Enhancement of Local NGO Capacity Building

NGOs Capacity Building

AREAS

Advocacy  Mobilization  Planning and Management  Technical Resource Development  Gender Equality  Sustainability

Local NGO Network

NGO  NGO  NGO  NGO  NGO  NGO
Editorial
It is clear that without the help and cooperation of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), the government alone cannot achieve the goals of Education For All (EFA) program. In Nepal NGOs are working at the central level as well as at the grassroot level for EFA especially for the promotion of non-formal education for out of school children, youth and adults. Since their number is very large, the NGOs role becomes very crucial.

The NGOs in Nepal are engaging themselves in the field of public health, non-formal education, women's empowerment and development, child welfare, care to physically handicapped people, environment conservation, AIDS and Drug control, community development etc. The government of Nepal tries to control and limit the role of NGOs. Therefore the NGOs have a lot of difficulty to work in Nepal. On top of that they have very little opportunity to improve their capacities to operate.

The survey conducted by NRC-NFE has revealed that they want help to improve their capacities in the field of mobilization, administration and technical resource development. This issue of the bulletin has attempted to highlight the value of NGOs role and need to help them to enhance their capacities especially to play an effective role to promote education for all among disadvantaged population in Nepal.
Capacity Building of NGOs: A Need for National Development

The countries need to increase their production, trading and simultaneously develop social services to improve quality of life of people to exist as a nation. In order to achieve development goals systematically, the developing countries prepare and implement national development plans. Until 1970s government used to play a major role in the development plans. But gradually it was realized that the government alone cannot undertake all development activities. Therefore since 1980s private sector and civil society including NGOs were asked to play their due role. The UNDP (1993) has defined the Civil Society in these words

“Civil society is together with State and Market, one of the three ‘Spheres’ that interface in the making of democratic societies. Civil society is the sphere in which social movements become organized. The organizations of the civil society, which represent many diverse and sometimes contradictory social interests, are shaped to fit their social base, constituency, thematic orientations (e.g. environment, gender, human rights) and types of activity. They include church related groups, trade unions, cooperatives, service organizations, community groups (NGOs) and youth organizations as well as academic institutions and others.”

Nepal has been embarking upon the democratic path since 1990, it started to recognize the role of civil society including NGOs. Before that the government was very repressive. The government under the Panchayat regime had a policy to control civil societies through the Social Service Council. After the restoration of the multi party democratic policy, the Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) increased in a phenomenal ways in Nepal. The growth of NGOs in Nepal is shown below.

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of NGOs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>10,555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jagdish Ghimire-Social Development and INGO Activities in Nepal 2000

Mr Ramesh Thakur of the UN University writes “There are three broad reasons for the rise of NGO influence. Political space for them opened up with the end of the Cold War. New issues like human rights, environmental degradation and gender equality came to the forefront of public consciousness. These are the issues on which NGOs enjoy many comparative advantages over governments in terms of experiences, expertise, and political credibility with the public.”(The Japan Times, October 18, 1999)

In Nepal NGOs are engaged in a large number of sectors. Their functions has been classified according to their involvement. The table below shows that most of the NGOs are working in the area of education, community & rural development, urban slums, empowerment of women, improvement of environment, delivery of public health, irrigation, providing health education on AIDS & drug abuse, youth activities & development of moral values, (NPC: 1992-97: 565-572).
NGOs and their functional areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Functional Area</th>
<th>Number of NGOs (1992)</th>
<th>Number of NGOs (1997)</th>
<th>Increased by %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Child Welfare</td>
<td>14 (2.4)</td>
<td>122 (2.2)</td>
<td>871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Women Development</td>
<td>34 (5.9)</td>
<td>572 (9.6)</td>
<td>1682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Youth Activities</td>
<td>203 (35.2)</td>
<td>1298 (21.7)</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Health Service</td>
<td>46 (8.0)</td>
<td>157 (2.6)</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2 (0.3)</td>
<td>56 (0.9)</td>
<td>2800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Service to the Blind and Handicapped</td>
<td>12 (2.1)</td>
<td>106 (1.8)</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Community &amp; Rural Development</td>
<td>179 (31.1)</td>
<td>3076 (51.4)</td>
<td>1718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Environmental Conservation</td>
<td>16 (2.8)</td>
<td>386 (6.5)</td>
<td>2412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>AIDS &amp; Drug Control</td>
<td>6 (1.1)</td>
<td>28 (0.5)</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Moral Development</td>
<td>64 (11.1)</td>
<td>177 (3.0)</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>576 (100)</td>
<td>5978 (100)</td>
<td>1030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above table reveals that community and rural development activities and youth activities including environment conservation and women development activities were the most preferred one by the NGOs. The NGO’s role has been to supplement and complement the works of the government agencies. It is clear that the NGOs reach to most needy people in a people friendly manner. The NGOs are strong in:

