Challenges in the Administrative Processes of Community-Based Non-Profit Organisation in Durban, South Africa

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Abstract

This research paper explores the administrative challenges faced by non-profit organisations (NPOs) operating in Durban, South Africa, through the insights of NPO founders. Using a qualitative methodology, the study employs semi-structured interviews with NPO leaders across sectors, including education, health, and community development. Findings reveal that NPOs in Durban face significant obstacles, particularly in sustaining funding, addressing human resource constraints, meeting regulatory compliance requirements, and building capacity. Many NPOs struggle to secure adequate financial support due to intense competition for limited grant funding and reliance on unpredictable government funding, thereby affecting their operational effectiveness. Additionally, high staff turnover and reliance on volunteers exacerbate human resource challenges, hindering service delivery. Regulatory burdens further complicate operations, as navigating complex compliance requirements demands significant time and resources. The study underscores the need for enhanced training and capacity-building initiatives to equip NPO leaders with essential management and administration skills. The paper concludes with recommendations to foster the digital transformation of the administrative process among NPOs. By addressing these administrative challenges collectively, NPOs in Durban can enhance their effectiveness in serving the local communities.

Keywords: Public administration, Non-profit organisation, administration, digital transformation.

Introduction

NPOs are described as organisations that work to better the lives and means of subsistence of those who are underprivileged or have not yet been able to understand their full potential in society (Diab, 2021). In South Africa, these organisations are organised and private in type since they are institutionally distinct from the government (Nkabinde & Mamabolo 2022). According to the South African NPO Act (No. 71 of 1997). A NPO is "a trust, company or other association of persons established for a public purpose; and the income and property of which may not be distributable to its members or office-bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered".

South Africa is still a very unequal nation plagued by poverty and misery, and there are still apparent remnants of its authoritarian past. According to Odeku (2023), the years of segregation during the apartheid era are still the source of issues with inequality, social exclusion and a lack of integration. These socio-economic problems continue despite the government investing a significant sum of money in social upliftment to address these causes

(Rogerson & Rogerson, 2023). Due to the ongoing demand for social development, non-profit organisations (NPOs) are seen by South African society as a source of social service delivery, development and improvement, as well as a means of mobilising for social change.

Despite their necessity, NPOs have not received the highest level of support from either the government or civil society to ensure their continued existence (Sithole, Phesa & Sibanda 2024). However, it must be noted that NPOs are integral to the social fabric of communities worldwide, serving as vehicles for change and development in response to various societal needs (McIntyre, 2021). In Durban, South Africa, an urban centre characterised by economic diversity and significant socio-economic challenges, it also grapples with high unemployment rates, widespread inequality, and various social issues (Mvunabandi & Mbonigaba, 2023). NPOs in this region have emerged to fill crucial gaps in service delivery, advocating for marginalised communities and providing essential programs that improve quality of life (Mvunabandi et al., 2022). Engaging in a wide range of activities, from educational support and healthcare initiatives to environmental conservation and social justice advocacy. Nevertheless, the operational landscape for these organisations is fraught with challenges that can undermine their effectiveness (Henna & Mdiniso, 2024).

Research Problem

Community-based NPOs in Durban are essential players in addressing the socio-economic challenges within their communities, including poverty alleviation, education, healthcare, and social welfare. Despite their critical role, many of these organisations face persistent challenges in their administrative processes that significantly hamper their effectiveness and sustainability (Sibisi & Makka, 2022). Many NPOs rely on manual, paper-based systems for record-keeping and communication, which lead to inefficiencies, errors, and delays in data retrieval and reporting (Suykens *et al.*, 2022). The absence of digital tools also hampers effective communication both internally and with external stakeholders, reducing overall organisational responsiveness (Gee *et al.*, 2023). These interconnected administrative shortcomings contribute to operational inefficiencies, reduce stakeholder trust, and limit the potential impact of community-based NPOs (Lim & Kim, 2025). Consequently, the sustainability and scalability of these organisations are compromised, diminishing their capacity to address pressing community needs over time.

Given this context, it is imperative to undertake an in-depth investigation into the specific administrative challenges faced by community-based NPOs in Durban. This article aims to evaluate administrative process challenges through the lens of an NPO founder, providing insight into the underlying

challenges that hinder the effectiveness of administrative processes in community-based NPOs and ultimately affect the communities they serve. Secondly, the researchers explore the experiences of NPO founders and recommend best practices for administrative processes with a digital-transformation focus. Addressing these administrative challenges is crucial for improving resource utilisation, compliance, and effective management practices, enhancing service delivery, improving stakeholder engagement, and ultimately empowering NPOs to serve communities better. This work aspires not only to inform current stakeholders in the NPO sector but also to inspire future policy developments and collaborative efforts that can strengthen NPOs' role in promoting social welfare and community resilience.

