

Product Description 3: Bottom-up Organizational Development of Partner Organizations

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1. Summary

The bottom-up organizational development is a simple tool to improve the service delivery performance and management of partner organizations. Start with the existing management system of the organization and improve step by step (bottom-up). Do not force an external management system to a local structure (top-down).

2. Basic features

Target structures

- Public and private Partner organizations involved in SME development.
- Business associations and Chambers of Commerce.

Approach: Partner organizations normally have at their disposal a basic management system consisting of simple planning, documentation, reporting documents and simple management elements as regular staff meetings, sharing of responsibilities and work plans. Even if these systems may exist only in an insufficient and inadequate manner, they present some organizational know-how internalised by their staffs.

Our idea is, that sustainability will only be achieved if we take up the existing know how of an organization and its staffs and try to improve it from inside with bottom-up, instead of imposing an external system. In most cases, implementing an external system top-down will be beyond the scope of a local staff.

Our approach is a mix of internal organization self-analysis and input of external know how, because it is not evident that the staffs that often have the habit to hold onto familiar systems, have an overall view of the major constraints of their structure. The following modules of organizational development will be implemented by a 3-5 day visit to the organization and its branches.

a) Situation analysis overview for capacity building. Meetings with the staffs will be agreed at different levels for group and individual discussion in order to get a non-manipulated overview of the internal situation and differing points of view. Documents, especially planning documents, reports, studies and organizational presentation will give a supplementary impression of the organization's and staffs' performance. A short overview matrix can be drawn out as follows:

Situation analysis overview for capacity building of partner organizations	
Name of the organization and fields of intervention	
Staff (educational level, job description, vocational training, work experience)	
Infrastructure and equipment	
Management: planning, documentation, reporting, studies	
Products and services for the business operators / target group	
Staff's proposals on how services can be improved	
Problems identified by the staffs themselves	
Staff's proposals to overcome identified problems	
Remarks of the external facilitator.	

This is a template. The final table will be more extended, probably to 1-3 pages

b) SWOT analysis. The situation analysis overview should be completed by a staff meeting on SWOT self-analysis (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) of their structure.

Strengths	Weaknesses
What are the internal strengths of your organization / institution?	What are the internal weaknesses of your organization / institution?
Opportunities	Threats
What are the opportunities of external conditions?	What are the threats of external conditions?

The SWOT analysis requires drafting the SWOT analysis matrix (everybody forwards his opinion on Metaplan cards) and documenting the discussion outcomes (meeting minutes).

The SWOT analysis should be done before the staff is aware of the results of the situation analysis overview. In this way the results of the situation analysis overview can be compared with the SWOT analysis and distinctions and agreements can be very informative.

c) Action planning: A final staff meeting on the results will discuss the problems and make proposals to overcome the major constraints so as to bring about an efficient structure and management. The meeting will design the guidelines for the organizational development action plan.

The organizational development action plan may be a six-month action plan. It will be an agreement between the organization involved and the SME promotion project. The action plan focuses on the major problems identified by the situation and the SWOT analyses and considers the following commitments:

Action plan for organizational development			
Problems identified	Self initiative of the staff concerned	Responsibilities	Additional support by the SME promotion project.
Problem 1			
Problem 2			

d) An Office Folder is handed over to the partner organization including separators with the following titles: Mission and objectives of your agency; fields of intervention and services achieved; leaflet; activity planning, activity reports; job descriptions (see folder method outline on www.bds-ethiopia.net/approach-foldermethod.html). The partner organisation has to fill the folder with the respective documents. If, for instance no documents are available for “services achieved”, we will know that there is a problem in implementation of services. The project staff or BDS advisor will make quarterly visits in order to take a look on the folder and give advice in case of insufficiencies or lacking documents.

3. Benefits, impact, scope

Situation analysis and SWOT analysis are simple tools to analyse the organizational structure. The “Folder method” is a simple tool for internal self-organizing as well as for external presentation of the respective organization to other partners. All important fields of intervention and the management structure are documented in a centralized manner - no problem to find and present them immediately if necessary! External evaluators like it!

Above all, we are convinced that project management systems of international cooperation projects will rarely be suited to national, regional or local partner organizations. Organization and management of an international project are characterized by a high input of external management know how and expertise with high financial inputs, which may not be the case in a national or local structure.

With this in mind, we suggest a strategy of institution development to improve the existing structures and management systems bit by bit through a tailor made medium-size system that ensures sustainability in the long run even after our project intervention phases out in time to come.

4. Implementation process

Organizational development should be done step by step: Existing planning, reporting and evaluation documents should be improved and not be rejected and replaced by external formats. Services to business operators should be analysed, improved and extended bit by bit.

The facilitator should agree to make regular meetings and contacts with the organization to be involved until a certain progress on the basis of the organizational development action plan has been achieved.

- A situation analysis overview should be elaborated through talks with the staffs on different management levels.
- An initial SWOT analysis together with the partner organization will identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the partner organization. Respective activities will be agreed.
- In addition a checklist for organizational development is handed out and discussed with the partner organization (see checklist on www.bds-ethiopia.net/approach-checklist-od.html)
- All documents are filed in the organization's presentation folder.

Requirements

- The tools, e.g. checklist and folder separators, must be specifically adapted to each of the organizations involved in order to obtain the best result.
- Valuable information to fill the presentation folder must be gathered by an assigned collaborator of the partner organization.

5. Costs

- SWOT workshop of the respective organization together with the project staff.
- Follow-up visits.

No important financial inputs are necessary. First to be initiated and experienced in your own project and then to be transferred to your partner organizations.

6. References

The bottom-up organizational development including the situation analysis overview, SWOT analysis, checklist for organizational development and the "folder method", has been implemented in Ethiopia with about 30 partner organizations and proved as successful by external GTZ evaluation.

The tool can be transferred to any organizational structure - partner organizations, business associations, chambers of commerce.

- Product description for "Bottom-up Organizational Development" on www.bds-ethiopia.net/approach-od.html
- Checklist for Organizational Development www.bds-ethiopia.net/approach-checklist-od.html
- "Folder method" www.bds-ethiopia.net/approach-foldermethod.html

7. Contact

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