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How to Effectively Change the World
by Ramos, Marinho, Cariello,
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How to Effectively Change the World

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INTRODUCTION

On September 2015 the United Nations adopted 17 sustainable goals to transform the world by 2030. These goals are related to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as shown below.

For the goals to be reached everyone needs to do their part: governments, private sector, and civil society. Globally, thousands of organizations, even before the release of these goals, have been working on many of the themes. Together, these organizations form an extremely heterogeneous group but differ in an array of ways. Some are government affiliated, others bilateral or multilateral agencies; many are associated with educational institutions, and most are non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Nevertheless, while development organizations are heterogeneous and unique in many ways, they all share one thing in common: their main reason to exist is to create social transformation managing their initiatives as projects. The success of all these organizations and the livelihoods and well-being of the hundreds of millions of people they serve depends on their ability to deliver project results effectively and efficiently. These organizations must develop teams to elaborate project proposals, to develop project plans, to implement project activities (many with the essential help of the beneficiary community), and to monitor their progress and evaluate their impact. Unfortunately, project management is rarely identified as a strategic priority for these organizations although a culture of project management should pervade their work.

In 2011 McKinsey-Devex published a survey on Development Agency Effectiveness. Only 36% of those surveyed said that most aid projects achieved their intended impact. The four main areas needing improvement were: planning for financial sustainability, ensuring

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stakeholder skills to sustain the programme, forward-planning allocations and evidence-based resource allocation.

Aware of the importance of the development sector, IPMA Brasil and PM4NGOs established a partnership to help development organizations create social transformation in an effective way through management by projects in Brazil. On the one hand, IPMA Brasil (IPMABRASIL.org) is a non-profit organization focusing on achieving excellence on projects and programmes through the development of specific competences. On the other hand PM4NGOs (PM4NGOs.com) is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancement in the project management skills of individuals and organizations working in the development sector.

PM4NGOs established a methodology (PMDPRO) which helps development organizations and NGOs organize their initiatives as projects. The main reason for this approach is to adapt the project management approach for the specificalities of the development sector. The goal is to have a standard approach to deal with scarce resources, high risks, unsafe conditions, unstable political and economic environments, and stakeholder complexities which can deliver successful results according to the established objectives and deliver the intended benefits to the targeted population. IPMA Brasil adopted PMDPRO as the reference in helping Brazilian social organizations to develop capabilities and competences in social and development projects.

DEVELOPMENT SECTOR PROJECTS CHARACTERISTICS

Development projects usually have less tangible goals. Besides, the results might be less visible and measurable when compared to infrastructure and industrial projects. These are some of their particularities:

- The intangibility of project objectives and deliverables requires adaptation of the existing project management bodies of knowledge and adoption of new tools and concepts to define, monitor and measure to what extent development projects achieve their objectives. Neglecting this important aspect usually leads to the tendency of measuring only resource mobilization and efforts, rather than results. The consequence is the inefficient use of development funds and long-term lack of accountability (Khang& Moe);

- Most projects also have an ultimate goal to produce positive and significant changes that will be sustained after the external assistance comes to an end. This sustainability requirement adds a new level to the intangibility of the development outcomes. It becomes mandatory to track closely the benefits to be delivered since project deliverables are only a means to an end of improving the welfare of the population benefiting from the project.

Most international development projects also have a complex web of stakeholders involving three separate key stakeholders: the funding agency that does not directly use the project outputs; the implementing unit, responsible for the best utilization of the resources available; and the target beneficiaries who actually benefit from the project outputs but normally do not pay for the project.There are some key characteristics of these projects: first, since most of the projects are implemented in developing countries where corruption often takes place, financial accountability and transparency is as important as the processes in place to

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complete projects within time and cost; second, the huge cultural gap between donors and target groups may result in poor project design and consequently failure during implementation.

Development projects are very similar to projects in other areas:

- Results must be achieved within time, budget, quality, scope;
- Project plans must be comprehensive, detailed, and manageable over the entire project life;
- Potential risks must be identified and monitored to guarantee the expected results and benefits.