Literature review

Administration processes for community-based NPOs

An organisation's administration is its very essence. Administrative process, as noted by Joensuu-Salo, Viljamaa and Varamäki (2022). This is how verdicts are made, assignments are given and finished, data is collected and shared, and resources are distributed. Bellini and Raglianti (2023) aver that it is the method by which an establishment, organisation or institution completes tasks. Examples of administrative processes include setting up meetings, processing bills and costs, tracking personnel and payroll, responding to customer questions and correspondence, keeping up with office supplies and equipment, and organising mail and document filing systems. (Persada and Nabella 2023). However, in global NPOs, insufficient resources, inadequate planning and management, poor leadership and communication, a lack of accountability and corruption, a lack of skilled workers and training, outdated infrastructure, low citizens' participation, and adverse effects from external political and economic circumstances are some of the leading causes of poor administrative service delivery (Mampane, 2023). NPOs in South Africa are not excluded from global issues, as outmoded, flawed and unreliable administrative processes impair NPO service delivery.

Accountability of administrative processes in community-based NPOs

A robust understanding of administrative challenges in community-based NPOs rests on an interconnected theoretical lens—namely, Governance theory and NPO foundation theory. In practice, the 'Governance theory' of NPOs involves balancing policy direction, compliance obligations, funding

allocation, and program outcomes within environments that supply modest resources and uncertain funding streams (Young, 2021). Regulations and laws apply to NPOs. Chu and Luke (2023) suggest that adherence to rules and regulations is a key component of accountability. Fulfilling these responsibilities demonstrates prudent resource management and helps preserve the company's legal standing and reputation (English, O'Neal-McElrath, and Kanter 2025). To carry out their tasks, NPOs rely on public confidence and support. Assuring stakeholders and donors that their funds are being utilised sensibly and for the right reasons, accountability demonstrations increase openness and trust.

Maintaining public confidence is essential to long-term viability and gaining continued support. Frequently, NPOs focus on humanitarian, environmental or social issues. It is morally required of these groups to exhibit accountability because they seek to improve society. Accountability guarantees that NPOs' actions are consistent with their declared ideals and tenets (Chu and Luke 2023). On the other hand, 'NPOs foundation theory' focuses on NPOs' vision, mission, and upliftment projects for communities (Pilon & Brouard, 2023). NPO administration refers to applying business, leadership and creative abilities to support an NPO in its efforts to serve as many people as feasible and operate as efficiently as possible (Dicke and Ott 2023). In NPOs, it is important to realise that the most effective way to grow an organisation is to invest in its employees. Many NPO management abilities can be taught, while some are natural.

Administrative Governance theory *vs* NPOs foundation theory

However, literature suggests that perspectives emphasise the potential for conflict between governance theory and NPOs' foundation theory (Toepler & Anheier, 2021; Ahmad *et al.*, 2024; Neumann *et al.*, 2024). This is due to the overload of administrative processes and the opposing interests of NPO governance compliance. Leaders of NPOs must strike a balance between achieving their missions and maintaining their administration processes aligned to governance requirements (Oyelola 2025). However, to increase operational effectiveness, boost donor transparency, and satisfy changing stakeholder expectations in a digital environment, NPOs must use a digital system to align administrative processes (Zimmermann, Soares & Roca 2024; Tumpa & Naeni 2025).

Challenges that affect the administration processes in community-based NPOs

Challenges in the Administrative Processes

According to De Corte, Arys and Roose (2022), NPOs work hard to accomplish ambitious objectives with inadequate or very little funding. Individual contributors, corporations, foundations, government agencies, investments, and other potential sources may provide funding for the organisation, depending on its size, structure, and mission. However, fundraising is unexpected and highly competitive. Even if NPOs are successful in raising money, the funds frequently have complex conditions attached that limit how they can be utilised (De Corte, Arys and Roose 2022).

Contributions are frequently made to NPOs with the agreement that either none of the funds be used for overheads or only a small portion be used for overheads. Moreover, donations to charities can occasionally be made with a specific program or goal in mind. Therefore, to guarantee a variety of restricted and unrestricted funding sources, non-profit directors must discover a vast collection of fundraising channels while avoiding over-reliance on a single donor or funding source (De Corte, Arys and Roose 2022).

