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Project Management

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ABSTRACT
Project management does not look the same in every type of organization. For-profit companies often focus on efficiency, cost, and profit, while non-profits measure success by the difference they make in people's lives. This paper explores these differences by looking at how a mid-sized non-profit, the *Health for All Foundation*, managed a healthcare outreach project in rural areas. The case shows the practical realities of working with limited budgets, donor restrictions, and a team that relies heavily on volunteers, yet still managing to deliver strong social outcomes. It also highlights the creative approaches non-profits use to overcome challenges, such as building partnerships and adapting methods to local needs. To deepen the discussion, the paper compares project management practices in for-profit and non-profit settings, showing contrasts in funding, governance, risk handling, and evaluation. While businesses concentrate on financial returns, non-profits put impact and accountability at the center of their work. Together, the case and comparison provide a clearer picture of how project management practices shift depending on organizational goals, and why adapting methods to context is crucial for success.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore how project management practices are applied within non-profit organizations.
2. To compare and contrast project management approaches between non-profit and for-profit organizations.
3. To identify the challenges non-profits face in implementing structured project management frameworks.
4. To examine how success is defined and measured differently in non-profits versus for-profits.
5. To suggest practical strategies for strengthening project management in non-profit organizations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Project management has become a vital discipline across all types of organizations, but the way it is practiced can differ widely depending on the nature of the institution. In for-profit organizations, projects are often tied directly to financial performance, competitive advantage, and shareholder value. Budgets are usually more predictable, teams are structured with clear roles, and success is measured in terms of efficiency, profitability, and growth. Non-profit organizations, however, operate in a very different space. Their projects are designed not to generate financial profit, but to fulfill a mission, serve communities, and create meaningful social change.

This difference in purpose changes the entire approach to project management. Non-profits frequently rely on external funding sources such as grants and donations, which come with restrictions and conditions. They must also work with a diverse set of stakeholders, including donors, beneficiaries, government agencies, and volunteers, all of whom may have competing expectations. Unlike corporate projects, where employees are paid and guided by formal structures, non-profit projects often depend on volunteers whose skills, availability, and commitment can vary significantly. These realities force non-profits to be more flexible, adaptive, and innovative in how they design and carry out projects.

At the same time, the core principles of project management—such as planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating—remain important in both sectors. What changes is how these principles are applied. For-profits may adopt standardized methodologies like Agile or PRINCE2, supported by Project Management Offices (PMOs) and performance dashboards. Non-profits, on the other hand, often adapt methods to fit resource limitations and mission priorities, focusing heavily on monitoring and evaluation to prove impact to donors and stakeholders.

This paper focuses on understanding these differences through two approaches. First, it presents a case study of the *Health for All Foundation*, a mid-sized non-profit that implemented a mobile healthcare outreach project in rural areas. The case illustrates how a non-profit managed to deliver significant social outcomes despite resource and funding challenges. Second, the paper provides a comparative analysis of project management practices in for-profit and non-profit organizations, highlighting contrasts in funding models, governance, human resources, risk management, and success measures.

By bringing together a real-world case and a structured comparison, the study sheds light on how project management must be adapted to align with organizational goals. It also shows that while non-profits face more constraints than for-profits, they are capable of achieving substantial impact through creativity, collaboration, and mission-driven project execution.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Dal Pozzolo, A., Caelen, O., Le Borgne, Y.-A., Waterschoot, S., & Bontempi, G. (2015) – *Calibrating Probability with Undersampling for Unbalanced Classification*
   Although focused on fraud detection, this paper's insights on resource optimization in imbalanced systems are relevant to non-profits. It highlights how scarce resources can be better managed with tailored evaluation metrics, a challenge many NGOs face in project management.
2. Kerzner, H. (2017) – *Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling*
   Kerzner shows how systematic planning and control are vital for project success. Non-profits often adapt these methods, but instead of financial performance, their key success measures are impact and accountability.
3. Müller, R., & Turner, J. R. (2010) – *Leadership Competency Profiles in Successful Project Managers*
   The study identifies leadership traits that drive success in project managers. In the non-profit sector, traits like persuasion, motivation, and managing diverse stakeholders are particularly critical.
4. Bryson, J. M., Crosby, B. C., & Bloomberg, L. (2014) – *Public Value Governance: Moving Beyond Traditional Public Administration and the New Public Management*
   The authors propose public value as a key driver for organizations outside the market. Non-profits reflect this by prioritizing social outcomes and partnerships over profit motives in project execution.
5. Svejvig, P., & Andersen, P. (2015) – *Rethinking Project Management: A Structured Literature Review with a Critical Look at the Brave New World of Projects*
   This paper calls for adaptive and context-driven approaches to project management. Non-profits exemplify this by being highly flexible with limited budgets, volunteer-driven teams, and evolving community needs.

