

# 2 AUTOMATING NGO MANAGEMENT : THE TECHNOLOGY WAY

## Abstract

Organizations in the not-for-profit sector are considered to be voluntary organizations striving to fulfill vital social objectives. Independent from government influence, these organizations differ considerably in size, resources, organizational level, mission, form, and orientation; engaging in wide variety of Programmes ranging from humanitarian causes to economical endeavors. Funded by public and private charitable contributions; accountability, transparency and efficiency are critical in this sector. Although NGOs are not primarily for profit making; the profit generated as part of the mission, if managed well can help the organizations to grow. Contrary to Advocacy NGOs where fund raising is on a smaller scale, Operational NGOs have to mobilize resources, in the form of financial donations, materials or volunteer labour, in order to sustain their projects and programs which is very complex. Finance obtained by grants or donations require time and expertise to be spent on planning, budgeting, accounting and reporting. Major fund-raising events need advertising and media relations. In this scenario while the contribution of technology as a booster to NGO movement and management cannot be denied, they tend to be expensive thus discouraging smaller players in this domain. Non profit software is widely available for a price, but one can find many inexpensive and open source solutions that drive NGOs to achieve operational efficiency like any other profit-oriented organization.

**Key words:** *NGO management, NGO software, Donor management, non-profit organization and open source software.*

## Introduction

NGOs are civil society actors and different causes that have been championed by NGOs in the Human evolution included Humanitarian NGOs, Human Rights NGOs, Educational NGOs, Environmental NGOs, Women's NGOs, Children's NGOs, Youth NGOs, Peace and Conflict NGOs, Health projects to name a few. They have a specific agenda for the improvement of society, and act on the desire to advance and improve the human condition (Gallin 2000). It was only about a century later that the importance of NGOs was officially recognized by the United Nations. Since 1850, more than 1,00,000 private, not-for-profit organizations with an international focus have been founded. After the Second World War, about 90 international NGOs founded each year, compared with about 10 each year in the 1890s, although those organizations founded after the wars have had a better survival rate. Some of the best known NGOs include the International Red Cross, Salvation Army, CARE International, and Oxfam International, Melinda-Gates Foundation concerning with the life and welfare of displaced Persons and with the delivery of social services including food delivery, health and mental care, nutrition, and education and training.

In its latest updates; the Charity Commission, the independent regulator for charitable activity in England and Wales indicated that some members have instituted wage freezes, hiring freezes, travel restrictions, etc. due to economic recession and there also have been functions eliminated and layoffs. Most of the foundations claimed to have had substantial decline in receiving funds. In such circumstances it has become imperative to make use of online networks and digital communications to maintain correspondence with different stakeholders.