Development projects also share many traditional project issues:

- Lack of shared agreement of the objectives of the project by donors, government, and other stakeholders;
- Lack of detailed, realistic, and current project plans (schedule, budget, and procurement);
- Unclear lines of authority and responsibility (organization not structured for project management);
- Poor feedback and control mechanisms for the early detection of problems;
- Poor or no analysis of major risks.

In particular they frequently suffer from delays caused by bureaucratic administrative systems (approvals, procurement, personnel, land acquisition, and release of funds).To navigate through this complex scenario, development projects require several competences that can be classified into three areas (IPMA):

- **Perspective competences** – every project is started and governed by external drivers. People, organizations and societies demand an extraordinary variety of things and it is rare that any project is executed in a vacuum. On the contrary, every project is highly influenced by its context. For this reason, many drivers, formal or explicit, contribute to the formulation of a project such as strategy, structures and processes, standards and regulations, and local culture where the project will be delivered. Competences related to these perspectives need to be developed by the project team in order to understand the context of the specific project and the existing multi-layers through which decision making and monitoring will take place;

- **People competences** – projects are started and delivered by people. Personal and social competences are pivotal to project success. They are often referred as the "art of project management". To understand other people you must first understand yourself. It is the capacity to look inside and be able to reflect and manage yourself. If you are able to understand yourself then you can develop empathy with others, communicate, inspire, align teams and resolve conflicts along the project lifecycle. You can finally become a leader;

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- **Practice competences** – these are often referred to collectively as the "science behind project management". The project manager must identify, select and employ the right tools and processes to satisfy the expectations of key players and control the project from start to finish to deliver project success. It is an approach which includes: the logical relationships; the governance structure; responsibilities and accountabilities; the interfaces with the permanent structure; approach to procurement; management of stakeholders and management of change.

As project managers' responsibilities increase from relatively simple projects to more complex projects, the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and experience need to increase commensurately. It is undisputable that project managers must take responsibility for their career path and permanently build their personal, interpersonal and development sector-specific competences.

THE VALUE OF ESTABLISHING A METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Some organizations have the capability to consistently deliver projects effectively while others do not. Using standard lifecycle processes and techniques will help coordinate resources to achieve predictable results. Although understanding and applying a project life cycle is no guarantee of success, it helps deal with the complexities and uncertainties involved, increases the odds of success and provides governance and alignment for the benefit of all stakeholders.

A methodology is a set of tools, processes, and practices that are repeatedly carried out to deliver projects. The key element is that by repeating the same actions on every project the organization will gain efficiencies in its approach. A project methodology should contain standardized lifecycle processes to manage the phases of the lifecycle, tools and templates.International development projects present peculiar characteristics (Golini, Landoni) that require specific methodologies:

- The target "customer" or beneficiary is a community in a developing country with boundaries and requirements that can be difficult to access. As a consequence beneficiaries are often not included in the project design phases leading to fatal errors in the execution of the project;
- The presence of a large number of key stakeholders may result in the lack of involvement and communication leading to inappropriately defined project objectives;
- An array of social factors must be taken into account, including, among others, workforce availability, social instability, and the presence of different communities with conflicting interests;
- The diversity in culture and values can create considerable challenges, the most frequent of which revolve around assumptions, expectations, and language;
- Development projects normally have objectives such as poverty alleviation, improvement of living standards, and basic human rights protection. These humanitarian and social objectives are usually intangible, invisible, and difficult to measure.

Reaping the benefits from using a standard project methodology in the international development sector takes time and effort. Many may complain that the adoption of standard procedures introduces overhead, cost and waste of time. However, the problems presented above indicate that standardization, discipline, and governance are mandatory. First of all, grouping activities into a project life cycle sequence enables the project team to:

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- Define the phases that connect the beginning of a project to its end and ensure appropriate governance is in place;
- Enable the creation of decision points to assess the continuing viability of the project and if a new course should be pursued;
- Identify the processes project teams must implement as they move through the phases of project life cycle;
- Implement a project life cycle model improved by lessons learned to be used in future projects.

