
Human Resource Management in Non-Governmental Organizations and their Security

Submitted 12/10/24, 1st revision 20/10/24, 2nd revision 13/11/24, accepted 25/11/24

Katarzyna Ochyra-Żurawska¹, Iwona Klonowska², Henryk Wyřbek³,
Dariusz Brązkiewicz⁴, Czesława Christowa⁵

Abstract:

Purpose: The aim of the article is to examine how human resource management, and the implementation of new technologies affect the safety of employees in non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The first part discusses the main principles and objectives of human resource management in NGOs, taking into account the specific needs of this sector. Subsequently, the authors focus on the recruitment and selection of employees, considering safety aspects and analysing which traits and skills are particularly important for work in NGOs. The article then presents the impact of new technologies on human resource management.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research problem is formulated as follows: What actions and tools in human resource management can enhance the safety level of NGO employees? In line with the research problem, a hypothesis is proposed, suggesting that careful employee selection and the implementation of modern technologies supporting safety can significantly reduce risks and increase efficiency and safety at work in NGOs. The article employs theoretical research methods, such as literature analysis and reliable online sources, to understand current trends and challenges in human resource management within the NGO sector and the implementation of technologies that improve safety.

Findings: Continued research is necessary on optimal recruitment methods and ways to implement new technologies to better tailor human resource management to the specific operational conditions of NGOs. Further studies on the impact of new technologies on personnel safety are particularly important, along with an analysis of the challenges associated with their implementation in various geographical and cultural contexts.

Practical implications: As technology advances, NGOs increasingly adopt modern tools to support employee safety. Innovative solutions, such as monitoring systems, rapid communication applications, and remote crisis management tools, help minimize risks

¹State Academy of Applied Sciences in Jarosław, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0001-6214-8930,
e-mail: katarzyna.ochyra-zurawska@pansjar.edu.pl;

²WSB University in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0002-3320-5649,
e-mail: iwonaklonowska76@interia.pl;

³University of Siedlce, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0001-9801-6905,
e-mail: henryk.wyrebek@uws.edu.pl;

⁴John Paul II University in Białą Podlaską, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0002-5372-1210,
e-mail: d.brazkiewicz@dyd.akademibialska.pl;

⁵Warsaw Management University, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0001-6005-3495,
e-mail: cz.christowa@wp.pl;

associated with field activities. Utilizing such technologies not only enhances safety standards but also allows for better control and management in emergency situations, which is crucial for protecting NGO employees and volunteers operating in unpredictable conditions.

Originality/value: The development of tools supporting safety management can contribute to raising operational standards for NGOs worldwide while minimizing risks associated with their activities.

Keywords: Safety, management, organization, third sector, NGO.

JEL codes: M12, L31.

Paper type: Research article.

1. Introduction

Human resource management in non-governmental organizations is a key element of their efficient functioning, especially in the context of a dynamic and often risky environment in which they operate. These organizations are engaged in the realization of important social missions, often in areas threatened by conflict, natural disasters, or other crisis situations. In such a demanding environment, an appropriate approach to recruitment and the selection of employees becomes a priority, particularly when it is necessary to consider aspects related to safety. The selection of the right individuals, who not only possess the appropriate qualifications but can also operate under conditions of increased risk, has a direct impact on the effectiveness and safety of the organization and its members.

The recruitment and selection of employees in non-governmental organizations is a complex process that must combine standard requirements with additional safety criteria, especially when NGO activities are conducted in challenging areas. It is essential not only to search for candidates with the appropriate qualifications but also to verify their ability to cope in stressful situations and their mental resilience. The recruitment process in these organizations differs from traditional ones, as it takes into account the specifics of working in high-risk locations and uncertain funding conditions, which requires flexibility and significant commitment from the staff.

