

founder/director. As a result, the field staff is less effective because it must check constantly with the chief before making decisions. Small NGOs generally have informal work environments and flexible office hours. However, when there is something to be completed, staff often work long hours.

In contrast, large NGOs, which are city-based and work across districts and states, have departments for each development theme. Their office environments are formal compared to the work environments of small, rural NGOs. Large NGOs have staff hierarchies and project approval mechanisms. Department heads often distance themselves from the general staff, as in government bureaucracies. In the absence of the chief executive, who is frequently required to attend meetings, seminars and conferences both in and out of the country, departmental heads have substantial operational powers. The chief executive and directors generally decide on important policy matters.

Low-level workers and field staff have direct contact with the local communities. As a result, they often have the best understanding of the local situation and up-to-date knowledge of projects, issues and problems. They keep their department heads well-informed. The heads, in turn, guide the chief executive.

Most NGO workers have good qualifications. Many have university training and some hold graduate degrees, although not often directly relevant to their work. NGO workers may not be fluent in oral or written English but can express themselves well in their regional language. After a few years of field experience, they know which programs are most relevant and which implementation strategies are most effective in their regions.

NGO staff members are generally ideologically committed to what they do. They believe the projects they implement benefit the people and the country. While they are satisfied with their social status as supervisors and coordinators, they are sometimes frustrated with their low salaries, insecure jobs, heavy work schedules and inability to influence decisions.

Many staff members attend short-term training programs. Most chiefs of large NGOs attend training programs outside the country and have access to newsletters and periodicals on development themes. Consequently, they are usually aware of the latest national and international development debates. Low-level staff are likely to be less aware of current development issues.

NGOs increasingly feel the need for professional and management skills in