REPORT ON ONLINE COURSE.

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Name of the Course: Fundamentals of Project Planning and Management

Course Description: Fundamentals of Project Planning and Management by University of Virginia was taught by Yael Grushka-Cockayne, Associate Professor of UoV, Business Administration.
This is an introductory course on the key concepts of planning and executing projects. It has identified factors that lead to project success, and learn how to plan, analyze, and manage projects. Learners are exposed to state-of-the-art methodologies and to considering the challenges of various types of projects.

- Level: Beginner
- Commitment: 4 weeks of study, 2-3 hours/week
- Language: English

Objectives of the course: Major Objectives of this course are:

- To understand project planning
- To learn how critical path method is used and how to interpret critical tasks
- To study how network analysis is conducted
- To practice simulation for project risk analysis

Course Contains (Syllabus) :

A. Week 1: Welcome to the course - we're excited you're here! In our first week, we'll gain an understanding of what a project is, what it isn't, and why that matters. We'll consider how projects are defined and a project's three objectives. We'll look at a model for examining a project's organization and its stakeholders, and then analyze those stakeholders using a power/interest grid. We'll look at the main reasons why many projects fail and then learn how to measure success. Finally, we'll review the key stages in the project life cycle and highlight the important features of each stage. (8 videos, 4 readings)
B. Week 2: The Ins & Outs of Project Planning-During our second week, we'll start digging into the details, focusing on how to develop a project plan. We'll understand why we plan and what a plan should or should not include. We'll discuss the process of scoping out a

project and see tools that can help us identify what should be included in our project. We'll learn about sequencing project tasks and the nature of the dependencies among project activates. We'll learn how to determine a project's duration and critical path, how it is determined, and why it is useful. We'll see how we should schedule a project and, finally, we'll review how you can make changes to a plan to support your overall project objectives. (9 videos, 1 reading)

C. Week 3: It's a Risky World & Then the Unexpected Happened- In our third week; we'll consider the risk and uncertainties projects face. We'll understand what is risky about projects. We'll identify and assess project risks and prioritize these risks in order to focus our attention on those most impactful to the project. We'll consider schedule risks in detail and ask, "What is the likelihood of finishing on time? What are the drivers that may cause delays in my project?" We'll see how a project budget can be set to include a contingency. Finally, we'll consider situations with a high degree of ambiguity and identify methods than can useful in these situations. (9 video, 1 readings)
D. Week 4: Ready, Set, Go: Project Execution- In our final week, we'll move from plan to action and consider the execution phase of a project. We'll learn about the earned value approach for monitoring and controlling progress. We'll consider the individuals who are executing the project and how their habits impact project progress. We'll discuss some alternative methods for project execution such as Agile, Scrum, and Kanban. Finally, we'll review and summarize the course, and our journey from project definition through execution and completion. (9 videos, 2 readings)

Learning Methodology used in course: The various learning methodologies that were used on this course are:

- Lectures
- PPT
- Videos
- Cases
- Reading Materials
- Simulation

Key Learning from the Course

The importance of project management has been widely recognized and effective tool to handle complex activities since three decades. Project management is widely understood as an emerging discipline in which its members are increasingly involved in their project managers' competencies. The manager’s guides and take leads for meeting projective goals, objectives by following different techniques. As project management is method of introducing and putting new ideas into the market that imposes management methods and techniques that are needed for day-to-day operations.

Project is multidisciplinary ongoing performance that has unique or specific aim and it is temporary endeavor that is limited with specific start date and a end date. On the other hand project management includes the terminology and mechanisms for the company (individuals) to plan tasks, scheduling operations, resource allocation and risk minimization. The project management success has often been associated with the project's final outcome. Over time it has been shown that project management is not inherently directly linked to project performance. The goals of both project and project management vary, and time, expense and progress monitoring, which are also the goals of project management, should not be confused with measuring project success. Basically project success is determined by various factors like objectives, goals, stakeholders, budget and efficiency and effectiveness of project management principles.

The Harverd Business Review has explained project management is a unique set of activities meant to provide a defined outcome within an established timeframe using specific allocation of resources. When it is to discuss about **key learning from the course**, it can be classified under major takeaways.

1. Project life-cycle: The project management life-cycle describes high-level processes for delivering a successful project. This life-cycle can be breakdown into four phases: Imitation, Planning, Execution and Closure. The process of project management basically relates with how the ideas for project are generated, goal identification, plans for execution and directs it to its completion.