THE PMDPRO METHODOLOGY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

In 2007 LINGOs, an NGO focused on delivering learning solutions to development organizations that are appropriate, affordable, accessible, and actionable, began to work with a group of international NGOs to collectively establish principles and best practices in project management in the development sector. The work of that group laid out a methodology which was developed and field tested by over 200 practitioners from 15 organizations in 20 countries. While good project management principles are universal, PMD Pro builds on established methodologies to provide practical guidance to running development projects. The PMD Pro Guide was launched in 2010 in Johannesburg and Zambia. Since then over 10,000 individuals in more than 70 countries have been trained in the approach and have been using it.

The purpose of PMD Pro's Project Phase Model is to provide a balanced and comprehensive phased model. Balance and comprehensiveness in the project model are especially important within the context of the development sector. Too often, development organizations have placed an especially strong emphasis on project design, monitoring, and evaluation that has overshadowed the importance of other phases. A project team must not only invest in one strong, coherent phase, but also commit similar levels of resources and effort in all the phases in the life of the project.

The PMDPro phased model is shown below:

Illustration 1: PMD Pro' Phases
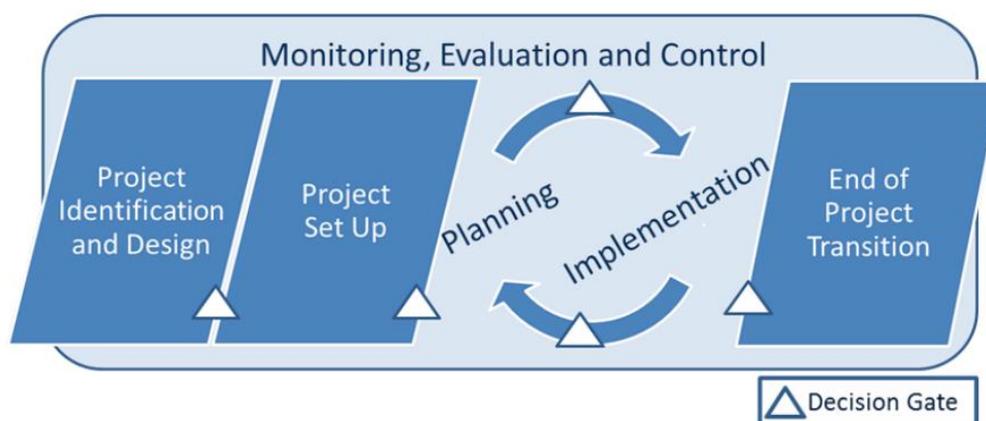
The six phases presented on the illustration include:

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Project Identification and Design–All projects begin as an idea. This idea is related to a need, a problem or an opportunity that is assessed, analyzed, and which is managed through the project life cycle. It is during this process that we begin answering the critical questions: *'What is the problem?'; 'What is the desired transformation?'*. Get it wrong here, and the project may pursue a track of failure. It is during this phase that the project teams define needs, explore opportunities, and analyze the project environment. The decisions made during the Project Identification and Design Phase set the strategic and operational framework within which the project will subsequently operate.

A tool used during this phase is the logical framework (Logframe). The Logical Framework Approach was developed in the late 1960's to assist the US Agency for International Development in improving its project planning and evaluation system.The Logframe has become a standard approach required by many donors for grant applications. Although it is very well known in the humanitarian sector, it is neglected in the corporate world. However, the Logframe is of paramount importance, providing:

- A systematic and visual tool for organizing the project thinking and identifying relationships between resources, activities, and project results that enable clarifying the underlying cause-effect interdependencies, defining indicators to measure progress, and identifying external factors and assumptions which will ultimately determine project success;

- A framework that makes the underlying rationales and assumptions transparent, facilitating the identification and assessment of risks;

- A results-based management approach that brings logic, clarity and accountability into the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the project.