a. Making the people as the center of the development objective;
b. Making the people self reliant through the formation of saving and credit groups, micro credit, lunching small scale income generating enterprises, marketing etc.
c. Making the development process participatory involving the people in real sense i.e. in planning process, implementation and evaluation of community based programs;
d. Maintaining flexibility in planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs taking into consideration of the people’s culture and tradition.

In general, the government of Nepal does not encourage the NGOs to play an effective role. Nevertheless the government has started to say that the NGOs are development partners in their Eight and Ninth National Development Plans.

Due to different reasons the performance of NGOs at the national as well as community level has not been up to the expectation of the people. They are criticized for their lack of accountability, transparency, competency, sustainability and quality. There are many reasons for the low performance of NGOs such as:

- Lack of clarity of the vision.
- Lack of knowledge on how to develop organizational structure and system.
- Lack of activism.
- Scarcity of institutional materials and financial resources.
- Problems like, lack of confidence, assertiveness, vulnerable to repression, weak publicity, logistic constraints, and weak educational medium.
- Facing the identity crisis & donor driven ness.
- Lack of expertise in the field of their work

Actually NGOs are recently facing many criticism like they are donor driven and they harp the tune of some international lobbyists in the First World countries etc. Some feel that it may not be possible to have an independent outlook or mission if they rely on donors funds. Because of their dependence on this money, their accountability gets shifted 'upward’, rather than where it ought to be, ‘downward below at the grassroots’.

But the critics forgot to notice that the governments in South Asia have not been able to provide the service to the people who elected them to serve the people. The government after the government gets elected promising that they would work for providing basic education for all, reduction of poverty, women’s development etc. But after getting the government seats they do not fulfill the promise. Now the questions arise whether the billions of people should be left without any help? or some socially conscious people get organized into NGOs and try to help the people and at the same time go on advocating to draw the attention of the power holders in the government and the society at large.

One of the important reasons for lower level of performance of the NGOs is because of low level of capacities of the NGOs. The NGOs have a plenty of people with volunteer spirit and willingness to work among the disadvantaged population in difficult situations. But a large numbers of NGOs do not have competencies and capacities to deliver program, undertake planning and management of the program, mobilization of local resources and their management etc. Because of lack of such competencies, most of the NGOs face questions about their sustainability and viability of their organizations.

Another criticism they face is that they are concentrating only in Kathmandu and other big cities. Whereas the development focus is changing towards local NGOs for implementing development programmes. As a consequence there has been a tremendous growth of local NGOs. These organizations, usually powerful and influential locally, often do not have the required management capabilities to see their decisions through, let alone have the capability to undertake development activities. What is needed is the capacity of doing what the traditional institutions have failed to do. Nepal's decentralization act provides space for local groups to ask questions to both traditional and new social organizations. Therefore they are in desperate need to be trained properly to be able to manage development activities.

**Capacity Building Areas.**

Different studies regarding capacities have stated that the NGOs need assistance to enhance capacity to implement development programs by establishing effective management and administrative system. The assistance should include means for developing appropriate mechanisms to plan and carry out tasks in collaboration with other organizations. The capacity building programs should include management training of key decision makers of NGOs who tend to be more activists than managers, building the capacity of management and other staff by assisting them to acquire organizational, management and behavioral skills so that they can produce an interesting combination of
home grown activism and modern management technique that would help them to achieve better results.