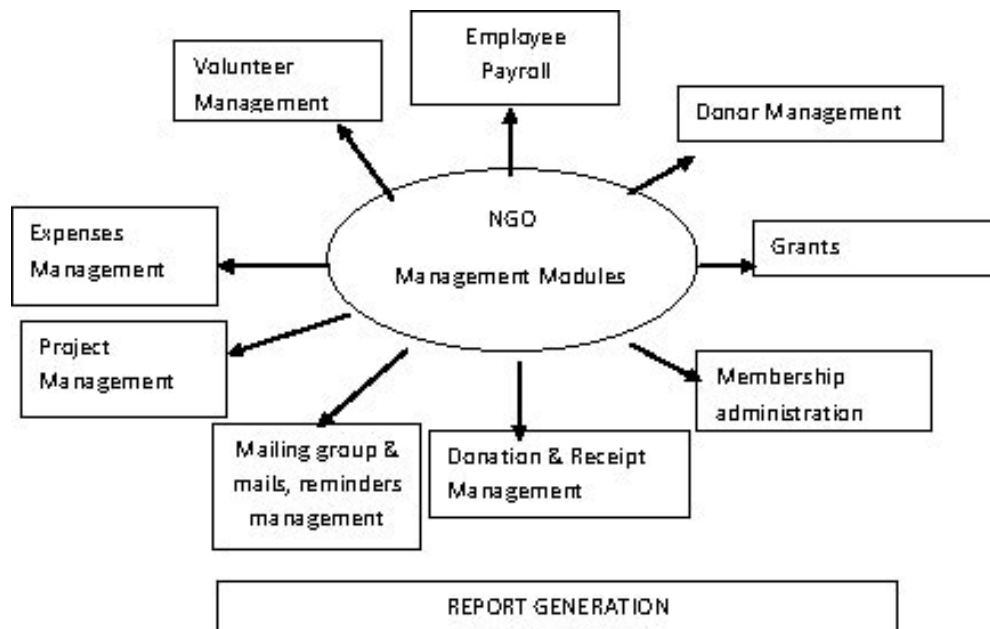
### Significance of the Study

Large Non Governmental Organizations have to maintain large number of employees, their payroll, volunteer expenses, donor database management, grants and funds management, application for tax exemptions et cetera. Additionally in the Information age with global reach, software solutions which simplify the complexity of NGO management are explored with a wider spectrum ranging from simple office management to Enterprise level packages.

### Framework of NGO Management

Like any other business organization Non Governmental Organizations also contain planning, decision making, organizational design and structure, personnel management, recruitment, performance monitoring plan, work allocation, supervision, coordination, training, organizational assessment, fund management, capacity building, social marketing, network expansion, information management and so on. Fund-raising process comprises collections, deposits of collected funds, creation of donors, identification of causes towards which funds have to be allocated, issuing receipts and filing of statutory reports under various applicable laws. There should be a better coordination between resource generation and utilization and other departments and improved donor service.

**Figure 1: Framework of NGO Management**



## **Software tools for NGO Lifecycle**

Most of the Non Governmental Organizations have to optimize every paisa of their budget, which can be done efficiently via software applications designed specifically for their purpose; which is especially true in case of large organizations with large number of stakeholders. They also have large amount of core accounting jobs to maintain. It is simply not possible to manually manage all the data and information. A software becomes handy in the management of project, finance and reports; in channelling funds and assets of a non-profit organization in an efficient way.

Starting with a minimal office management package to a simple web page to a non-profit accounting software, the organization can easily maintain the payroll of its different employees, track the maintenance expenses given to voluntary workers and keeping a tab on material management. The most important thing that a non-profit software does is, to track donations and grants as they are central to the functioning of a non-profit organization. Recording of such grants and of fund-raising data in a proper manner is also important. Tracking of an event, the attendance of sponsors and donor information can be easily done with this software.

## **Office Management Software**

Free software like open Office which has powerful spreadsheet, word processor, presentation, and drawing programs and is compatible with Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux; while GoogleDocs includes a word processor, spreadsheet, presentation, drawing, and form. The cool thing about GoogleDocs is one can share files with others in organization so everyone can see them and easily collaborate.

## **Organizational website**

If the organization can afford to have its own website by hiring web designers or one can set up these days using a blog that offers inexpensive web hosting.

## **Accounting Packages**

General Accounting packages like Tally to specialized Accounting packages for non-profit organizations. Peachtree Premium Accounting for Nonprofits: known for its scalability, affordability and reliability. This accounting solution helps to manage donor aid, programs and reports of funds and core accounting features. software is very easy to start and learn. It is scalable making it capable of supporting the life cycle of non-profit organization.

## **Donor Database software**

Controlling the costs as a non profit will always be an important task, but in the beginning it is especially important. You might want to start with these options: Donation Solutions, Donor Access, Donor Records, and Easy Gift, though there are many others. Initially, one may be able to manage with a spreadsheet for donor donations, but eventually, it is better to invest in actual donor database software.

## Enterprise Software - with complete NGO Solutions

### NatNGO

NatNGO, an NGO solution from NatSun Technology Services Pvt. Ltd. helps in managing non-profit organizations by connecting all departments together namely Projects, Beneficiary, Donors, Staff and so on. NatNGO is an intuitive software package created with the latest development tools to manage NGOs better. The module Project Management helps in Creating main projects and its sub detailed project with cost and duration details; Beneficiary Management module maintains beneficiary information, Connects the beneficiary with a project; Donor Management maintains a Donor list with their information and Connects them with a particular project by setting up the duration and due dates or simply add the donations to an unassigned project; Accounts management accepts payment information by cash, cheque, debit or credit card Payment made against the due dates and for a particular project; Reports, generate reports for monthly or yearly payments and expenses, reports for project list, donor list, staff details, beneficiary list etc. or as required by management.

