
In Managing NGOs in Developing Countries Volume II: Management Cases from Pakistan, Lahore University Management Sciences (LUMS) text series editor Zafar Iqbal Qureshi informs readers that the case studies described in the text were written "to serve as a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation" (Acknowledgment). The depiction provides readers with an important and helpful insight as they proceed through five post-Introduction chapters, each of which includes multiple case studies covering one broad area of NGO administration, including the following: 1) Managing People and Organizations, 2) Marketing and Advocacy, 3) Finance and Control, 4) Operations Management and 5) Managing Change.

In spite of the publisher’s intentions, I see a very broad possibility within the frame of provoking meaningful reflection through the chapters. Texts like what we read from the 219-page book certainly prove useful for NGO administrators within the development industry; they will also be useful to non-practitioners as well, including those who have founded and direct small, non-traditional, NGOs outside of it. As a former project manager, organization change management specialist, and process/risk management subject matter expert (SME), I believe that the text is good reading for corporate and non-corporate as well as non-NGO organization specialists, project managers and administrators. The text is well-organized and clearly written, and it effectively covers materials that have relevance to the articulation of events and issues that are meaningful for readers in the aforementioned constituencies.

The basic format of the book is to provide, within each chapter following the introduction, a series of relevant case studies with supporting reference material. The latter immediately follow each related case study and are collectively labeled “exhibits,” North American readers will in each case want to substitute the phrase ‘case study appendices’. Each case study includes an abstract and background followed by additional sections, some of which have standard labels that will be familiar to administrators, project managers and organization specialists, including vision, objectives, programs, organizational structure, and so on. Case study end-notes precede the exhibits (appendices), and there are also useful end-notes. There are overviews describing contributors to the volume.

The main focus of the text is found in Qureshi’s introduction, which provides a paragraph that details the focus of the publishing co-sponsor of the text, the LUMS-McGill Social Enterprise Development Centre (SEDC) in Lahore, Pakistan. Among other details, it reads:

The SEDC focuses on research, specialized training, capacity building and consultancy services designed to strengthen civil society organizations and to promote an understanding of their role. It provides a platform for development professionals and resource persons from LUMS to network, collaborate, and support joint initiatives in order to accelerate the pace of development in the social sector. Its portfolio of activities also includes training and capacity building of local government functionaries, and monitoring the performance of local government institutions. In addition, it offers On-the-Job-Assistance through customized consultancy services to the social sector organizations, (Introduction).
A brief explanation of the rationale for including each chapter (each broad area of NGO administration) is also provided in the Introduction. Each contribution is accompanied by what amounts to a ‘teaser’ for each of the related case studies examined in the chapters.

The chapters comprise each of the case studies themselves, which are clearly and engagingly written. ‘Professional speak’ is, thankfully, avoided, while data and other information provided in various formats in the exhibits (appendices) were more straightforward and very clear. Photographs are modestly employed, but very interesting.

Above all, the book, as promised, delivers “well-researched management case studies . . . drawn from real-life issues in non-governmental organizations.” There is clearly an emphasis on the business model of development, and this is consistent with the political economy framing of initiatives intended to elevate the human condition since Bretton Woods in 1945.

The business model will be very attractive for students in schools for public and environmental affairs, which emphasize policy studies, while socially-conscious MBA students should also find the framing of the text especially useful. Non-traditional development activists, who are more focused on social justice issues and anti-capitalists, will find the business model approach less-appealing, but can still employ the text as an inspiration for meaningful reflection. Similar problems, after all, are often encountered by people in and out of the traditional development industry, who are engaged in societal transformation, organizational maintenance and change management, process and risk management, and project management. It is, indeed, a book worth being purchased and added to one’s library.

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Notes
1. My own organization, Rhythm of Hope in Brazil (ROHB), undertakes development in non-traditional ways relative to the ‘development industry.’ ROHB was formed by like-minded individuals as an outgrowth of my nine preceding years of relationship building with, advocating for and assisting (in various ways) programs in the Afro-Brazilian cultural epicenter of Bahia which serve the needs of children from desperately poor favelas (slums) and ‘children of the street.’ ROHB is virtual in that we have no specific location; we connect via the internet, we have members in a number of different countries, we collectively facilitate the good work of programs which have demonstrated a track record of making a constructive contribution in their respective communities. Our physical appearance is often not required to facilitate some form of assistance. For more information about ROHB visit http://www.rhythmofhope.org.

2. The funding co-sponsor is the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Canada’s McGill University collaborated in establishing SEDC, which explains the fact that it is the LUMS-McGill Social Enterprise Development Center. Also note that although LUMS-McGill SEDP is the publishing co-sponsor, the text is actually published by Oxford University Press.

3. “The college,” is not more clearly identified at this point, it is, in fact, revealed to be the College of Home Economics, Lahore in the chapter in which this case study appears. Remember, the text is being produced by Lahore University of Management Sciences for classroom discussion.