   Understanding in context of Livelihood project of XYZ NGOs.

   A. Initiate: initiate phase contains the process about establishing organization structure, project charter and definition. It is fundamental phase that includes understanding a feasibility study, identifying scope, identifying deliverables, developing statement work and other legitimate works.
   B. Plan: Planning is blueprint of any activities that are performed and in this stage guidelines are drafted based on the scope, time and budget. The project manager gets involved on planning and drafting various activities based on the nature. In

context of this holy-trinity (scope, time and budget), project manager have to draw attention on constrained, optimize and compromise as each of this objective might pull in a different way. When manger have to organize community training program, which was not earlier mentioned on their monthly agenda but donor/ funding agencies order . So at this context, he/she must have to think on giving up on one of the other two dimensions. Similarly, change on schedule also could affects on cost and time. When it is to be done as soon as possible then the time is important rather than cost and vice versa. It is equally important to make sure about the things that are done and at emergency time there are chances to get lack. So during such high time, activities are necessary to be monitored. Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is one of successful approach to segregate task and also allows visualizing the activities and nature. Ultimately such activities add value. Furthermore, it is significant to understand the dependencies of task. For an example, when manager need to hire Agriculture Technicians then, he/she needs to coordinate with HR, Finance and also with other program body if they have fellow employee. The independencies can be identified by using different framework like Dependency Design Structure Matrix and Network Diagram. This framework gives logical flow of the project and also allows finding out the duration of the project. Meanwhile, these frames contain various relationships (early start, early late, early finish and late finish). Additionally these frameworks also enable to understand critical path and projected completion date. When project has to be completed within two years from its agreement date, it must have to complete within agreed budget and time. So if any breakdown task let's say, distribution of pesticides to the farmer has to be distributed before winter, but due to monsoon it couldn't happen. Then over here, manager place this task as critical task because its estimated time has crossed. Generally, critical path happens during two conditions. One when early start is equal to late start and next when early finish is equal to late finish.

It is also necessary for the project Manager to allocate and optimize the resources that could be physical, financial and human resources. In the other hand, stakeholders are also important resources on this context. There are different stakes involved on community project and it is imperative to figure out. These stakeholders are determined on the basis of Interest (High and low) and Power (High and low) .

In the figure 2, various stakeholders are classified based on their interest and power in development projects.

- Keep Satisfied: They have High Interest but Low Power. For an example Community people.
- Manage Closely: They have both Power and Interest high. For an example, local governing body, local groups and committee group.

- Keep Informed: They have high power but low interest. Government body could be its example.
- Monitors: Neither they have interest nor power. So this could be funding agencies or donor.