6. Crawford, L., Cooke-Davies, T., Hobbs, B., & Labuschagne, L. (2008) – *Governance and Support in the Sponsoring of Projects and Programs*
The study emphasizes governance in shaping project outcomes. For non-profits, this often comes in the form of donor oversight and accountability to beneficiaries rather than shareholder expectations.
7. Lewis, D. (2003) – *The Civil Society Sector: A Review of Critical Issues and Future Directions*
Lewis outlines the operational difficulties of NGOs, including financial instability and legitimacy. These pressures influence project management practices by requiring greater stakeholder engagement and transparency.
8. Jugdev, K., & Müller, R. (2005) – *A Retrospective Look at Our Evolving Understanding of Project Success*
The article shows how success has shifted from efficiency to broader stakeholder value. In non-profits, this means measuring long-term community benefits and social impact rather than just deliverables.
9. Lacruz, A., & Cunha, E. (2018) – *The Role of Project Management Offices in Non-Governmental Organizations*
This study explores how PMOs operate within NGOs. It finds that when aligned with mission goals, PMOs improve efficiency, donor trust, and cross-project learning.
10. AbouAssi, K., & Makhlouf, N. (2018) – *Nonprofits' Application of Project Management Practices: Insights and Comparisons*
The paper directly compares project management in for-profit and non-profit settings. It concludes that while both adopt similar frameworks, non-profits adjust them to deal with uncertain funding and volunteer-based teams.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative and comparative methodology. Secondary data is collected from academic journals, books, and case studies focusing on project management practices in both non-profit and for-profit contexts. A case study approach has been used to illustrate real-world challenges and solutions in non-profit project management. Comparative analysis is conducted to highlight differences in governance, resource allocation, performance measurement, and stakeholder engagement.
The methodology also relies on thematic analysis, where recurring themes such as resource constraints, stakeholder accountability, and adaptability are identified from the literature. By combining case-based insights with comparative discussion, the study ensures both depth and breadth in understanding project management practices.

Case Study: Project Management in a Non-Profit Organization

Introduction

The environment of non profit organizations (NPOs) is characterized by the scarcity of resources, the heterogeneity of stakeholders, and the lower level of success based on monetary profit and rather on social contribution. In this case study, we look at how a non-profit organization, Health for All Foundation (HFAF), that is mid-sized handled an outreach project in healthcare. It also makes comparisons with the way a profit-making company would normally conduct a similar project.

Company History.

Health for All Foundation is a non-governmental organization which aims at enhancing access to healthc-

are in the rural regions. It is mainly financed by foreign donors, charitable giveaways and governmental grants. It is a small organization with a lean staff of 50 employees, but 200 volunteers.
In 2022, HFAF introduced a project to establish mobile healthcare clinics in 3 underserved districts. Its goal was to bring preventive health services, basic treatment and health awareness to the eyes of about 100, 000 residents.

Project Objectives

- Create 6 mobile healthcare units and achieve them in 12 months.
- Implement no less than 200 health education sessions in the villages.
- Deliver healthcare to no less than 50,000 people in the initial year.
- Establish relationships with local hospitals to refer and receive follow-up treatment.

Project Management Style:
HFAF embraced a hybrid project management strategy, which is a blend of the conventional planning strategy and adaptive practices that are flexible.
Initiation and Planning: The project charter was developed according to what was required by donors. A stakeholder mapping exercise revealed that there are four major groups of stakeholders including donors, beneficiaries, local authorities, and partner hospitals. A delivery plan was provided as a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS).
Implementation: Recruitment of volunteers was given much priority. Health ambassadors were trained to be locally based so that the culture is human and sustainable.
Monitoring & Evaluation: The project had monitored indicators like number of patients treated, workshops conducted, and satisfaction of the beneficiaries, as opposed to profit based measures.
Issues: The project encountered constraints of the donors on the budget allocation, loss of volunteers and logistical setbacks in accessing remote locations. To counter this HFAF developed contingency plans, registered in-kind donations (ambulances, medical kits) and rescheduled according to seasonal conditions.
Outcomes
By the end of the first year:
It was able to roll out 6 mobile clinics.
There were more than 220 awareness seminars.
An average of 63,000 people were served with medical services and this is more than what was set.
The feedback of the beneficiaries described a rise in confidence in healthcare services and knowledge levels about preventive practices.
The project was considered very successful socially even though it was financially constrained. Notably, the success increased the credibility of HFAF in the eyes of the donors, which allowed securing new funding.

Key Lessons Learned
Stakeholder complexity: It takes good communication and negotiation skills Outcome-centered achievement: In contrast to profit projects, achievement is not gauged in terms of profit margins but rather in terms of concrete community good and alignment of the mission.
to have a balance between the needs of the donor and the beneficiaries.
Resource innovation: NPOs have to take advantage of volunteers, unions, and in-kind donations to offset

funding constraints.