### Symmetry's Enterprise suite for NGOs

It comprises applications for fund-raising, collections, donor management, project management, grant management and contact management. Applications in this suite are available on per-application basis or as a part of an integrated suite.

Symmetry's Web-based Donation Management System helps Child Rights and You (CRY), one of India's largest NGOs, in streamlining fund-raising operations. Until 2006, these processes were decentralized with each branch managing these activities on local desktop applications. This decentralization not only led to a duplication of efforts but also higher maintenance costs. Over 25 percent growth, these systems were not able to support expansion plans. Therefore, CRY's IT envisioned the centralization of the entire fund-raising process. Symmetry's centralized Donation Management System went live in CRY in August 2007 and is now being used by over 100 users across India.

		Organization type		
		Public Trusts	Private Foundations	Funding Agencies
Symmetry Solutions	eFundRaiser	●		
	eCollect	●		●
	eContactManager	●	●	●
	eGrants		●	●
	eIntelligence	●	●	●
	eDevelopment	●	●	●

**Source: Symmetry-it.com**

The module eFundRaiser automates the fund-raising activities of NGO's with features for campaign management, channel management, agents, commission rules and calculations, campaign costs and budgeting; eCollect automates collection activities with features for constituent/donor management, collection recording, receipting, statutory reporting, and integration with payment gateways for online collections; eGrants automates activities related to grant applications, reviews, approvals and release of funds; eDevelopment automates activities related to managing development projects, assigning achievement targets, measuring performance, and reviewing success rates; eContactManager automates activities related to managing donor/constituent queries and requests while eIntelligence, a business intelligence module provides analytics for decision making.

Being 100 percent web-based, Symmetry's system maintains Seamless integration with payment gateways for authorization, capture and settlement of online donations. Automation of banking processes such as deposits and bank reconciliations and support for complex commission schemes with complete support for specialized management of international donations as required by FEMA and FCRA. Additionally, it comes with User-definable reporting through Excel templates and data filters, Multi-level securities with securities at field, screen and option levels, Comprehensive audit trails and logs, Dashboards for management reporting .

**Donorsnap**

DonorSnap is an on-line Donor/Contact Management System. Some of the features of it include tracking for donations, pledges, interaction; Unlimited User Defined Fields; Excel import/export; and Document Management. No long term contract, free data conversion for most and simple pricing of \$40 per month that allows unlimited users, unlimited usage and up to 5,000 contacts in your database.

It comprises Donation Tracking, Volunteer Tracking, Campaign Tracking, Communication Tracking, Analytical and Standard Reports, Excel Export, E-Mail Notification, Pledge Management, Membership, Appeal Tracking, User Query Package, Customizable Screen Layout.

**NGO-in-a-Box**

The Base Edition of NGO-in-a-box is a collection of essential tools for running a small-to-medium sized NGO. One can use this toolkit to set up and coordinate office, organise and manage projects, collaborate online and support campaigns. The Box contains a set of peer-reviewed Free and Open Source Software tools, with associated guides and tutorials, giving one the technical foundations to build upon.

Produced by Tactical Tech in association with Women's Net, the BaseBox is aimed at activist and advocacy organisations with a particular emphasis on developing and transition countries. The contents of the toolkit were selected by an editorial team made up of leading international practitioners working in technology support for non-profits, social justice organising and the development and deployment of Free and Open Source Software.

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## Sahana Disaster Management System

The Sahana project aims to provide an integrated set of pluggable, Web-based disaster management applications that provide solutions to large-scale humanitarian problems in the relief phase of a disaster. Sahana currently has three projects: Eden, being developed in Python; Agasti, being developed in PHP; and the localization project, L10n.