The capacity building programs need to focus on assisting individual staff members to understand the importance of performing and completing their tasks within the given time. It is necessary to assist them to learn taking initiatives to respond to the emerging needs of the communities they serve. In addition, the staffs need to understand their responsibilities better vis-à-vis their beneficiaries. Establishing these simple but core work principles can make NGOs more effective in implementing development programs. Development efforts can be more effective if they are run and managed by trained personnel who understand the process of planning, management including decision-making, communication and human relation skills.

The training and human resource development activities will enable the NGOs to achieve what they have set out to in the first place. The process would help them understand their strengths better and identify areas where they should concentrate most establishing priority. This way they would be able to be efficient, transparent, accountable and sustainable organizations.

It is generally known fact that the NGOs can do some of the work that the larger membership organizations like youth organization and women’s organization cannot do. Although they are stronger because they are usually supported by external agencies including the government. But their agenda is more political than developmental.
Capacity Building of Local NGOs in the Field of Non-Formal Education

It is realized since the Jomtian Conference that the NGOs have to play more vigorous role for basic education for the poor people. Some people tend to argue that basic education is a sphere of the government, but the situation in developing countries especially in Nepal is such that there are more children and youth out of school than in schools. Those out of school children and youth are not being looked after by the government. Therefore a question arise whether NGOs should show an innovative methods to provide education to them both in schools and out of schools adapting some innovative methods and advocate with government to pay more attention to the educational needs of the vast number of out of school children and youth or the NGOs and other organizations of the civil society become silent spectators of this unfortunate massive human tragedy. Many NGOs in Bangladesh, India and Nepal have taken up this challenge and they have shown that with is a better local participatory planning the Non Formal Education could be a viable means to provide basic education to those who would have been excluded from schools. The NGOs are working hard to convince the government to pay more attention to this problem.

It is already stated that the NGOs play a very significant role in the promotion and strengthening of non-formal education in Nepal. But with the exception of International and some National NGOs, most of the local NGOs do not have adequate competencies to plan, manage and implement the programs. Therefore, such NGOs have been demanding training courses to enhance their capacities.

Realizing the need of capacity building of local NGOs in basic education in least developed countries, a planning meeting of UNESCO/BMZ project "Basic Education: Capacity Building of Local NGOs in Least Developed Countries in Africa and South Asia was held in Dhaka from 28th June to 1st July 1998. " After the planning meeting at Dhaka, Nepal constituted a National survey team to assess the Capacity Building needs of local NGOs in Nepal in 1998.

The National Team of Nepal was consisted of representatives from the National NGOs such as National Resource Center for Non-Formal Education (NRC-NFE), World Education, Nepal (WEN), Socio-Economic Welfare Action for Women in Nepal (SEWA), Innovative Development Education Academy (IDEA), Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD), Research Center for Education Innovation and Development (CERID). The national team carried out a national survey on Capacity Building Needs of Local NGOs in Nepal and conducted a detail needs analysis. The team collected data and information from 60 local NGOs involving in the literacy and non-formal education programs in 25 districts of Nepal as given below:
The survey found that among the total NGOs involved in the survey, 43% NGOs need training on development literacy training materials. In the same way 40%, 36% and 35% NGOs expressed that they need training on community participation and in awareness building, designing of training program for literacy instructors and methods to motivate participants for literacy programs respectively. In general, the survey showed the need of the training of the local NGOs in following areas:

- Awareness raising
- Local resource mobilization
- Decentralized planning and management system
- Continuous and effective monitoring and evaluation
- Strong co-ordination system among NGOs
- Increase women participation and gender equality.
- Development of local literacy materials
- Training program for literacy instructors
- Training on system's approach (Input-Process-Output)
- Training on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
- Development of network system

Finally, the survey recommended to develop three training manuals on following major areas:

i. Mobilization of People and Local Resources
ii. Planning and Management of Plans and Projects including Finance
iii. Technical Resource Development and Implementation
Following up the recommendation of the national survey, NRC-NFE, Nepal conducted three national workshops as stated below to prepare draft of the training manual one each on mobilization, planning and management & technical resource development.