In relation to the issue of finance, Kober and Thambar (2023) note that forecasting and budgeting in non-profit organisations can be difficult due to a variety of restricted fund categories and unreliable funding sources, as known fund sources are not always guaranteed. To ensure expenditure is budgeted to support ongoing operations while continuing to meet the goal, financial managers must be exceedingly cautious when projecting revenue for future financial quarters. Accurate income predictions and forecasting are critical components of non-profit budgeting (Kober &Thambar 2023). Therefore, one cannot predict how much money will be available to spend on programs until one knows how much money the organisation will raise. To ensure that money is set aside and budgeted correctly, leaders administering must monitor the cash in several limited buckets while they predict their budget (Kober & Thambar 2023).

According to Holzer (2024), it can be hard for NPOs to manage their cash flow, which involves coordinating when funds come in and go out of their organisation. When NPO funding is limited and somewhat unreliable, the situation can be odd due to erratic timing. For instance, end-of-year giving campaigns result in many NPOs receiving a significant portion of their annual earnings at year-end. Donations are welcome at any time, but if

NPOs receive the majority of their funding in the last month of the year, it may be difficult to cover their expenses from previous months (Holzer, 2024).

Jung (2024) notes that NPOs that receive grant funding are probably in charge of monitoring the search and application procedures, as well as the awards and their reporting obligations. Although grant management is difficult and complex, particularly for organisations that receive financing from several awards, grant funding is crucial to the functioning and success of charities. Missed deadlines, misappropriation of funds, and noncompliance with standards can all result from poor grant management. In the short-term, this can harm NPOs by preventing them from making the most of their grant's potential. The organisation may thus suffer long-term consequences, including harm to its reputation and difficulty in obtaining continuous grant financing (Jung 2024).

Theoretical Framework
This research study employs the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) as the framework of analysis to investigate the challenges hindering the effectiveness of administrative processes in community-based NPOs in Durban. The UTAUT framework offers a comprehensive lens for exploring the factors influencing the adoption, acceptance, and utilisation of technology, an increasingly critical component of NPOs' efficient administration. Administrative inefficiencies in community-based NPOs are often linked to limited or ineffective use of information and communication technologies (ICT). The UTAUT model helps to systematically examine the determinants affecting technology adoption, such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Methodology
The study utilised a qualitative approach, conducting semi-structured interviews with NPO founders in Durban, eThekwini Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. Permission for this study was granted by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Social Development and the Institutional Research and Ethics Committee (IREC) of the Durban University of Technology. Ten (10) NPO founders in Durban were selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation of various community-based NPOs, including those focused on health, education, and community development. The following selection criteria were used to select NPOs' founders who participated in the study.

Relevance: The NPO should engage with or have an impact on the communities in the research area, which is the eThekwini region in KwaZulu-Natal.

Experience: The NPO must have considerable experience in the field to possess the knowledge and abilities to participate in the study.

Credibility: The NPO should have a good track record of implementing effective programs and using resources efficiently.

Availability and willingness: The NPO should be available throughout the study's duration and willing to cooperate in the research.

Ethical regulations: The NPO should follow professional and ethical conduct in its organisational practices or projects; and

Independent status: Preferably, an NPO not affiliated with any biased or harmful entity.

The pseudonyms P01 – P10 were used to represent the participants interviewed. Information gathered from participants had to be corroborated to enhance reliability and quality. The study adhered to ethical considerations outlined in DUT's research guidelines, aligning with the philosophical examination of right and wrong in research ethics.

Data analysis

Primary data is collected by the researcher directly from participants by interviews, focus groups, mail or computerised surveys to address the questions of a study (Velentgas et al., 2013). In this study, the qualitative data instruments included face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the founders of community-based NPOs based in Durban. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews allow flexibility in the questioning process, enabling participants to share their thoughts and experiences more openly. These questions explored current administrative processes and the factors affecting them in community-based NPOs.

Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, following established academic guidelines by Maguire and Delahunt (2017). An analysis of data from open-ended questions with NPO founders resulted in the researcher identifying themes, generating preliminary codes, identifying potential themes, meticulously evaluating and defining these themes, and ultimately presenting the findings in accordance with established qualitative data analysis procedures. This study adhered to the same process and steps outlined in the literature for qualitative data analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Xu & Zammit, 2020).

