

## **Abstract**

This study explores the paradigm shift in non-profit management focusing on experiences of non-governmental organisations (hereafter NGOs) that have transitioned from being donor dependent and adopted the social enterprise form of operation. Several organisations have prudently adopted social enterprise as a framework for non-profit management in an attempt to attain financial stability and maintain the goal of addressing social problems. However, little research has been done on the change management process of shifting from aid dependency to self-sustainable management in NGOs. Beyond this, the adoption of social enterprise principles in non-profit management has led to concerns of mission consistency and entrepreneurial competence in maintaining the fundamental visions and strategies of NGOs. This study adopted a qualitative approach. The data were gathered from a sample of 9 individuals who are of employees of the selected NGO and they were selected via purposive sampling. A semi-structured interview schedule was used as the primary data collection tool and data were gathered using in-depth interviews which were tape recorded. Additional data was obtained from documents and records of the selected NGO. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings show that dwindling donor aid, shifting donor priorities and the desire to strengthen social impact account for NGO transition to social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the findings also indicate the key success factors for a successful transition to social entrepreneurship. These include infusing an entrepreneurial culture in the organisation, encouraging risk taking, effective communication and leadership inter alia. The findings also reveal a number of challenges that are experienced during the transition process pointing to the difficulty of selling mental health services, and breaking a culture of donor aid dependency among other things. It is hoped that the findings of the study will have both theoretical and practical value especially for NGOs transitioning to social entrepreneurship.

### **Key words:**

Donor aid, Social entrepreneurship, NGOs, transition