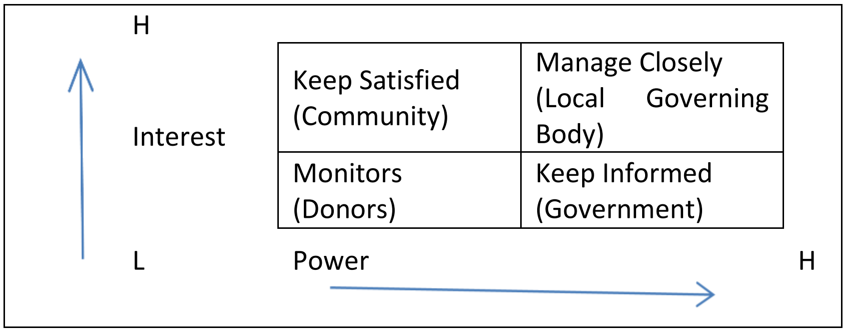


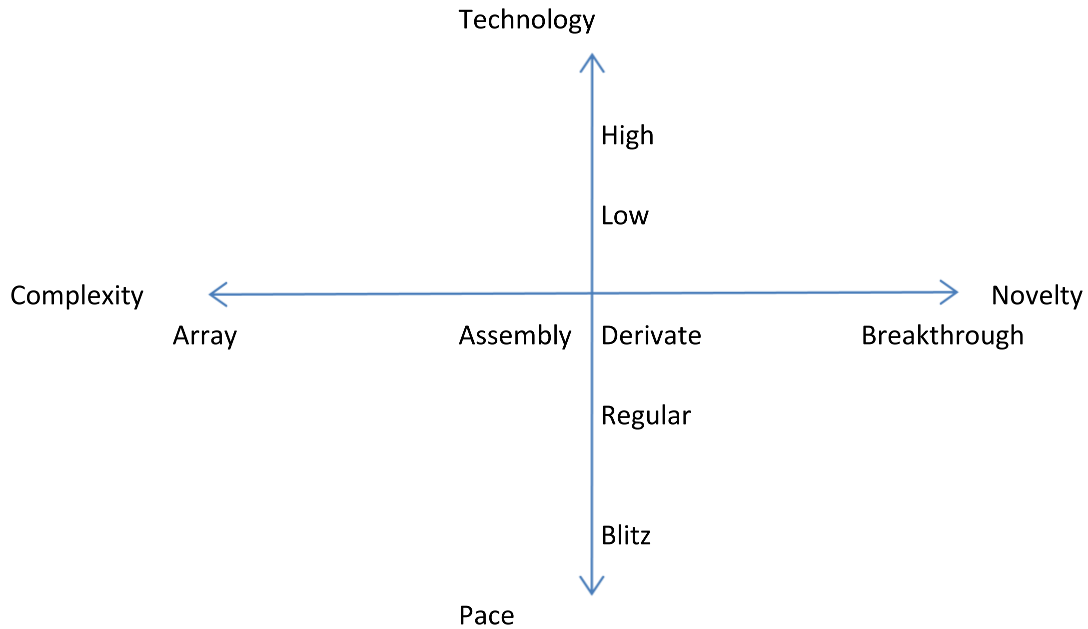
Figure 1: Stakeholder Power/Interest Grid

Last but importantly, during planning phase it is necessary to analyze risk. Here, project manager has vital role on assessing risks. As risk are of different types based on the likelihood and impact. There are particularly three different risks such as foreseeable (uncertainty), complexity and unforeseeable uncertainty (ambiguity). Beside risk type manager has essential role on risk management plan. It can be carried by following four stages; identification by bringing down all stakeholders, assessing by understanding likelihood with nature of impact, response planning and last monitoring and controlling by analyzing project progress. Therefore, in this framework associate calculate probability and based on the score works for contingency. The risk could further be analyzed by studying degree of critical tasks with the help of different charts like tornado chart, schedule risk analysis, and gantt chart. Hence, the mentioned charts examine progress, cost risk, budget risk followed by foreseeable risk and contingency budget of the project.

C. Execute: The strategy helps us to focus on the goals we set, and to understand whether plans are even feasible. It also helps us to come up with ideas about how we want to conduct our project and what sort of processes is required. Thus it is now time to execute the plan to get to work. Project manger plays crucial role on building team work, leadership, organizing team, managing timelines and also following the budgetary track to make sure whether the work is done according to the plan or not . Monitoring quality of work, communicating and reporting the work, correct and controlling team members are few responsibilities at this phase. In context of livelihood projects, manager has to brief and coordinate with its subordinates. Here, he/she monitors workflow and reduce the critical task by contingency planning.

D. Close: In the closure phase, manager provides final outcomes, releases project resources and determines the project's success. Typically, managers compare and contrast the end line report with the beginning report. Through this, project performance, post implementation and review of the project could be generated. In livelihood project, manager will compare the beneficiary’s income and support aid, its efficiency and effectiveness of their approaches. Along with this, manager as well donor could involve on social audit with involvement of stakeholders.

Other then the above, this course has also covered how project gets success and get failure. Talking about reason behind project getting failure are, little or lack of planning, lack of leadership and communication, lack of adaptability with new technology, lack of historical evidences, lack of implementation of project management techniques and biases on various level. On the next hand, success of the project is basically determined by four dimensions,



The success of the project is been defined with respect to its objectives, whether the objectives are achieved or not. By thoughtfully identifying where project lies on each one of these dimensions, it shall be identify the proper tools and techniques by which to manage the project. And that will guarantee, or at least, improve chances of success. So for instance if project is about to begin a new project, and it has been identified that this project, for instance, is low on technology it's a low tech project. And it is derivative, in terms of its novelty. Then, the pace in which it's required to hit the market is neither regular or blitz. There is some urgency, but it is not severe. And on the dimension of complexity, it is rated as moderately complex. Well if identified that and that is not correct, probably the wrong set of techniques and tools to manage the project will be chosen.

Besides, the above theoretical approaches there are some practical simulation been taught on MS Project and MS EXCEL. There, how the above charts are abstracted and how to interpret the results are been explained. For instance, tornado chart have been explained to abstract from MS EXCEL and further interpret, indication with red reflects the task is critical and there has been either cost or time been exceeded. In an overall, the session was really helpful and resourceful.