Thematic analysis facilitates the categorisation of interviewees' real-life experiences into several subjects, thereby enabling a thorough understanding of the investigated issue (Humble & Mozelius, 2022). Thematic analysis was employed to identify common challenges and insights shared by the participants. Thereafter, the researcher identified themes and sub-themes to interpret the qualitative data and compare the findings with the literature.

Results

NPO founders represent a critical stakeholder group whose first-hand experiences provide invaluable insights into the administrative challenges that shape organisational effectiveness. Their reflections reveal nuanced barriers to administration beyond those identified in the broader literature. The analysis of the content data unfolded across three thematic dimensions aligned with the study's objectives. Firstly, to provide insight into the underlying challenges that hinder the effectiveness of administration processes in community-based NPOs, which can ultimately affect the communities they serve. Secondly, exploring the experiences of NPO founders can reveal best practices and innovative solutions.

The findings presented below are synthesised from primary data collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 founders of community-based NPOs operating in diverse socio-economic contexts in Durban. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis in accordance with established academic guidelines. Researchers immersed themselves in the data, generated preliminary codes, identified potential themes, and meticulously evaluated and defined these themes, ultimately presenting the findings in alignment with established qualitative data analysis procedures.

NPO founders were asked about the significant challenges the NPO experienced within the current administrative processes. The key findings are presented in Figure 1.1 and thereafter discussed.

Figure 1.1: NPOs' insight into significant challenges within the NPOs' administrative processes

Source: Moodlley-Bhulaye, 2025.

Resource constraints

NPO founders highlighted an overwhelming financial constraint as a

significant barrier to effective administrative operations. Many participants reported that insufficient funding restricts the NPOs' ability to invest in necessary technology, hire qualified staff, and provide adequate training. This perception underlines a common belief that financial stability is critical to overcoming administrative hurdles. The following participants cited that:

> Limited resources often mean that we struggle with time management. Staff sometimes encounter workload pressures, which can lead to lapses in administrative diligence. Also, funding is an issue. Employees are encouraged to communicate challenges and work collaboratively to prioritise and delegate tasks (P03).

> Limited funding and high demand for services can stretch our resources thin. Staff burnout is also a concern, as administrative tasks can sometimes become overwhelming alongside community service (P07).

NPOs often operate with limited staff and rely heavily on volunteers. This can lead to burnout and high turnover rates. Recruitment and retention of skilled personnel remain issues, compounded by poor remuneration and limited career development opportunities.

Workload and staff burnout

Many NPO founders expressed concern about the high workloads placed on the limited NPO staff. The perception of chronic understaffing leads to burnout and stress among employees, thereby affecting the NPO's productivity and motivation. This recognition of the human factor emphasises the need for adequate staffing and support to maintain a healthy work environment. Here are some of the participants' responses.

> The main challenges are limited staff and funding. Employees often experience burnout and overwhelming stress at work. Everyone at the NPO has to complete an administrative task; there is no escape. Staff rely on teamwork and communicate openly about their workloads to ensure that critical tasks are prioritised (P04).

Many NPO leaders expressed a need for ongoing training in governance, project management, and fundraising techniques. Lack of access to capacity-building resources limits NPOs' effectiveness, hindering their ability to innovate and adapt to changing circumstances.

Technological challenges

NPOs' founders exhibit mixed perceptions of technology. In contrast, many recognise the importance of adopting digital efficiency solutions, a

significant portion of organisations report feeling overwhelmed by the rapid pace of technological change. Participants' response is as follows:

> A significant challenge is the limited financial resources, which make it hard to invest in better technology and additional administrative support. Staff often collaborate closely to share workloads and best practices, and we encourage open discussions about the hurdles they face (P05).
> The constrained budget limits our ability to finance technology and administrative support. High turnover in volunteers also makes consistent administrative practice difficult. We work as a team, share knowledge, and support one another in managing workloads and overcoming administrative challenges (P08).

The lack of digital skills among staff and insufficient training further exacerbate these challenges, leading to a reluctance to embrace technology fully.

Compliance pressures

The perception of compliance with regulatory requirements is a source of stress for many NPOs. NPO founders have expressed concerns about the complexities of navigating legal obligations and maintaining transparency and accountability, often leading to anxiety about potential penalties or scrutiny from stakeholders. Participants' responses are as follows:

> The dedication to compliance with regulatory requirements is a source of stress. Our staff is prioritising more hours spent on manual administration tasks than on assisting communities. Funding is also another challenge we experience (P09).