The Sahana project has 7 modules that address common disaster coordination and collaboration problems: Missing Person Registry, An online bulletin board of missing and found people. It captures information about the people missing and found, and also the information of the person seeking them; Organization Registry, A collaborative “Who is doing what, where” tool which enables tracking of the relief organizations and other stakeholders working in the disaster region. It captures information about the places where each organisation is active and the range of services being provided; Request/Pledge Management System, An online repository where all relief organizations, relief workers, government agents and camps can effectively match requests of aid and supplies to pledges of support. It tracks aid provision from request to fulfillment; Shelter Registry, which Keeps track of the location and basic data of shelters in the region. It also provides a geospatial view to plot the location of the camps in the affected area; Inventory Management, tracking the location, quantities, expiry of supplies stored for utilization in a disaster; Situation Awareness, gives an overview of the event and allows people to add information on what is happening on the ground. It features the ability to plot a note and a photo with additional information on a Map, so that people can collaboratively capture the current disaster situation; Volunteer coordination, Helps NGOs keep track of all their volunteers, their contact information, project allocation, availability and skills to help them distribute staff resources.

Sahana also includes tools for synchronization between multiple instances, allowing for responders or district offices to capture data on victims in the field and exchange the data with the other field offices, headquarters or responders. The Past Deployments of Sahana include Tsunami - Sri Lanka 2005, AsianQuake - Pakistan 2005, Southern Leyte Mudslide Disaster - Philippines, Sarvodaya - Sri Lanka 2006 - Deployed for Sri Lanka's largest NGO, Terre des Hommes - Sri Lanka 2006 - Deployed with new Child Protection Module, Yogyakarta Earthquake - Indonesia 2006, urRemote and Indonesian whitewater association and Indonesian Rescue Source, Peru Earthquake - Peru 2007 - Deployed and localized into Spanish, Myanmar Cyclone - Myanmar 2008, and Haiti Earthquake - Haiti 2010.

## CiviCRM

CiviCRM is a Constituent Relationship Management system designed specifically for non-profits. With the available civicontribute module CiviCRM will work as both a contact and donation management system.

CiviCRM allows for storage of common nonprofit contact data (individuals, organizations, and households) that support donor management, case management, voter, and advocacy applications, CiviCRM is highly configurable and in most cases can be configured to work with existing business processes, Designed for the civic sector. CiviCRM was designed for use by non-governmental organizations that engage in advocacy, community and political organizing, and non-profit work.

CiviCRM integrates directly into the popular free software web systems Drupal and Joomla. Web

site registrations automatically become CiviCRM records and individuals can maintain their own CRM record, Available add-in modules such as civicontribute, civimail, civievent, and civimemeber make CiviCRM one system that is well suited to both contact management and donor management can pull directly from payment processors such as Google Checkout and PayPal (creating new 'individual' records automatically as needed, for names / email addresses it hasn't seen before). Amnesty International is using CiviCRM to collect website registration and Fundraising while Wikimedia Foundation uses CiviCRM for their fundraising efforts.

## **ERP5**

ERP5 is a full featured high end free software solution published under GPL license and used for mission critical ERP / CRM / MRP / SCM / PDM applications by industrial organizations and government agencies. Apart from accounting, CRM, trade, warehouse management, shipping, invoicing, human resources, product design and production management; Capabilities built in that are specific to governmental agencies can also work well for non profits and NGO's.

## **OpenPetra**

It provides an easy to use software system for the administration of non-profit organisations. It covers Contact Management, Accounting, Processing of Donations, Personnel, Conference Management, Fund Raising, and more. The strength of the software has always been that it is easy to use. Integration of all aspects of the administration of a charity means that data can be used through all modules. It is specifically targeted on charities, therefore handling of donations etc comes naturally to the system. OpenPetra supports Windows/Linux/Mac, both for the client and the server.

## **Conclusion**

The modern NGO movement has largely reflected the patterns in the world history whether it is the cause it is championing or the techniques by which it is managed. Scientific principles are deployed in the not-for-profit organizations in managing human, financial and other material resources. Similar to that of business organizations, the influence of Digital Revolution has been there in automating the activities of NGOs. Many software solutions are developed exclusively for NGO management to track donations and grants as they are central to the functioning of a non-profit organization. Informative sites like wikipedia, Social Networking sites like facebook are playing a critical role in spreading awareness on the concept of "giving back to society" and are becoming excellent channels for social marketing.

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