While there are many versions of project logical frameworks, the PMD Pro subscribes to a four-level logical framework model that includes the following deliverables:

1. Activities are actions taken, through which inputs (financial, human, technical, material and time resources) are mobilized to produce the deliverables (training, constructing, etc.) of a project for which staff can be held accountable and which, when aggregated, produce outputs.

2. Outputs are tangible deliverables resulting from project activities. They include products, goods, services and changes (e.g. people trained with increased knowledge and skill; quality roads built) that aggregate and contribute to outcomes.

3. Outcomes are what the project expects to accomplish at the beneficiary level (e.g. use of knowledge and skills in actual practice over time; transportation of goods on constructed roads over time) and contribute to population-level changes (reduced malnutrition, improved incomes, improved yields, etc.) that aggregate and help bring about the accomplishment of goals and impact over time.

4. Goals are the highest-level desired end results or impacts (transformation, sustainability, livelihood, well-being, etc.) to which the project contributes (the ultimate objective in many logical frameworks).

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The deliverables are integrated in a logical way that enables all stakeholders to understand the project as a whole or through their particular perspective as shown below:

Illustration 2: PMD Pro's Logical Framework

As such, the logframeis used to improve project design, foster project performance, and facilitate project management by providing a simple summary of the key elements of the development initiative in a consistent and coherent way that enables the identification of broad boundaries and further project detail during the next phase;

Project Set Up–Every successful project has a thoroughly planned and implemented Set Up phase with the following objectives:

1. Establishing the Project Governance Structure – In the context of project management, governance defines the management framework within which project decisions are made. It is the process of decision-making and whether decisions are implemented or not. A robust governance structure clarifies authority, i.e. who has the power to make decisions and within what tolerance levels, and accountability, i.e. who is accountable for the success of the project. With no clear accountability, hidden agendas emerge turning the project into an instrument for the interested few.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to governance. Governance needs to fit the organizational structure, culture, and complexity to be effective (PMI, 2016). Good governance has 8 major characteristics (UN-ESCAP):

- participation with freedom of expression on the one hand and organization on the other;
- rule of law of the procedural frameworks implemented;
- transparency of the decisions taken according to the rules of laws;
- accountability and clear definition of roles and responsibilities;
- responsiveness to serve stakeholders in a timely manner;
- consensus-oriented in order to mediate the different interests involved;
- equity and inclusiveness ensuring that all who have a stake in the projecdo not feel excluded;
- effectiveness and efficiency to meet the needs of stakeholders while making the best use of resources available.

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Governance structure can have different formats: The Sponsor (simple projects) or the Project Committee (more complex projects). The larger the number of Committee members, the more difficult it is to reach decisions. If the Committee is the adopted format, at least one member must have a senior executive perspective (role). Also, it is important to guarantee the presence of a senior user perspective (beneficiaries) and one member as a senior supplier (implementing partner). Each member represents a different perspective of what project success means.

2. Officially authorizing the start of the project – It is crucial that a project has been formally authorized to start by the governance (sponsor or committee) through a Project Charter, which must be signed by all main stakeholders and partners as well as the project manager.

Once the Project Charter is signed, it will authorize the use of resources, guarantee a shared understanding of the project, and document the shared commitments to achieve the project outcomes and goals.

Do not underestimate the value of the project charter. It is such an important document that a project should not be started without one. Not having a project charter hinders the project manager from being successful in his role and consequently impacts on project success.

3. Communicating the project launch – the purpose of this phase is threefold: to formally acknowledge the beginning of project; to ensure that key stakeholders have a consistent understanding of the project; to introduce stakeholders to the project.

The project kick-off meeting is an opportunity to foster a foundation of communication and understanding, share information on the project charter, energize the team, set proper expectations, and establish guidelines on how to develop the project plan. If you fail to prepare for this meeting, you'll put the project at risk right from the start and miss the opportunity to have everyone on the same page.

Project Planning – Once the project is authorized, the planning phase involves, but is not limited to, analyzing the work to be done, the dependencies and risks involved, the timing and resources to be allocated. Choosing to rush through or ignore the project planning process can be a formula for failure. This is also the time to explore and make adjustments since the cost of change at this stage is much lower than in later stages, as shown in the figure below.