Navigating the complex legal and regulatory framework governing NPOs in South Africa is a daunting task for many NPO founders. There is an ongoing challenge to remain compliant with the requirements set by the Department of Social Development and other regulatory bodies. This includes reporting and record-keeping, which can be resource-intensive. Many NPOs in Durban struggle with securing sustainable funding. The competition for grants, limited donor trust, and high reliance on government funding pose significant challenges. Financial mismanagement and lack of budgeting skills further exacerbate the issue. NPO founders highlighted the need for financial literacy training to enhance their capabilities.

Data management issues

NPOs' founders perceive inadequate data management practices as a significant challenge affecting the NPO operations. NPO founders cite

difficulties in storing and analysing data. This perception underlines the need for improved data processes and infrastructure. The following participant cited that.

> That storing and maintaining data management processes hampers the NPO's ability to make informed decisions and to have a quick, practical impact. It does take time to find and identify data in a timely manner when working within communities. Our financial limitations broadly restrict our ability to invest in more sophisticated technology that would enable instant data retrieval. Additionally, high demands for our services can outpace our administrative capacity, creating operational bottlenecks (P10).

Support for capacity building

The perception of a gap in support for capacity-building initiatives is evident, with NPO founders expressing a need for targeted training programs that address the NPO-specific administrative challenges. Organisations recognise that external support and tailored training could significantly enhance their operational capabilities. Participant P01 expressed the following statement:

> There is no support given to NPO in terms of assisting with training for maintaining administrative tasks with a more minor admin task team. There are always budget cuts, and then a reduction in the number of admin staff within the NPO. If there was free external support for administration, we would use it. With our current budget, we cannot enhance our administrative process or improve our NPO's capabilities (P01).

Overall, the findings reveal that NPO founders have a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced in the community-based NPO administrative processes. Additionally, the findings reflect a combination of internal and external factors affecting NPOs' operational effectiveness.

Discussion

The results of this study shed light on the administrative operational complexities that define the community-based NPOs. Through insights from NPO founders, several critical findings emerged regarding the administrative hurdles these organisations face, as well as potential pathways to address these challenges and capitalise on existing opportunities.

One of the primary challenges faced by NPOs is limited financial resources.

Many NPOs rely heavily on donations, grants, and fundraising to support their operations, resulting in chronic underfunding (Reficco *et al.*, 2021). This lack of resources can lead to insufficient staffing and inadequate infrastructure, impacting the organisation's ability to carry out its mission. Many NPOs struggle to compete for funding, particularly as they face stiff competition from other organisations and the increasing expectations of funders who often require more extensive reporting and accountability (Finley *et al.*, 2021). As NPO founders rely on funding to proceed with NPO administrative processes, if there are no funds to pay for an internet connection at the NPO, all documentation advancements are halted.

Additionally, the findings indicated that staff at NPOs often wear multiple hats due to limited personnel, resulting in increased workloads. This is particularly problematic in smaller organisations where staff may have to juggle administrative tasks with direct service delivery (Wang and Seifert, 2021). The pressure to perform under such conditions can lead to burnout, which not only affects employee well-being but also impacts the organisation's continuity and quality of service. High turnover rates can disrupt programs and lead to the loss of institutional knowledge, further exacerbating the challenges of service delivery (Setati, 2023). This can affect NPO staff burnout, leading to delays in the administration process. It was found that the adoption of technology presents both opportunities and challenges for NPOs. Camngca *et* al. (2024) highlighted that many organisations struggle with outdated administration systems (manual) or lack the resources for modern technology upgrades. This can limit the NPO's operational efficiency, inhibit effective communication, and affect service delivery.

NPO leaders frequently emphasised the potential of a digital system to streamline administrative tasks, reduce time spent on paperwork and enable staff to focus more on core mission-driven activities (Holman, 2022). NPO Managers noted specific examples where digital tools could minimise redundant processes. Similarly, NPO administrative staff echoed these sentiments, discussing time-consuming, manual processes. These participants expressed eagerness for a system that automates reporting, provides audio-to-text capabilities, tracks donations, and manages volunteers, thereby enhancing NPO productivity and morale. Mziray and Mshana (2023) highlighted that addressing these challenges requires advocacy at the municipal and national levels with the improvement of procedures where the NPO is compliant, whilst still focusing on the NPO's core mission.

