

Organisational Capacity Assessment Project Summary Report

HKU-HKJC ExCEL3
Department of Social Work and Social Administration

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What is Organisational Capacity?

We can think of organisational capacity as all those components it takes for an organisation to achieve its mission, from physical resources to people to ideas. At any given moment, capacity is an output of basic organisational activities like managing budgets, recruiting board members, raising funds, serving constituents and so forth. As capacity is generated, it is spent on mission-related activities and then regenerated through those same organisational activities. The reason then for an organisation to engage in any capacity building effort is to generate more capacity to achieve program impact (Light, 2004).

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The Process of Organisational Assessment

- Any attempt to build capacity should always be preceded by an organisational assessment in order to guide where, how, and if capacity building should even occur. Capacity building efforts should not be implemented in a vacuum; an organisation should always have a clear picture of its assets and deficits
- Results from such assessment exercises serve as a baseline measure of how an organisation is currently doing in terms of its existing capacities and also provide a starting point for those areas on which to focus capacity building efforts. Ideally, a capacity assessment tool should be used on a consistent basis, for example annually, as a means of incorporating learning into the organisational culture

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About Organisational Capacity Assessment Project (OCAP)

- OCAP is an ExCEL3 project in collaboration with the Department of Social Work and Administration
- NGOs that participate in OCAP undergo organisational assessment, using the ExCEL3 Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) and receive a recommendations report

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About Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)

- OCAT is a two-part tool consisting of a self-administered survey and a facilitator-led discussion section. Results from the individual self-assessment and group discussion can be used as a reference point for where an organisation stands at a particular time, help drive capacity building efforts, and contribute to the organisation's learning and culture
- The ExCEL3 OCAT is based on a revision of the original CCAT by members of the ExCEL3 team, and updated through current research on governance, leadership and philanthropy in the third sector in Hong Kong as well as a review of the latest literature on organisational assessment for nonprofits. The tool was then translated to Chinese and localized through the experience of 5 local NGOs

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- There are 9 capacity areas in OCAT:
 - Governance and Leadership
 - Human Resource Management
 - Financial Management
 - Organisational Planning
 - Innovation and Learning
 - Program Management
 - Performance Management
 - Partnerships and External Relationships
 - Technology

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Purpose of OCAP

- To work with NGOs in Hong Kong to increase their self-knowledge and help direct their capacity building efforts
- Results from the assessment could be used by NGOs to help future development
- Feedback from the NGOs will be used to revise and develop a localised OCAT for NGOs in Hong Kong

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Summary Overview

- A total of 5 nonprofit organisations participated in OCAP, ranging from social services provision to environmental protection. All were non-subsented by the government; had annual budgets ranging from of HKD 5-12 million and staff headcount ranging from 20-35
- 120 responses collected on 116 questions
- 10 focus groups conducted
- 5 recommendations reports submitted to the NGO

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Overall Areas of Strengths and Development

- What follows is a summary of the areas of strengths and development. Please note that only 5 organisations took part in this initial phase of OCAP, and the results are not representative of the sector as a whole
- Survey scores are a subjective measure of capacity and a low score does not necessarily reflect low capacity. It could be due to lack of understanding of the question, lack of communication within the organisation regarding that issue, or even a lack of relevance to the organisation. This is why a facilitator-led focus group is crucial to understanding the survey results
- All organisations are at different stages of their development, providing different services, and so it is not productive to compare amongst them

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Areas of Strengths

The following areas were the highest scored capacity areas:

- Governance and Leadership
- Human Resource Management
- Program Management

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Top 10 Statements (Agree or Strongly Agree)

- Our organisation is guided by a clearly written set of shared core values. (94.5%)
- Our organisation has a clear mission and vision that reflects its values and purpose, and are frequently referred to in order to direct actions and set priorities. (91.8%)
- Our staff have the appropriate skills and professional knowledge to achieve our mission. (91.7%)
- Our senior management is energetic, highly committed, and able to live the organisation's vision. (89%)
- We regularly review our service portfolio to discuss new ideas for program development. (88.9%)
- Our management team are able to work independently, without over-reliance on the CEO. (88.1%)
- When necessary, our organisation collaborates with other NGOs within the community to address the needs of our clients. (88%)
- Ongoing communication, based on trust and openness, exists across all levels of our organisation. (88%)
- All our programs and services are fully aligned with our organisation's mission and goals. (88%)
- Our senior management keeps up-to-date on issues relevant to our organisation. (86.2%)

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Areas of Development

The following areas are the capacity areas with the lowest scores:

- Performance Management
- Financial Management
- Partnerships and External Relationship
- Technology

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Bottom 10 Statements (Agree or Strongly Agree)

- We have a well-developed comprehensive, integrated system used for measuring our organisation's performance and progress on a continual basis. (19.5%)
- Our organisation has the proper management information systems in place to collect, analyze and share data. (21.3%)
- Our organisation has enough manpower to provide technical support to individual staff. (28.7%)
- We regularly conduct market analysis in order to better position our organisation for the future. (28.7%)
- Our organisation is strong in identifying and cultivating new donors. (28.7%)
- We have a contingency plan in place to account for sudden changes in our internal or external environment. (28.7%)
- Our organisation has a highly diversified funding source and is thus insulated from potential market instabilities. (32.4%)
- Our organisation has a sound succession plan in place. (33%)
- Different levels of staff are well trained and supported in using the different technology. (36.1%)
- Our organisation has incentive systems which are competitive enough in motivating staff to perform their roles in an outstanding way. (38.9%)

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Interested Participants

- NGOs interested to participate in the survey can email the Project Manager at mcs Wong@hku.hk
- If it is agreed to go ahead, you will be issued a survey link which can then be shared with the rest of your organisation to complete
- Once completed, the survey system can generate a summary of results for your organisation to go through and use as a basis for discussion
- For further instructions please read through the user manual

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