Illustration 3: Cost of Change
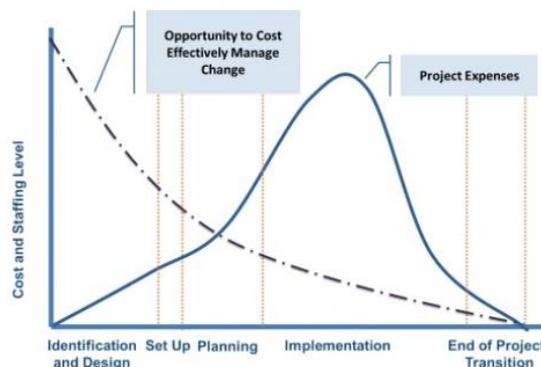
In reality, the planning phase must address the 5W2H (explained in the figure below). This tool has been used widely by journalists to establish good narratives. In project management

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it is important to maintain objectivity, simplicity and guidance to action answering the why, where, who, what, when, how and how much of every project. The figure below illustrates the relationship between 5W2H and the main project disciplines.

Illustration 4: 5W2H
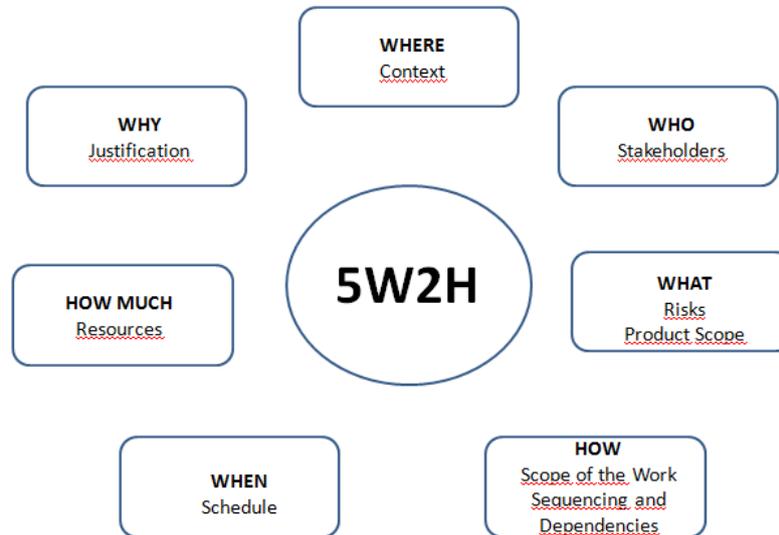
Why do the Project?

Projects are undertaken for a variety of reasons, but, in the end, the investment is made because of the potential value the project will provide to the stakeholders involved. For example:

- The donor organization needs to be convinced that an investment in this activity would be a worthwhile investment;

- The community where the project will work needs to perceive that their participation will result in concrete benefits;

- The leadership of the development organization needs to be assured that the success of the project will contribute to its larger programme (or portfolio) goals.

Strong project justification helps demonstrate why a project makes solid sense to the organization, the donor, and the beneficiary communities. Successful project managers need to have the skills and competencies to:

- define and document the justification for their projects;
- Communicate the justification to a larger audience;
- Track the project progress in achieving the value that justified its existence.

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Where the Project will be implemented

Project context is the environment in which a project operates. It covers both the internal and external environment. Different projects have different contextual issues to deal with, therefore it is important to understand a project's context and identify opportunities and obstacles to increase the chances of success.

The PESTLE technique can be used to analyze six main components of a project context: The **P**olitical, **E**conomic, **S**ociological, **T**echnological, **L**egal and **E**nvironmental.

Who are the stakeholders?

Development projects are complex and impact an array of stakeholders - individuals, groups and organizations who are actively involved in a project, or whose interests might be positively or negatively affected during the execution or the completion of the project.

