For Janet Martin, identifying people in need of help is relatively simple. She is founder of the nonprofit organization Angels in Africa, which focuses on helping impoverished Masai people in Africa. “We work with the poorest of the poor people in Kenya,” said Martin, adding that their needs are evident.

“All you have to do is open your eyes,” she said.

Nonetheless, Martin pays close attention to the messages the community sends as the nonprofit delivers its services. For instance, when she built a small school about 20 years ago, the 12-student endeavor soon began attracting attention from the community. “They wanted to be part of it,” she recalled. In response to their interest, she began expanding the school, which now has 850 students.

“Entire villages will flock to the area where the school is, so they can become part of the community, and kids can get a good education,” she said.

For nonprofits, engaging the communities they serve is critical. No matter how good their programming or services, finding the right way to reach their target clients and deliver services in the most convenient and accessible way for their community can make or break their success in achieving their mission.

Some nonprofits have found that traditional methods of relationship building, like grassroots conversations with members of the community as Angels in Africa does, are highly effective. Other methods include enlisting the support of community leaders, participating in local events such as festivals, where they will get exposure, and engaging local residents as volunteers for hands-on projects or to share their knowledge.

Data-driven ways to identify those in need are also popular. Ninety percent of nonprofits collect data, and 40% of nonprofit professionals use data to make decisions, according to research firm everyaction, a provider of customer relationship management software to nonprofits and the educational community. One creative example is by Polaris, an organization that fights human trafficking. Using data from calls to its telephone hotline, Polaris creates a map of locations where human trafficking has been reported, enabling affected communities to respond.

Children’s Aid, a private child-welfare group headquartered in New York City, is also among those nonprofits increasingly turning to data. It has, for instance, turned to formalized screening of the young people it serves to identify those in need.

“In recent years, the medical community has been more keenly focused on understanding the social determinants of health, which are economic and social conditions in the environments in which people live, learn, work and play that affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life outcomes,” noted Anthony Ramos, vice president of marketing and communications at Children’s Aid. “Children’s Aid decided to incorporate screening for food insecurity—a social determinant of health—into every ‘well child’ visit at our health centers for families with children age 6 and under.”

Through the use of health screening, Children’s Aid was able to uncover information that some of the families involved might have otherwise been reticent to share. “We found that an alarming 12% of families lacked adequate food resources and were going hungry, and we believe that number could actually be higher if we account for families who may have withheld information during the screening,” said Ramos. “Health care staff were then able to connect those families with resources to ensure the family was well fed and the kids could get to school and continue to learn and grow.”

Using digital tools to reach those in need is also helping many nonprofits engage with people who need their services. Social media is playing an important role, with many nonprofits now designating someone on their team to formally guide their social media efforts, on either a part-time or full-time basis, the research found. Nonprofits such as the United Nations Children’s Fund are particularly active users of sites such as Twitter and Facebook to raise their public profile.

But for many nonprofits, conversations with people who need services ideally continue long after initial contact. Setting up structured channels for ongoing communication and service delivery can also be very important.

One growing area of service delivery is through mobile apps. About half of charities in the U.S. and the U.K. have mobile apps designed for their beneficiaries. The Salvation Army is one example. It provides real-time updates on mobilization activities, coaching and community prayer.

Nontechnical approaches can be just as effective in keeping the lines of communication and service delivery open. Angels in Africa, for instance, relies on a formal school committee to provide input from parents. “They elect the people they would like to have on the committee, which helps plan the direction of the school,” Martin said.

Ideas submitted by the committee have resulted in the hiring of a chef to prepare meals for children at the school and a student farm, which raises staple foods such as beans, corn, tomatoes and kale.

“If the kids at the school will end up working on the farm, planting and harvesting the crops,” said Martin, “the extra food will go into the kitchen.”

Another initiative the committee suggested was the building of a girl’s dormitory. “Walking home in the evenings, many of the girls at the K-8 were unsafe. ‘So many would be taken or attacked,’ said Martin. ‘It was very dangerous for them.’”

