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Project Management for Developing Countries

Today the project management process is highly problematic. Many foreign and domestic economists have devoted their research papers address emerging problems in project management and they are offered a variety of approaches.

Projects are the basic building blocks of development. Without successful project identification, preparation and implementation, development plans are no more than wishes and developing nations would remain stagnant or regress. A project is a finite activity, not only in time, but also in the use of resources. Examples of projects include construction of a bridge, highway, power plant, repair and maintenance of an oil refinery or an air plane; design, development and marketing of a new product, research and development work, etc. Project management is defined as an application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements (Kloppenborg, 2012).

The types of project most common in developing countries, and which are considered to be the backbone of their developmental efforts, include but not limited to the following: Public Housing, Literacy, Industrial Facilities, Commercial Buildings, Power Plants, Dams, Irrigation Systems, Roads and Transportation, Water Purification Plants, Health and Sanitation Facilities. In the process of creating productive assets, projects optimize the process of resource allocation. Since projects can be successfully completed only with a focused attention on goals by the project team members, projects act as a means for consolidating the experience and expertise of the organizational members effectively, create a learning environment, encourage team spirit and help to achieve organizational objectives.

The probability of project management being successfully implemented can be greatly improved by carefully choosing the organizational model, the project manager, and the personnel to be involved in the project. Project management may be applied effectively to any ad hoc undertaking. If such an undertaking is unique or unfamiliar, the need for project management is intensified. In some cases, such as that of an undertaking whose successful accomplishment involves complex and interdependent activities, a project manager can pull everything together to accomplish an organizational goal (Cleland & Ireland, 2007).

Unfortunately, project management will not always be directly applicable. Small projects and those that are very simple or very repetitive will not justify the use of project management. It should therefore be used judiciously, i.e. only when the organizational climate looks likely to adapt successfully to its use, and only when its advantages are really needed.

It should be concluded that project management has proven to be an effective and flexible management approach, which has the potential of being of great value to

developing countries. A stronger emphasis on project implementation as a training mechanism for developing indigenous skills is still required. Moreover, improved planning, administrative and technical capacity must be defined as project outputs. The need for highly trained development administrators, especially those with project management skills, is a recurring theme of international assistance evaluation reports. It should be emphasized that developing countries require two types of trained project administrators: those who can plan and coordinate the entire project cycle and those who can manage the project.

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