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ORGANIZATION DIAGNOSIS AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
India, September 21-27, 1987

The Workshop on Organization Diagnosis and Development (ODD) for Indian intermediary organizations (IOs) was held at Sariska, Rajasthan, with fourteen participants: nine from PRIA (The Society for Participatory Research in Asia), two from ASTHA, and three from PRADAN (Professional Assistance for Development Action).

The workshop dealt with the following sequence of topics:

Mon: Introductions

- to staff and participants
- to organizations
- to workshop content and design

Organizational Analysis Framework Lecture

- small group discussions of framework relevance and shortcomings
- plenary discussions

Characteristics of Social Change Organizations Lecture

- discussion and articulation of topics to be considered

IO Ideologies and Core Values

Informal Discussions to Apply Concepts to Own Organizations

Tue: Dynamics of Social Change Organizations

Organizational Structure

- decision-making and micro structure
- configurations and coordination mechanisms

Factors Related to Choice of Structures

Informal Discussions to Apply Concepts to Own Organizations

Wed: Strategic Concept Formulation

Open Systems Planning by Organizational Teams

- Phase I: Missions and Core Values
- Discussion
- Phase II: Present State: External Demands and Organization Responses
- Discussion

Personal Organization Theory Building (on basis of experience and discussion as well as materials presented)

Informal Discussions to Apply Ideas to Own Organizations

Thu: Overview of Organization Development

Entry and Contracting

- lecturette and discussion
- Case: People's Project (A).
- Teams prepare entry and contracting plan
- Plenary discussion of plans and actual case events
- Entry and contracting problems with Indian NGOs

Diagnosis and Data Collection

- lecturette and discussion
- Case: People's Project (B)
- Teams prepare initial hypotheses and data collection plan
- Plenary discussion of plans and actual case diagnosis
- Diagnosis and data collection problems in Indian NGOs

Informal Discussions to Apply Concepts to Own Organizations

Fri: Data Analysis and Feedback

- lecturette and discussion
- Case: People's Project (C)
- Teams analyze data and prepare feedback plan
- Simulation: Feedback meeting with PP Coordinating Committee
- Discussion feedback process and actual events of feedback meeting

Action Planning and Interventions

- lecturette and discussion
- Reading time: Huse and Cummings "Intervention Overview"
- Case: People's Project (D)
- Teams plan intervention strategy and tactics
- Plenary discussion of plans and actual interventions

Discussion of OD in Indian NGOs

Sat: General Session on Special Issues

- Continuing Open Systems Planning
- Multiple Consultant Roles: facilitator vs. expert vs. mobilizer/advocate
- Consulting to Multiple Parties: donors, NGOs and others
- Resistance to Change and Other Problems of Consulting
- Working in Consulting Teams

NGOs in India: Types, Problems, and Implications for Consulting and OD

Action Planning for Application of Workshop Learning

- Individual plans for application and further development
- Organizational plans for action

Workshop Evaluation and Follow-up Planning

Several conclusions emerged from the workshop. First, it seems clear that experience in Northern NGOs is relevant, if not always directly transferable, to Southern NGOs. The issues in Indian NGOs in many ways parallel those in U.S. private voluntary organizations. It is also clear that some special characteristics of the Indian setting are important in shaping NGO behavior, such as the key roles played by charismatic leaders and by political and economic contexts. Perhaps most important is the clear message that people with OD skills can help Indian NGOs take more strategic roles in development, manage leadership and succession problems, and reorganize themselves to cope with growth and strategic changes.

Several types of Indian NGOs were identified as particularly in need of OD consultation: (1) Older NGOs that need to reposition themselves in environments that have changed significantly since their founding, (2) NGOs that have adapted their missions and strategies to fit environmental changes without altering their structures, systems, and human resources accordingly, (3) NGOs that need to adapt structures and systems borrowed from other agencies (e.g., government organizations) to fit the special circumstances and character of NGOs, and (4) NGOs founded and led by charismatic leaders who have not developed effective processes for developing new leadership and implementing succession policies, and (5) NGOs who need to learn how to create interorganizational coalitions and partnerships to accomplish their goals, especially with agencies from other sectors.

Discussions suggested several followup activities to build on the OD Workshop in the Indian context would be worthwhile. For example, participants wanted to see further workshops to develop human resources for OD work with Indian NGOs. These workshops would be jointly staffed by IDR and Indian IOs, with the intent of gradually transferring responsibility and developing capacity for IO staff to provide workshops independently. Two workshops were seen as appropriate in 1988: (1) Another ODD workshop for IO participants unable to come to the first one, jointly run with colleagues from PRIA or other IO agencies, and (2) an advanced version of the PRIA Training of Trainers Workshop that would provide OD and consulting training to individuals from key NGOs (SEWA, PRADAN) that want to develop internal capacity for OD work.

We also discussed followup field services by IDR that would be helpful to the development of OD capacity in the Indian NGO sector. We discussed the development of cases and other teaching materials on the application of ODD strategies to Indian settings. We provided some informal consultation to PRIA staff in case development during the visit. We also discussed providing some consultation help for enhancing the capacity of participating IOs for their own strategic management and organization development. We worked directly on issues of organization development with PRIA, and discussed a future strategic assessment of the activities of PRADAN.