Experience shows that when stakeholders are overlooked or misunderstood in the project design, or their interests are poorly considered, or worse, excluded during project planning and implementation, it can often result in unexpected and undesirable outcomes. In contrast, those projects that take time to identify and understand stakeholders benefit from:

- A clearer understanding of the individuals, groups, and institutions that will be affected by and should benefit from project activities;
- A better indication of the capacities of these stakeholders;
- A more informed understanding of who could influence and contribute to the planning and implementationoftheproject;
- An improved perspective on alternatives for designing project interventions and addressing project conflicts.

To succeed, the project team needs to develop the discipline to manage the stakeholders' relationships. Team members need to understand the reality and the complexity of interests and relationships; evaluate and predict project impacts (both positive and negative) on all stakeholder groups; and design and implement engagement plans that encourage project participation and strong communication.

One important principle in project management is participation. It is wise to include a variety of perspectives to help ensure transparency, clarify needs and expectations, improve quality, and strengthen buy-in at all levels.

What are the risks?

Effective risk management allows you to identify your project's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. By planning for unexpected events, you can be ready to respond if they arise. To ensure project's success, define how you will handle potential risks so you can identify, mitigate or avoid problems when you need to do. During the earliest stages of project identification and design, the team will start to gain an initial understanding of the potential risks that could confront the project. Comprehensive risk management will focus both on negative risks and positive ones. The negative risk is represented by potential events that could harm the project. In general, these risks are to be avoided. Positive risks, on the

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other hand, are opportunities and are desired by both the project manager and the stakeholders and may positively affect the project.

What is going to be developed? How will the work be implemented?

Projects exist to deliver a service or product. To do so, there is a need to define what is going to be developed (features and functions that characterize the product or service) and how it is to be developed (the work that needs to be done to deliver the product or service) as well as all dependencies. Both of these components are critical to project success and need to be managed diligently. In the absence of a clear scope definition, the following problems may arise:

- Unclear Expectations–A clearly identified and developed project scope helps stakeholders share a common understanding of the product and the work required to deliver project outcomes and outputs successfully.

- Inaccurate Estimates–To plan a project, a number of estimates must be made. If project scope is not adequately defined, the inaccurate estimates can result in schedule slips and hence cost overruns that will impact on project justification.

- Scope Creep – The purpose of defining scope is to describe clearly and gain agreement on the boundaries of the project deliverables and the project work. Failure to control these boundaries leads to scope creep– a principle cause of project delays and potentially "never-ending" projects. To avoid creep, the scope needs to be documented and managed for the duration of the project through a formal change process.

During scope elaboration, the connection between the Logframe and the scope demonstrate important principles of project management: integration between different phases of project management; iteration as a mean of revisiting and detailing the different processesas a way of reducing uncertainties along the project.

When are the project activities going to be developed? How much will they cost?

Successful delivery of a project will always take place in the context of assumptions and constraints. Normally, project management is concerned with the triple constraints: scope, related to the products/services that the project will produce and the work required to produce these deliverables; cost/resources, related to the money, materials, and effort to deliver the project product/services and to complete the comprehensive work of the project; and time/schedule related to the amount of time required to complete the components of the project.

These three fundamental constraints show once more the need for integration in project management. Considering that resources are scarce and must be optimized, it is not possible to influence one of these constraints without impacting the other two. One of the most important and most challenging jobs of a project manager is to organize effectively and efficiently all the resources involved in a project. The manager must know how to create and stick to a budget so that funds are allocated when and where they are needed, and effectively organize the team and guarantee that the right people are assigned, and

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appropriate tasks, clear roles and accountability are in place. Also, it is necessary to have an effective deployment and flow of services, supplies and inventory so that the project has access to what it needs, when and where it needs it and at the most appropriate price.

Development sector organizations usually rely on individual or organizational donors to fund programmes – and they expect donations to be well managed. Development organizations also have an obligation to the communities and partners they serve, being responsible for ensuring that resources obtained on their behalf are used in an optimal manner to maximize impact.

