

Asia/Near East Unit

Assessment of Human Resource Management System
at Family Planning Association of Nepal

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INTRODUCTION

Human resource is the most important of all resources of an organization. It is, therefore, important that an efficient system which provides present and historical information to facilitate human resource planning, development and control is necessary. During our discussion with senior officials of FPAN the need for assessment of the existing system and assistance in improving the system (if required) was stressed. This document is an account of such an assessment and will serve as a basis for any technical assistance in this area.

EXISTING SYSTEM

Personnel Administration

There are 382 staff currently employed by FPAN. If Community Workers (contract staff whose contracts are annually renewed) and Women Volunteers (low paid contract staff whose contracts are also renewed annually) are included the total number of personnel would add to about 1900. The organization offers family planning services through four static clinic sites and 21 field (branch) offices. The total number of clinical staff is about 100. Branch offices are staffed by a branch manager, a nurse, a health assistant, a field supervisor and an accountant. The branches are the core of the Association's services delivery, and as such their effectiveness is essential to the overall success of FPAN. Through the field network, FPAN employs 1256 Women Volunteers and 194 Community Workers. These staff provide motivation for sterilization and other family planning methods, as well as information, counseling and referral. They also provide a limited supply of basic medicines. Most of the staff are financially supported by IPPF. Other staff are supported by various other donor agencies. The number of staff is increasing because FPAN is both diversifying its activities and increasing its coverage.

Recruitment is largely centralized. Except for the post of Peon, CW (Community Worker) and WV (Women Volunteer), hiring is done at the central office. Sometimes, hiring authority is delegated to the branches on a case by case basis. But the FPAN management is considering making the hiring process strictly central to ensure quality and standard hiring practices. Transfers and promotions are decided at the center.

The Finance and Administration Division is responsible for personnel planning and administration. Under this division there is a section headed by an officer (level 6) responsible for all personnel matters. This section has one junior staff (level 5) who is responsible for personnel record keeping. Both employees of this section have working knowledge of computers. The current staff strength is sufficient to handle day to day administration and maintain records.

Record Keeping and Information Management

Records of all staff (except for CW and WV whose records are kept at their respective branches) are kept in the central office. Record keeping is mostly manual. A file is created for each employee. An employee is identified by his/her name instead of a unique employee identification number. These files are grouped (in a box file) by branches/projects the employee is currently assigned. If an employee gets transferred to another location, his/her personal file needs to be physically moved from one box file to another.

A list of employees is maintained in a LOTUS spreadsheet. A row in the spreadsheet records partial information (post, level, supporting donor, current placement, name, date of appointment, last promotion date) of an employee. Important information like education, training, punishment/reward etc. are left out. Historical information about placement, education, training, punishment / reward and benefit is neither properly maintained manually nor automated. If historical information about an employee is required it has to be manually compiled going through each and every letter issued to the employee. For example, if placement history of an employee is needed all letters issued to the employee to effect appointments, transfers and promotions are to be referred from his/her personal file. This poses a serious concern as regards to accuracy and timeliness of information. Even more difficult is to prepare a list of employees who fulfill a given condition. For example, if the management needs to list all employees who have had training on 'Management for Quality' it practically requires one to go through files of all the employees and prepare a list manually.

Records about an employee's leave are maintained in the attendance register itself. There are basically three types of leaves : Home leave (15 days), Sick Leave (20 days) and Casual Leave (7 days). Unclaimed home leave is paid at the end of fiscal year. Sick leave can be accumulated up to a maximum of 90 days. Since attendance registers are re-written every year the accumulated leave is always carried forward and the system is working fine. History about medical expenses made by an employee is maintained (manually) by the accounts division. Similarly record of employee's clothing expenses is maintained by the accounts division. The salary sheet is currently prepared using LOTUS 1-2-3 and the system is working satisfactorily except for the advance deductions which is done manually. During the assessment it was found that individual files are not updated regularly.

There does not exist a documented procedure regarding recording and updating of data. When a person is hired a file is created and his/her personal data form (containing bio-data , level, post and place of first appointment) is filed. Copy of all the letters issued (e.g. letter of transfers, promotions, nomination for training etc) to an employee are kept in their respective files. All certificates (academic or otherwise) are also kept in the file. Data kept in the spreadsheet is not updated at the time of filing the letters. The spreadsheet is only updated (after going through all the files) at the time of generating information to support management decisions (e.g. at the time of promotions, transfers etc.). Historical information about an employee is not consolidated. Source of historical information are the letters issued to the employees, so if a letter is lost it becomes practically impossible to track historical information.