The resulting girls’ dorm now sleeps 400 students. A boy’s dormitory followed. Students live in the dorms during three trimesters, with month-long breaks three times a year to return to living at home with their families, most of whom live three to four miles away from the school.

Angels in Africa also actively makes efforts to extend the relationships it has with children and their families beyond the time the children attend its schools. Once kids finish 8th grade, promising students are often invited to go to high school, which comes with fees that many families cannot afford. Angels in Africa is currently paying for 125 students to attend high school. If a student does well, the charity sends them to a university. Currently, there are 12 graduates from Angels in Africa schools, in college, said Martin.

“It warms your heart when you see that such a little bit of money and effort can make such a big difference,” said Martin.
1. Please visit our website at AngelsinAfrica.org.
2. Watch our videos and see for yourself how HOPE can change people.
3. Realize that 100% of all donations go towards our projects. There are no employees and no administrative costs come out of donations.
4. Happily decide to make a donation!
   • A donation of $200 supports a student in our primary school for 1 year.
   • A donation of $500 sponsors a student in a neighboring high school for 1 year.
   • A donation of $1,000 pays for an entire year of tuition, room and board at a university in Nairobi for 1 year.
   • A donation of any amount provides books, uniforms, shoes, and school supplies for our students.
5. Think about joining us with your high school aged student for a good-will mission to Kenya. A life-altering experience!

Please join Angels in Africa in bringing HOPE to some of the poorest people in the world!
At BEAM, math is fun, engaging, exciting, and deep. Students attend intensive middle school summer programs where they study advanced topics (such as number theory, astronomy, combinatorics, and programming—which they might not otherwise study until college) and then receive follow up through weekend enrichment classes, individual guidance, and mentoring throughout 8th grade and high school. BEAM’s students are admitted into top schools across the city (including the specialized schools such as Stuyvesant and Bronx Science), attend excellent high school summer programs for advanced study, and continue on to top colleges to major in STEM.

What We Do:

- Starting in 6th grade and continuing through college, our students learn advanced math, find a community of friends who love math, and develop the social-emotional skills to succeed through college.
- Our students learn advanced math, find a community of engineers, and computer scientists. Starting in 6th grade and continuing through college, our students learn advanced math, find a community of friends who love math, and develop the social-emotional skills to succeed through college.
- Through our network of community centers on the Lower East Side and in the East Village, we provide dynamic programs that center on education, health and wellness, arts and culture, and civic engagement, which serve the needs of people at all stages of their lives. We are a place where everyone is welcome and where progress is powered one relationship at a time.

How You Can Help:

- Over 50% of BEAM’s annual funding comes through individual donors. To support the organization’s recent growth, the board of directors has put forth a match: all new or increased donations through 12/31/2018 will be matched at a rate of 2:1, so that each $1 donated becomes $2 of impact, up to a total of $275,000.
- Corporate sponsors can support tables at our events, including our annual Slightly Matryoshka Night in late October.
- BEAM also welcomes volunteers to work with students on everything from math to college essays. Individuals may apply at www.beammath.org/volunteer. Companies interested in exploring a partnership should reach out to info@beammath.org or by calling (888) 264-2793.

For more information about BEAM, view our annual report at www.beammath.org/summer-report or reach out to info@beammath.org.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE.

Educational Alliance brings together partners with diverse communities in Lower Manhattan, offering individuals and families high-quality, multi-generational programs and services that enhance their well-being and socioeconomic opportunities. A historically Jewish organization, we have dedicated ourselves to improving the lives of all New Yorkers since 1889.

Everyone is welcome and where progress is powered one relationship at a time. For more, visit edalliance.org.
Nonprofits fight income inequality through education

Students in affluent communities who love science and math often get a head start exploring their passions, participating in school science fairs and after-school enrichment programs from an early age. But in disadvantaged school districts, these resources don’t always exist, and students must rely on classroom teaching alone.