Project Implementation and the Discipline of Getting Things Done – Implementation is a specific set of behaviors and techniques to be mastered to achieve success. It is a discipline of its own. At the implementation level, objectives that involve organizational transformation, require a shift or improvement in people skills (Bossidy, Charan). At the same time, no plan is immutable. As the project progresses issues will arise and changes will be necessary. As mentioned by Winston Churchill, "However beautiful the plan, you should occasionally look at the results."

Project Implementation is related to leading and managing the delivery of the project plan: (1) dealing with issues, (2) managing the project team and (3) creatively integrating the different elements of the project plan.

An issue is an unresolved decision, situation or problem that will significantly impact the project and that the project team cannot immediately resolve. Issue management consists of having a process for identifying these problems and managing them until they are resolved. The governance frameworks come into action when unresolved issues need to be escalated to the next level. The project manager needs to be ready to apply resources to address and resolve these issues.

Projects are realized by teamwork. For this reason, project managers are only able to achieve their goals as a result of the commitment, cooperation, and contributions of the people on the project team. As a result, managing people can become the project manager's most important, and most difficult, job. Most often, when we think of project managers who are especially good at managing people, we tend to focus on their mastery of "soft skills" of people management. These are the project managers who are especially effective at motivating team members, communicating vision, empowering staff, recognizing achievements, listening, leading by example, resolving conflicts and building trust. This does not mean, however, that there are no "hard skills" involved in people management. A comprehensive project plan will not rely solely on the interpersonal skills of the project manager but will also include concrete activities such as organizational charts, job descriptions, acquiring staff, team development, performance assessments and communication.

The third focus of project implementation is to oversee the valuable assets that have been allocated to conduct the work of the project and bring all the fragmented activities together. To assist with this challenge, internal control systems should be put in place to provide reasonable assurance regarding the responsible use of project assets.

The ability to successfully execute projects is what drives the realization of intended benefits and the achievement of business strategies. Organizations that execute projects successfully employ effective project management practices as a tool to drive change and achieve business objectives. Given the strategic impact that projects have on business, organizations

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must follow effective project management processes that measure progress and risks and ensure the right projects can be delivered in alignment with organizational priorities.

Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Control – Despite all the efforts to plan exceptionally well, events may happen or change that cause projects to derail. This is where sound, effective monitoring, evaluation and control prove to be worthwhile. The purpose of monitoring, evaluation and control is to provide an understanding of, and to communicate, the project's progress. Identifying when a project's performance significantly deviates from the plan enables corrective actions to be taken.

Progress monitoring tracks information about the operational work of the project. It is a passive process, gathering information but changing nothing. It tells the project manager where the project is. Evaluation tends to focus on tracking progress at the higher levels analyzing project outcomes and contributions to its ultimate goals. Control involves establishing the systems and decision-making process to manage variances and the realities of project implementation. It also involves establishing how project variances and changes are managed, documented and communicated to stakeholders. It is during the monitor and control process that we keep abreast of project progress, the quality of our efforts, identifying deviations, determining the necessary corrective action and implementing those corrective actions. The integrative nature of project management requires that monitoring, evaluation and control interact with the other five phases of the PMDPRO life cycle.

Nevertheless, most of the monitoring, evaluation and control targets the plans developed in the form of baselines for schedule, cost, scope, quality, and risks. This enables the project manager to take decisions necessary to manage changes. These actions often require revisiting and revising the original plan.The project logical framework is the first step in developing the full monitoring and evaluation plan for the project. The indicators and means of verification that are includedin the logical framework will ultimately become the building blocks for the full monitoring and evaluation plan of the project.

Three evaluation approaches that are extensively used in the development sector are the final evaluations, mid-term evaluation, and ex-post evaluations. Final evaluations are often mandated by a funding agency or required by a development organization's policy, and would be conducted towards the end of the project. Common evaluation questions might include:

Did the project succeed at accomplishing the outcomes, goals and impact desired? Was the project relevant, effective and efficient?

Mid-term evaluations offer the advantage of answering many of the same questions posed through final evaluations, but also provide the opportunity to supply suggestions to improve the project efficiency and impact while the activities are still underway.