- The first training workshop was held on 3-7 March 1999, which finalized the training needs of NGOs.
- The second training workshop was held on 18-27 March 1999 to prepare a draft manuals for conducting training of NGOs in three areas i.e.
  
  a) Mobilization  
  b) Planning and Management  
  c) Technical Resource Development  

- The third training workshop was held on 11-19 April 1999 to field test, edit and finalize the manuals.

During the entire process gender sensitivity, sustainability and environmental concerns were taken into full consideration. In all three workshops 30 participants from different NGOs representing 5 development regions have participated.

The draft training kits were presented to "International Workshop on Developing Training Kits for Local NGO’s Capacity Building in Basic Education" organized by UNESCO, Paris at Dhaka, Bangladesh on 6-15 May 2000. The Dhaka workshop developed criteria for revising and finalization of the draft Training Kits. In the mean times many experts working in different NGOs also gave their comments and recommendations.
A group of experts who drafted the Training Kits revised the Training Kit following to the suggestions of the Dhaka Workshop and national experts suggestions. Ultimately the finalized Training Kits were printed and distributed.

The National Resource Center for Non Formal Education (NRC-NFE) and many NGOs has been utilizing the Training Kits to conduct training NGOs and GO’s personnel. The “Literacy Watch Committee” of Nepal has also utilized the manuals.

**Dichotomy between International NGOs and National NGOs**

There is also a debate going on whether the donor should provide assistance to national NGOs directly or they should channel the funds through the NGOs of their own countries. In Nepal the International NGOs registered in the industrialized countries are conducting basic NFE program by themselves. Bilateral donors such as USA and the British Government have adopted a policy to bring their own British and American NGOs to work in Nepal. This has weakened Nepalese National NGOs and the local NGOs have become subservient to the International NGOs. Times and again the national NGOs have complained that they cannot compete with the INGOs like PACT, the World Education Inc. etc of America and these INGOs are perpetuating dependency syndrome among the local people. Therefore the NGOs Round Table held on 23 March 1999 recommended that the INGOs who is in fact Northern NGOs should not implement the program directly in the field they should help national NGOs to implement the program in the field to promote self reliance and sustainable development among the local people.

In this regard Mr. Anthony Bebbing and Mr. Roger Riddell article titled “Heavy Hands, Hidden Hands, Holding Hands, Intermediary NGOs and Civil Society Organization” is very pertinent. As he said the Northern NGOs could be heavy hands, hidden hands or they could be friends holding hands of the Southern NGOs. The article has observed that the donors are increasingly providing assistance to Southern NGOs because they are near the field, they are more able to mobilize local participation and cooperation. This has made NGOs in the North unhappy that they are loosing source of fund and leverage to control Southern NGOs. But providing direct assistance to Southern NGOs is more effective and economical. But this does not mean that the Northern NGOs have no role. His conclusion is that the Southern NGOs are near the field; close to the people so they are better accountable to the people, better performer and more effective in strengthening civil society than the Northern NGOs. But the Southern NGOs need help of Northern NGOs in policy advocacy with the donor governments, synthesis and dissemination of information, providing access to expertise in different fields. So the suggestion is that the Northern
NGOs and Southern NGOs should be real partners holding each other's hand. The suggestion has been to develop a new approach of joint programming and helping each other in the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the programs between Northern and Southern NGOs.

Generally, the INGOs enter into agreement with Social Welfare Council (SWC) with the objective to primarily provide financial & technical support to the partners, Nepali NGOs. INGOs entering in Nepal in different goals have divergent status. The INGO like CARE, PLAN, ACTION AID, LUTHERAN, and International League of Red Cross are institutions, which are well-established organizations and have a large outreach in the developing countries. They have enough resources to hire trained technical manpower paying them high wages. But it is clear that these INGOs staffs have no root in Nepal and they are less sensitive to local people’s needs. More often they develop their program in the industrialized countries and come to Nepal to implement their program. That way they are more like donor agencies. The local staffs of the INGOs also behave as if they are in the field not to implement people's program but the program of donor agency. The local people also do not show ownership of those programs. So when the project completes, the project usually disappear.

The National NGOs feel that they would not be able to compete with the INGOs. They have two alternative either to seek direct external fund from the donors or to be subservient to INGOs.