Chapter 3
Knowledge Management in the Non-Governmental Organizations Context

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ABSTRACT

NGOs are recognized as knowledge-intensive organizations in nature. This is because of the employees' and volunteers' professionalism and knowledgeable experiences and the area in which NGOs work. However, like other organizations, NGOs have fewer financial and personal resources but huge and greater demand for their services. Consequently, leading NGOs started to reengineer their core processes and organizational paradigms to minimize the cost and time spent on internal functions in order to apply the greater part of their energies externally. To meet these targets, NGOs develop and formalize systems and mechanisms for converting and retaining their tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge over time successfully. This strategic and systematic process and mechanism for data capture, storage, classification, and retrieval is knowledge management. Hence, this chapter will attempt to fill the absence of KM study in NGOs. It will help to understand KM from the perspective of NGOs.

INTRODUCTION

Information and knowledge are critical for perceiving all the human aspirations. As knowledge society, acquisition of information and knowledge and its utilization have intense and pervasive impact on improvement the quality of citizens' lives and empower them. People who have access to information and who understand how to use the acquired information by making informed choices in the processes of exercising their political, social, economic and legal rights become empowered, which, in turn, enable them to build their strengths and assets (M., 2012).

Based on the right to information to remove information asymmetry, the societies have made endeavors for democratizing knowledge resources by way of putting in place the mechanisms for free flow of information and ideas (M., 2012). However, the exchange and sharing information in society is professional work, which requiring expert organizations like non-governmental organizations (hereinafter-NGOs). NGOs are non-profit oriented organizations in nature. They are more cost-effective and have a better ability to effectively access masses as compared to the public sector. Moreover, NGOs act as democratization vehicles can play a fundamental humanitarian role to accomplish themselves as "a counterbalance to the state power, protecting human rights, opening up communication channels and participation, and promoting activism and pluralism." (Edwards & Hulme, 1996). However, NGOs have limited resources and time to meet stakeholders' and citizen's needs, develop their strengths, and maintain operational capacity. Thus, *"The restructuring of the NGOs has made it essential for NGO leaders to develop new systems of management and governance that build organizational capacity to develop and manage a diverse funding base, respond to the accountability requirements of multiple funders, manage employees and volunteers, market the organization and oversee inter-organizational relationships and partnerships, manage daily operations, and monitor service delivery"* (Schwartz & Austin, 2008). To meet these changes, NGOs should design, develop and formalize systems or mechanisms for converting and retaining their tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge over time successfully (Ragsdell, 2013). This strategic and systematic process and mechanism for data capture, storage, classification and retrieval is knowledge management (hereinafter-KM).

BACKGROUND

The Non-Governmental Organizations

In last few decades, developing countries have witnessed dramatic growth in the number, nature, reach, influence and diversity of NGOs (Voluntary Action

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