That can leave lower-income children struggling to catch up if they decide to continue to study subjects later on, especially if instruction is lacking. “In college, they find they are not prepared for the level of the work; and their peers, who have this extra prep, will do much better,” said Daniel Zaharopol, executive director of The Art of Problem Solving, a nonprofit based in New York City and Los Angeles.

The Art of Problem Solving aims to help close the gap through its program Bridge to Enter Advanced Mathematics (BEAM), which Zaharopol founded. BEAM brings advanced enrichment learning in math to low-income students.

The program starts the summer after sixth grade, when students who apply can attend a five-week program taught by both college professors and high-school students in New York City. The fast-growing program currently serves 200 students in the city.

“We’re not just giving them the academic preparation but also building a community,” said Zaharopol. “They are meeting other kids like them who are really interested in math and really serious about pursuing their academics. The Art of Problem Solving is one of a number of nonprofits bringing extracurricular programs that low-income students rarely have access to, to families of modest means.

Researchers have found that a lack of enrichment programs can have a big effect on students’ future. According to a recent study by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, “A growing body of research demonstrates that participation in organized activities outside the classroom helps cultivate the skills, habits, connections, and knowledge that prepare children for lifelong success: academic success in school, graduating from high school, going to college, getting a job, and participating in civic life.” Studies also show that students who earn a postsecondary degree have a better chance of earning a middle-class income than those who don’t.

Such gaps can contribute to income inequality, a pervasive problem throughout the country. The top 1% of earners in the U.S. averaged 26.3 times the income of the remaining 99%, according to a report released in 2018 by the Economic Policy Institute.

In New York City, income inequality is particularly pronounced. In 2014, the top 0.1 percent of earners brought in nearly 24% of the total income in the city, while 50% of earners brought in 7.4% of the city’s total income, according to a report by the city’s Independent Budget Office.

Income inequality is a complex problem that isn’t easy to solve, but nonprofits are finding they can make a difference by offering programs that bolster students’ knowledge and performance throughout the years they spend in school.

BEAM, for instance, doesn’t stop at sixth grade. In seventh grade, students attend a series of challenging math programs throughout the year, including a three-week, application-only program during the summer at Bard College or Union College. After that, there is a Saturday program for 8th through 12th grades. Along the way, the program helps students with other aspects of their academic careers, including gaining entry to New York City’s top public schools, known for their academically challenging programs.

Ultimately, the enrichment programs are aimed at helping them succeed when they enter the workforce, notes Zaharopol. “It gives them the pathways to much higher-paying careers,” he said.

As mentioned however, the causes of educational and income equality are complex, and the need for solutions extends beyond schools. The Educational Alliance, based on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, works with both students and their parents to help make educational opportunities more accessible and brings together both low-income families and middle-class residents of the city through its programs. The organization runs a network of community centers on Manhattan’s Lower East Side and in the East Village.

The nonprofit’s Teen Center has in recent months introduced programs such as a fashion studio, where students work with instructors from the Fashion Institute of Technology, and has teamed up with a computer programming company to offer workshops to teach them how to design video games, including those that include virtual reality.

“These kids are now getting a chance to do things that their public schools are not giving them a chance to do,” said Alan van Capelle, president and CEO.

The Educational Alliance, also offers early childhood education. It was home to one of the first Head Start programs to open when the government program was introduced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1965. As the children participate, their parents are invited to take part in English-as-a-second-language programs and take community college classes in partnership with City University of New York. Parents can also take a financial literacy course.

“We believe this two-generation approach to education is not only going to have long-term benefits for their academic progress but also finally give them a leg up into the middle class,” said van Capelle.

The Educational Alliance has made an effort to ensure that its learning centers are more attractive than the typical one offered in programs for low-income students.

“If you walked into any of our community centers, everything is clean and beautiful,” said van Capelle. “There is a heavy emphasis on customer service. We believe the folks walking in our doors are customers with agency to shop for service.”

The Alliance’s efforts extend beyond education to helping clients build networks of friends and neighbors to aid them in creating social capital that contributes to success.