**AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT STUDIES**

**Assignment One - Certificate in Grants Management**

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**Individuals who write Project Proposals and the Kind of Proposals they write**

There are different types of individuals that write different types of project proposals depending on the type and size of the organization (Gorsevski, 2016). According to Browning (2014), some organizations usually have specific individual(s) (grants manager) whose main responsibility is to write grant proposals on its behalf. The author further stated that in other instances, the organization could out-source these services to outside professionals who have outstanding experience in proposal writing. These responsibilities, could as well, be vested on any member of the organization. The following are some examples of individuals that are responsible for proposal writing:

1. **Program Officers in NGOs:** In non-governmental organizations where there is no specific grants professional to write proposals, a program officer could take on this responsibility. Browning (2014) stated that program officers, are tasked with the duty of carryout technical project activities. The author added that program officers are responsible for carrying out the main program activities and they are the primary implementers of the project. The type of proposals that program officers write are the program development proposals.
2. Program development proposals: These proposals are requests for funds to pay for the development of a new project or for the expansion of an existing project (Browning, 2014). Examples of such projects could be to provide safe drinking water for victims that survived a natural disaster that reside in temporary camps.
3. **Government Officers:** Government organization request for funding as well to embark on projects that would be beneficial to its citizenry. Selected and trained government staff usually handles these responsibilities. According to Gorsevski (2016), the kind of proposals government officials write depends on the type activities the organization embarks on. Below are a few examples of the kind of proposal that government officers write.
4. Proposals for annual campaigns: These are request made my government organizations for infrastructure developments and project expansions. In most cases, there are a one-time project expenditure (Browning, 2014).
5. Proposals for capital projects: These are proposals requesting funds for major capital project expenditure, which includes procurement of equipment, renovation, buildings and constructions. These projects are usually funding on a yearly basis until they are completed (Browning, 2014).
6. Research proposals: These kind of proposals are limited to government agencies that carry out research activities in educational or medical grounds (Browning, 2014).
7. **Project Implementers:** Browning (2014) pointed out that project implementers are usually referred to as project managers and they are the main point of contact between an organization and the beneficiaries. The author also stated that project managers are responsible for leading, directing, communicating and resolving issues in relation to project implementation. Project implementers, can be found in all types of organization that engages in project implementation. The kinds of proposals they write include but not limited to:
8. Research proposals: Project implementers that engaged in research activities also write research proposals for funding related to laboratory testing, purchase of laboratory equipment, educational and medical research (Browning, 2014).
9. Proposals for endowment funds: These are long-term investment income that would keep an organization financially viable in the long-run (Browning, 2014).

**Motivating Factors that make Donors enter into Grant Making Endeavors**

Several factor motivates donors to enter into grant making endeavors depending on the type of donor and the type of project. However, emphasis here will be made on factors that influence foundation donors. Below are some motivating factors:

**Provision of Social Needs**: This entails provision of basic needs such as food, health, shelter, education and clothing needs to the poor or to persons who have been affected by natural/man-made disaster (Degasperi & Mainardes, 2017). According to the authors, this factor stands at the top of the list of reasons that motivates donors to give funds; this is because beneficiaries in this category are usually in extreme environment and would completely rely on the assistance of others. Example include provision of assistance to victims of 2010 Haiti disaster.

**Project Satisfaction:** In non-profit sector, there is a positive relationship between donor satisfaction and service delivery to beneficiaries (Nilceia et al., 2015). The authors added that donors that very satisfied with project implementations were most likely willing to provide more funds for future implementation.

**Trust in the Organization**: Trust is the metal state of mind possessed by the donor that the non-profit organization would use their funds judiciously in pursuing projects that are beneficial to a group of persons (Nilceia et al., 2015). Trust usually takes many years to earn, which is why non-profit organisations that have high reputation and trust tend to attract more funds that organisations without such reputation (Nilceia et al., 2015).

**Donor Involvement**: Nilceia et al., (2015) pointed out that donor involvement in project progress would go a long way in donor retention. They added that non-profit organizations should strive to involve donors in their objectives and implementation process. A general satisfaction comes with proper accountability of resources.

**Factors to Consider When Writing a Problem Statement of a Development Project Proposal**

The problem statement, lays the foundation for the project proposal (Merete, 2012). Hernon and Schwatz (2007) defines problem statement as a precise issue that needs addressing. The authors pointed out that problem statement centers on identifying the gap between current issues and desired outcome

According to Merete (2012), a problem statement should not be more than two (2) pages long, it should be clear, straight to the point, and supported with detailed evidence. Blum and Preiss (2005) pointed out that there should be a clear relationship between the organization and the problem identified. The authors stressed that the problem identified should have a direct relationship with the organization’s objectives.