The research highlights the interconnectedness of these challenges, suggesting that addressing one area can lead to improvements in others. For

example, enhancing knowledge of digital administration may lead to improved implementation of digital administration processes, while better financial management monitoring practices can enhance NPO funding allocation.

Conclusion

The study highlights that while NPOs in Durban play a vital role in social service delivery, they face a myriad of administrative challenges that impede their success. Addressing funding instability, regulatory compliance, administrative capacity, technology adoption, and stakeholder engagement is crucial for enhancing the operational efficiency of NPOs. The insights provided by NPO founders in this research serve as a valuable resource for understanding the local context and informing strategies to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of NPOs in the region. By addressing these challenges collaboratively, NPOs can better fulfil their missions and contribute positively to the communities they serve.

Recommendations

The research recommends establishing support networks for NPOs to enhance knowledge sharing and collaboration. Additionally, targeted training programs focused on compliance, technology use, and effective stakeholder engagement could empower NPO founders to navigate their administrative challenges better. The paper concludes with several actionable recommendations for NPO founders in Durban.

Implement a capacity-building programme focused on financial management, human resources practices, and compliance training.

By training staff in financial management, NPOs can better budget, track, and report funds, ensuring resources are used effectively and transparently. It would assist in improving the financial oversight for the NPO. In addition, training NPO administrative staff in human resource practices helps standardise recruitment, performance management, and staff development, reducing turnover and increasing productivity.

Compliance training would ensure that the organisation adheres to legal and regulatory requirements, avoiding penalties and minimising operational risks. Moreover, capacity building reduces errors, improves decision-making, and empowers staff with skills that optimise day-to-day operations.

Foster networks among NPOs to share best practices and resources.

NPOs' networking facilitates knowledge sharing among the administration, such as the exchange of successful administrative methods, innovative management techniques, and lessons learned to help organisations avoid

common pitfalls.

In an attempt to find cost-saving methods among NPOs in a region or area, sharing resources such as training materials, office space, or administrative tools can reduce operational costs. It is also recommended that NPOs conduct collaborative problem-solving to jointly address administrative challenges, enhancing efficiency through collective expertise with the communities or stakeholders' guidance. Partnerships can enable smaller NPOs to leverage others' strengths, improving service delivery without duplicating efforts in the same communities.

Engage in advocacy to influence policy decisions affecting NPOs' operations and help ensure a more supportive ecosystem.

Advocacy can lead to policies that reduce NPOs' bureaucratic burdens, simplify administrative reporting, or offer tax incentives, making administrative processes smoother. By influencing policy, NPOs may gain access to additional grants and government support, thereby improving financial stability and administrative planning. In return, the NPO would improve the organisation's image in the community, thereby attracting skilled personnel interested in efficient and impactful NPO operations. It is recommended that a supportive policy environment enables NPOs to focus more on core programs and less on navigating complex regulations.

Enhance community outreach and engagement strategies to build trust and collaborative relationships.

Improved NPOs' stakeholder communication could result in effective outreach, streamlining communication, reducing misunderstandings and administrative follow-ups. Enhanced NPO community outreach administration would attract more engaged communities, resulting in steadier volunteer contributions and donor support. Additionally, continuous NPO community engagement would provide valuable insights for the NPO, enabling feedback on how to improve future projects and operational adjustments without costly trial-and-error. This process can enhance the reputation of NPO and enhance collaboration with local authorities and partners, simplifying operations.

Enhance administrative processes through digital transformation.

Digital tools automate NPO repetitive administrative tasks such as data entry, reporting, and scheduling, reducing manual errors and free up staff time. This process would improve data administration processes within the NPO. A digital system would facilitate secure, organised access to a store of records, thereby enhancing decision-making and compliance. Digital workflows reduce paper use, physical storage needs, and communication delays, lowering operational expenses and making NPO administration processes more cost-efficient. Additionally, digital platforms would enable

efficient communication among dispersed teams and stakeholders, making administration more flexible and responsive. Moreover, technology would enable instant tracking of projects and finances, allowing for prompt adjustments and transparency.

Implementing these recommendations collectively enhances the administrative efficiency of NPOs by building internal capacities, fostering collaborative ecosystems, shaping supportive policy environments, strengthening community ties, and leveraging technology for more intelligent workflows. These improvements not only make operations more cost-effective and transparent but also empower NPOs to maximise their social impact.

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Conflicts of interest: The study was conducted with permission from the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Social Development and was approved by the Institutional Research and Ethics Committee (IRIC) of Durban University of Technology.

Disclaimer

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