How Swiss Red Cross improved document management and efficiency in its Nepal field office

The challenge

Swiss Red Cross's Nepal field office didn't have a systematic way to store and share information. This led to gaps in institutional memory and time wasted on searching for vital project information.

The solution

SRC implemented NGO Online to bring together program, project, and grant management in one integrated system, configured to their specific needs.

The outcome

Now, all SRC staff can instantly access and share all program documents, and work collaboratively within the system. It's easier and faster for Kamal and his team to plan, monitor, and report on their projects. This frees up more time for working directly with communities.

NGO online
by precio fishbone

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The challenge: Patchy documentation increased project management time and inefficiencies

As Nepal Country Coordinator for Swiss Red Cross (SRC), Kamal Baral is responsible for overall management of SRC's Nepal program. This focuses on health and disaster risk management projects. Kamal enjoys working at grassroots level: "I like to work with the community, so I can see what problems they're facing and how we can support them to resolve the need or problem."

However, the lack of a robust document management system and processes was making it harder for Kamal and his team to carry out routine project monitoring and reporting, share lessons learned, and handover to new staff. Some project records were in a patchwork of unlinked Excel spreadsheets. Others were in bulky folders stuffed with hard copy documents. It often wasn't quick or easy to find and share information with SRC head office, or get hold of documents Kamal needed from other SRC country programs.

"We were doing some really good work with communities: effective, sustainable, and cost-effective. But the detail of how we did it mostly remained with us, because things weren't being properly docu-

> "I feel this is a medium that actually brings everyone onto the same page. It tells everyone where we are and how we have to move to achieve the goal of the project. That's the beauty that NGO Online gives. Everybody knows where we have to go, and what tools we have, and where those tools are located."

Kamal Baral, Country Coordinator for Nepal, Swiss Red Cross

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mented and disseminated to other country programs so they can have a benefit to other countries as well. And the gaps in institutional memory had a significant impact on our team."

The solution: An integrated software solution for stronger project management

Swiss Red Cross realized they needed a better way to store, manage, and share information across their international operations. They wanted something user-friendly and flexible enough for their specific needs. SRC chose NGO Online software because it ticks those boxes, and provides an integrated solution for managing programs, projects, and grants.

Kamal was an enthusiastic advocate for implementing a better system, and the SRC Nepal team helped test the new software in late 2018. It was then implemented, with a mixture of virtual and in-person training sessions for all staff.

Now, all SRC personnel have direct access through NGO Online to all documents from SRC programs around the world, organized systematically. And NGO Online's centralized, web-based data collection system has replaced the numerous unlinked spreadsheets the Nepal field office were using. It allows for rapid, accurate tracking, analysis, and reporting of program and project data.

The outcome: Faster, more efficient program management – more community work

The changes in how project information is recorded, stored, and shared have transformed the ways Kamal and his colleagues work. Having all this vital program information at their fingertips has freed up more time and energy for delivering projects to the communities they work with.

"Now we can save time, we can be more efficient. We can plan our activities and milestones, we can monitor the use of funds, and whether things are happening on time or not. I use the risk assessment part of NGO Online a lot, to monitor the risks we've documented. And if we need any standardized templates you just go to the resource library and get the latest version of a document. You don't need to ask anyone at headquarters. It's very user friendly."

Kamal particularly likes being able to work collaboratively on draft documents within the system. Everybody can see at a glance which is the latest version of a document. This helps avoid errors with version control.

"Your whole office is within your computer, within your mobile device. All documents are there, in a very systematic order. And you can work together with your colleagues on the same document, sitting anywhere in the world. It's helping to improve transparency and communication. I don't need to click several emails to send documents to people, I just upload to NGO Online and they all have access. I like this tool a lot!"

Kamal can also instantly access information from other SRC programs to help him in planning and managing Nepal's projects. "I can think, okay, let me find out how the health program is being implemented in Bangladesh, or how the response program is taking place in Haiti. And with just a single click I can collect this information. This is a big change for me."

While Kamal and his team used to spend "a big chunk of time" writing around 20 pages for each quarterly report, they no longer need to do so. "Because we're already entering project information into NGO Online as we go along, all the data is there. And you can just fit it into your template, it's just copy, paste. It's just so quick, so time-saving. It's a wonderful tool and I would definitely recommend it."

To find out more about NGO Online's unique, comprehensive software solution for NGOs, get in touch:

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ABOUT

NGO Online is a cloud-based program, project and grant management IT solution specifically designed for international humanitarian and development NGOs.

NGO Online is developed by Precio Fishbone, a product and consulting company focused on SharePoint and Microsoft 365 based solutions. We have customers in Europe, Asia and North America supported by approximately 250 employees in Sweden, Denmark, United Kingdom, Canada and Vietnam.

Together with our partners, we have assisted some 1000 customers with their digital solutions.

Precio Fishbone is listed on Nasdaq Stockholm First North Premier.

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