology in the developing world. An Advisor to UNGAID, Nikhil holds an M.Phil in Technology Policy from The Cambridge-MIT Institute (CMI), University of Cambridge, UK, and was in the Fellow Programme in Management [Doctorate] from Institute of Management Technology (IMT), India.

Advisors

Ken Banks
Founder, Kiwanja.net and FrontlineSMS.

Rajesh Jog
Chairman & MD Waygate Capital.

Danah Boyd
Social Media Researcher, Microsoft Research

Francisco Noguera
Editor, Nextbillion.net

Kevin Braithwaite
Director, RootSpace.

Farida Paramita
Serial Entrepreneur, Open Mind Treasurer.

John Digrado
Director, Finance; NBC Universal.

Mark Pretorius
Managing Partner, Premanco Ventures.

Contact

We look forward to your interest & questions

Rose Shuman
rose@questionbox.org
+1-301-580-6601

1158 26th St. #267
Santa Monica, CA 90403
USA

Open Mind is a registered 501(c)3 organization. EIN 26-2107813