The following are some factors to consider when writing a problem statement for a project proposal:

1. **Research the Nature of the Problem:** According to Browning (2014), this entails a detailed research and gathering of relevant information of what the problem is all about. The author stressed that information gathered could be on demographics, scope and size of the population under review from reliable sources such as organizational records, websites, internet search, interviews, management files, minutes of board meetings, organiztions annual reports. The author finally concluded that the information should be current, relevant and up to date. The use of statistical tools (graphs and charts) will be paramount in driving home the point.
2. **Identify the Causes of the Problem:** After identifying a problem, the next step will be to look at the possible causes of such problem. In identifying the cause, Browning (2014) stressed the importance of avoiding assumptions of any kind. The author pointed out that several factors could cause a problem. When identifying that cause of a problem, it also entails gathering data from reliable and relevant sources. Finally, there should be a direct relationship between the cause and the problem (Browning, 2014).
3. **The Use of Visuals:** Presenting problem statement in sentences may not be attractive enough. Hence, the use statistical visuals such as maps, comparison tables and charts will make the reviewer interested and willing to continue reviewing (Browning, 2014). According to the author, maps with colour are used to show the targeted region and gives the reviewer a detailed insight of the area under study. Tables show numbers and make comparison where necessary. Charts could be in the form of bar charts or pie charts and are used to depict age range, income groups and any other numerical information.

Browning (2014) listed some tips when using statistical tools:

* Always cite the source of the chart/table
* Use tables for large amount of data
* Limit charts to one per page
* As much as possible, avoid the use of photographs. Except with explicit permission
* Avoid the use of too many colours in charts

1. **Identify Practical Solutions to the Problem:** Here, a logical and practical guide on how to address the problem should be emphasized (Browning, 2014). The author said that the way the organization intends to use the grants money to address the issues would be discussed here as well. For example: By providing 50 health care facilities to 50 communities in the North-Eastern Part of Nigeria and by employing doctors, nurses & nutrition professional to these facilities, the 50% rate of malnourished cases could be dropped to 35% by the year 2020.

In summary, problem statements should be supported with quantitative statements that shows certainty and practicality should support it.

**Logical Framework**

Logical framework is a tool used for project planning. Dale (2003) stated that the first version of logical framework was developed for United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for development projects in 1960 and later, many other international donors including Department for International Development (DFID) adopted it as well. According to Barau and Olukosi (2011), logical framework is a table that shows all components of a project in a detailed, clear, concise, systematic and logical manner. Myric (2013) who termed it “logframes” opined that it is simply a tool for monitoring and evaluating project impact amidst limited resources of human and financial capital.

Örtengren (2004) pointed out that logical framework could mean different things to the different parties involved. She said that to the international donor organization, it serves as a tool for assessing, monitoring and evaluating projects, while for implementing agencies, it is a tool for implementing and planning project progress. Logical framework serves as a summary analysis to update; international donors, implementing agencies, beneficiaries and other stakeholders on all necessary informational about the project (Dale, 2003).

**Standard format for Logical Framework**

According to Jensen (2013), the standard format of a logical framework will include:

1. The project objective
2. The activities to be carried out
3. The required resources
4. Possible problems that could affect the project
5. The measurement of the progress and success of the project

**Essence of Logical Framework**

Project management could be a very challenging endeavor and would require maximum efficiency to achieve success, it is therefore necessary to develop a logical framework approach to ensure project success. Örtengren (2004) outlined the following essence of logical framework to a development project

1. To identify the needs of a targeted society
2. To prioritize development projects
3. To implement development projects
4. To monitor and evaluate development projects

In conclusion, logical framework is a tool used by many international donor organisations for designing, monitoring and evaluating development projects. Worthy of note as well is that logical framework is not static but dynamic and can be adjusted depending on the dynamic nature of the project.

**Components of a Winning Proposal**

For a proposal to be regarded as a winning proposal, it has to be top-notch (Merete, 2012). The author added that the proposal must be one with a good idea and a good presentation. Scipione (2004) explained that funders are particularly interested in grant proposals that priorities’ community needs in connection with project goals and objectives.

Here are some components of a winning proposal:

1. **Good Knowledge of the Funder**: Scipione (2004) stated that the importance of having a deep knowledge of the funder and funder requirements could not be overemphasized. To succeed in proposal writing, prospective grantees should endeavour to abide by all the guidelines and requirements of the donor. Merete (2012) added that for a proposal to be considered, it must have to be in the required format, required font type, spacing requirement, length requirement and must be submitted before the deadline elapses.
2. **Use of a Realistic Budget**: According to Scipione (2004), the proposed budget should state all line items and projected cost. The author further pointed out that the budget must aligned with the proposal such that figures in the budget must correspond with the proposal. Merete (2012) emphasized that there should be a description showing how figures in the budget were arrived at and that only project needs should be reflected in the budget.
3. **Language Usage:** Language used to write project proposals should be concise, clear and free of unnecessary jargons (Merete, 2012). The author added that proposals should be written in simple language understandable to anyone

Scipione (2004) gave comprehensive components of a project proposal, which include:

1. Summary of the project
2. Description of the agency asking for funding
3. Problem statement
4. Objectives of the project
5. Measurable outcomes
6. Evaluation and monitoring plans
7. Realistic budget
8. Letters of support (where applicable)

In summary, project proposals should be presented in a logical manner, detailed systematic approach, comprehendible, cohesive and should be reviewed by other professionals at the end of each proposal stage.

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