Ex-post evaluations examine project impact at a defined period after project completion, sometimes a year after the official close of the project.

This phase also provides information to support status reporting, progress measurement, and forecasting. It is also important that implementation of approved changes is monitored when and as they occur.

End of Project Transition – The temporary nature of projects differentiates them from normal business operations. In the development field, however, one often finds projects that

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have been in operation for years – with one phase of the project continuing the work of the previous phases. This observation underscores the reality that development projects are dealing with social interventions, observation of the lessons learned resulting from these interventions and to look for a new stage of intervention. As such, development projects may be more characterized as evolving degrees of changes with transitions in between, i.e., the end of a project in the development sector is often more accurately characterized as a transition to another degree of social intervention rather than a strictly defined project closure. Change is external and situational while the transition is internal, the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation. Change must start with the individual who will cause a rippling effect on the social area under intervention. As mentioned by Leo Tolstoy, "Everybody thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself."

The development sector considers transition especially important because of their concern that impacts be sustained after the project has ended. Unfortunately, while project transition is of great importance, it is often overlooked and/orunder-resourced. With pressures to move on to new projects and reassign staff members to other activities, the most practical way to ensure a complete project closure is to include it in the project plan.

Even considering the transitioning nature of development, the activities that need to occur at the end of a project, include (but are not limited to) confirming the deliverables with beneficiaries, collecting lessons learned, and completing the administrative, financial and contractual closure activities. All these must be carefully planned and executed. As a project enters its end stage, the project manager should contact the internal and external stakeholders (including the Project Board or the Project Sponsor) to verify that the project has been completed and that the deliverables have been accepted.

It is important to ensure that the lessons learned are adequately detailed, filed and easily accessible. The project manager must distribute the lessons learned to those who can benefit from them. Without a system to capture the project learning, the organization will perennially reinvent the wheel each time a decision is made to pursue a similar project. Donors are often interested in ensuring that learning is disseminated throughout the sector to ensure that new projects benefit from learning generated by other projects they have funded.

Finally, some project teams celebrate the accomplishments during project development and at its end, while many others do not. It is important to have a culture that acknowledges effort and accomplishments. In the words of psychologist Frederick Herzberg, "True motivation comes from achievement, personal development, job satisfaction and recognition". A little appreciation expressed by co-workers, a project manager or upper management can be an important positive factor for project teams and can make the project environment more enjoyable. It is incumbent upon the project manager to encourage a project culture that incorporates an appropriate amount of recognition for individual and team accomplishments.

CONCLUSION

Most international assistance provided by governments and NGOs to developing countries is provided via projects. Despite the importance of effectively using the scarce resources for this sector, limited attention has been devoted in the literature to best practices, approaches, and management techniques in the sector. The broad nature of PM methodologies indicates that different contexts must reflect the specificities of each sector (Golini, Kalchschmidt & Landoni).

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How to Effectively Change the World
by Ramos, Marinho, Cariello,
Guedes, Rocha

Featured Paper

This paper advocates that social and humanitarian projects adopt a complete methodological approach and a well-defined and standardized life cycle. This approach ensures that inter-dependencies are identified and planned for, and project risks reduced. Through adopting PMD PRO a number of major benefits can be accomplished: better risk management through decision gates along the life cycle phases allowing for the continued project justification or even its cancellation; proper allocation of roles and responsibilities to the project team; stakeholders to complete the project activities in each phase with the ultimate objective in mind; benchmarking since a common frame for measuring performance is in place.

Donors give millions of dollars each year in grants to NGOs. When grant recipients use project management tools to deliver on time and under budget, they create better outcomes and, in turn, a better return on every dollar resulting in efficacy that permits more to be accomplished with the same resources.

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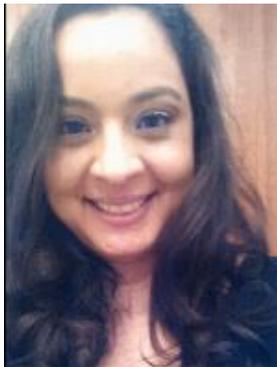
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