INFORMATION REQUIREMENT

During the assessment FPAN management was found to be interested in the following information.

Information	Area of Use	Expected user	Average Frequency of Use
Updated list/count of employees by employment category (e.g.. temporary, contract and permanent staff), sex, age, post, length of service, place of placement, education and training.	In human resource planning, staff promotion and placement	Dept. of Fin & Adm	Once in three months
List/Count of employees by supporting donors.	In donor reporting.	Dept. of Fin & Adm	once in six months
Personal information about a particular employee.	In human resource planning, staff promotion and placement	Dept. of Fin & Adm.	Once in three months
Placement history of an employee.	In planning transfers	Dept. of Fin & Adm.	Once in three months
Educational and Training history of an employee.	In planning promotions and training activities	Dept. of Fin & Adm. Dept. of Training	Once in three months
List of employees who were warned/punished and/or appreciated.	In planning promotions.	Dept. of Fin & Adm.	Once in a year
List/Count of employees who would retire within a given period (or date).	In human resource planning	Dept. of Fin & Adm.	Once in a year
Salary sheet (with forced deduction of certain types of advances).	In salary disbursement	Dept. of Fin & Adm.	Every month
Information about grade earned by an employee	In salary disbursement	Dept. of Fin & Adm.	Every month
Benefit (e.g. medical allowances, clothing allowances) history of an employee.	In financial control	Dept. of Fin & Adm.	Ad-hoc

CAPABILITY OF EXISTING SYSTEM TO FULFIL INFORMATION REQUIREMENT

Since personnel information is partially entered into computer spreadsheets it is easy to generate some of the information listed previously. On the other hand, some information like historical information and counts by some specific criteria is difficult and time consuming. For example, preparing a list of employees who have had training on “Reproductive Health” practically requires

going through each file and counting. Similarly, getting a list of employees who have had worked in a given location is equally difficult. In short, the existing system is not capable of producing quality information without extensive effort.

REQUIREMENT OF CHANGE

From the foregoing discussion it is obvious that changes are necessary to make the existing system capable of fulfilling the information need of FPAN. Following discussion focuses on the extent and approach of intervention.

There are four alternative approaches to better management of human resource information.

- *Redesigning existing manual system*

It is certain that if existing manual system is redesigned, quality information can be generated and managed with lesser efforts. But, because the size of staff is quite large and increasing this approach will eventually prove to be costly. Moreover, since FPAN is using computer spreadsheet to get some of the information, it does not seem appropriate to revert back to a complete manual system.

- *Modifying/Enhancing existing computer spreadsheet based system.*

Since FPAN is using LOTUS spreadsheets to store data it seems to be an attractive alternative. However, maintaining historical information and generating reports as per FPAN requirement requires multiple spreadsheets and cumbersome macro programming. The efficiency of spreadsheets also deteriorates with the increase in the size of data. This approach will be very costly in terms of level of effort both on the part of the designer and the user.

- *Use commercially available Human Resource Management computer programs.*

This approach is most attractive because it drastically reduces the level of developmental efforts. However, cost of customization, user training and after- sale support will eventually make the approach costlier than other approaches. Moreover, no such software is available locally with dependable after-sale support.

- *Develop and use tailored application in data base platform.*

FPAN has now a dependable computer infrastructure and since both the staff responsible for personnel record maintenance are exposed to computers it would be easier to implement computer based systems. As the system is not very complicated and since the data entered into the spreadsheet can easily be exported to database files, the development and implementation of tailored application would not be very costly with respect to time and resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assign a unique identification number to each of the employees of FPAN.
- Maintain personal files indexed with this identification number.
- Develop updating formats to record placement, education, training, use of benefit and other necessary information such as change of marital status, addition/reduction in the number of dependents etc.
- Document the process of entering and updating data.
- Develop appropriate codes for types of training, education, post, level etc.
- Design and develop a computer application program which is capable of producing desired information, train FPAN staff on its use and maintenance/ enhancement.