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Development Consortium: Changes That Matter

Development Consortium (DC) is an Indian non-profit organization dedicated to working with young people and vulnerable communities across India – empowering them to overcome issues related to health, education and rights, abuse and injustice. DC believes that a better future for humanity depends on the capacity to harness change. And building this capacity forms the core of their working model.

DC supports and facilitates global development programs to implement their projects in India and help Indian NGOs and organizations develop organizational capacities to maximize their potential. Through each of these, DC enables their stakeholders to facilitate actionable and sustainable change.

Challenges

DC visualizes young girls and boys (adolescents) reaching their full mental and physical development by addressing the health and economic impacts caused due to lack of iron in the body, ensuring their own and shared socio-economic growth of the community. DC has set up a robust Monitoring & Evaluation program to monitor the interventions across these beneficiaries. In the process of monitoring, evaluating & reviewing – DC has been facing challenges in data collection, unprecedented errors & tool limitations.

The beneficiary data was collected manually and entered in an excel sheet for record and analysis purposes. Also, correcting the errors made during data collection and data entry took up a lot of unwanted effort and time.

DC was at a higher SMART™ level when it came to its programs, but it was hindered from reaching its true potential due to a lower SMART™ level in its processes.

Solutions

After initial rounds of discussions and a detailed review and analysis of the questionnaire and the data, Acies proposed an M365-based solution.

1. The [free Microsoft 365 NGO license](#) was leveraged to build a dynamic data collection tool using [Microsoft Power Apps](#). The Application enables easy and accurate data collection.
2. [Microsoft SharePoint](#) pages were created to store, track and retrieve the data of the beneficiaries.

Outcomes

The application built for DC has several benefits as listed below:

- Simple navigation & limited features
- Minimal effort and actions
- Minimal chances of error by setting defaults, dropdowns and lists
- Breaking a long form into tabs & sections
- Setting smart defaults
- Better understanding; questions in English and Hindi
- Avoid loss of information by making important fields mandatory
- Provision to make minor changes and updates in the data at supervisory level
- Access restrictions to data loggers, supervisors, and super admins

Up Ahead

Data analysis and visualization will be the next step for DC to enhance the performance and outcome of its program. In fact, Microsoft Power BI Application can be used to build a dynamic dashboard that could help the stakeholders readily understand the beneficiaries' anemic levels and take necessary measures.

However, this is only the beginning and there is more that can be done to make DC a SMART™ organization:

1. Power Apps, SharePoint and Power BI could be used to build similar data logger tools for other projects and initiatives of DC making them more efficient and effective
2. The SharePoint system can aid in more process automation to make communication more efficient
3. Dedicated SharePoint sites programs can help streamline and categorize data storage and data presentation
4. A dedicated SharePoint communication site can help in keeping all the employees and volunteers up to date about the newest announcements
5. With Power Apps and Power Automate, the organization can create employee directories, leave management trackers, inventory management trackers, invoice generators, and processors. Also, it can build other kinds of supporting applications into SharePoint.

Conclusion

The identification of resources that are freely available to NPOs and the utilization of the right tools at the right levels of systems can drive NPOs to faster actualization of their goals. With the implementation of a Data Collection and Data Recording Application, DC will be able to save time spent on redundant processes, and error corrections, and focus on creating impact.

Analytics, insight-building, and dashboards are powerful tools that can fast-track social and institutional changes. And DC can leverage this using the freely available Power BI tool.

However, with one initiative moving towards a dynamic and technologically advanced method of data collection and storage, DC can evaluate its advantages and take further action in utilizing the freely available tools in M365. As a result, it enables the automation of other processes and systems within their organization, as well as other stakeholder projects which involve data collection, monitoring, and evaluation. With the right mix of technologies, DC was able to elevate its processes to a SMART™ level and unlock better potential toward higher impact.

Do you have similar challenges in your organization? Take your first definitive step towards creating better and faster impact.

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