As technology evolves, non-governmental organizations increasingly turn to modern tools that support employee safety. Innovative solutions such as monitoring systems, rapid communication applications, or remote crisis management tools help minimize risks associated with field activities. The use of such technologies not only improves safety standards but also enables better control and management in emergency situations, which is crucial for ensuring protection for employees and volunteers of NGOs operating in unpredictable conditions.

2. Human Resource Management in Non-governmental Organizations

Issues related to human resource management, and consequently proper organizational management, have been the subject of research and debate for many years (Surma-Wiśniewska, 2023, p. 117). The functioning of people within an organization occurs in accordance with the personnel policy being implemented. This includes elements that build the engagement of the human team in the activities performed (Nowicka and Ciekanowski, 2019, p. 80). Human capital theory has often been criticized. The reasons for this criticism are as follows:

- human capital is an investment in the future that can only be estimated, cannot be fully predicted, and should not be treated as a safe investment;
- educational institutions play a significant role in developing human resources, but they are often too rigid in relation to the dynamic changes occurring in today's turbulent environment;
- the current education system is an important source of knowledge acquisition, but for companies, soft skills such as negotiation skills, effective communication with others, proactivity, initiative, proper task management, and resilience to stress may be much more crucial (Jamka, 2011, p. 31).

There is no doubt that in contemporary times, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are particularly significant entities due to their commitment to social issues, the assistance they provide, and their selflessness (Ochyra-Żurawska and Ciekanowski, 2017, p. 217). NGOs represent a form of organization, a type of institution through which citizens can associate and cooperate to accomplish important tasks aimed at meeting various social needs, supplementing public offerings with missing services, and solving important problems for them (Grobela, 2022, p. 149).

Therefore, human resource management in NGOs is an exceptionally complex and demanding process because these organizations often operate under difficult and unpredictable conditions such as areas affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters, or humanitarian crises. In such environments, an appropriate approach to the recruitment, motivation, development, and retention of employees and volunteers who carry out the organization's mission becomes crucial.

The recruitment and selection process in NGOs is particularly demanding because it must be tailored to specific working conditions. These organizations seek individuals who not only possess the appropriate professional qualifications but also demonstrate high resilience to stress, flexibility, and the ability to work in culturally diverse teams. For NGOs, it is also essential to find people who are motivated to work for the public good and are willing to act under challenging circumstances. In addition to hiring employees, NGOs also engage volunteers who play an extremely important role in fulfilling the organization's mission but also require careful selection and appropriate preparation for fieldwork.

With the proper organization of the recruitment process, an organization can achieve a lower level of chaos within its structure while significantly increasing employee satisfaction (Korbus-Then, 2022, p. 9). Due to limited financial resources, NGOs often cannot offer competitive salaries compared to the private sector; thus, they must attract and retain employees through other forms of motivation. In NGOs, there is a strong emphasis on intangible values such as the sense of fulfilling an important mission, the opportunity to help others, and the impact on improving the lives of those in need.

Creating a work culture that emphasizes these values is fundamental to motivational strategies in NGOs as it allows employees and volunteers to find deep meaning in their work. Additionally, these organizations strive to offer professional development opportunities such as training and internships that help acquire new competencies and enhance qualifications.

Given the nature of their activities, NGOs must also invest heavily in training their employees and volunteers—especially concerning risk management, safety measures, and health protection—which is not easy since membership fees for associations are low enough not to constitute a significant category of income in the organization's budget. Other forms of funding such as donations or inheritances are rare (Księżski, 2013, p. 127).

Such training allows teams to better prepare for challenges they may encounter in their areas of activity while also increasing their safety—this directly impacts the achievement of organizational goals. NGOs also aim to develop intercultural competencies, communication skills, and flexibility in action under diverse and changing conditions. Human resource management in NGOs not only constitutes a foundation for effective functioning but also presents a challenge that requires creative and flexible approaches. Strengthening engagement, building a sense of mission, and ensuring necessary competencies are key elements that enable NGOs to effectively realize their goals and missions under demanding conditions.

3. The Recruitment and Selection of Employees Taking Security Into Account

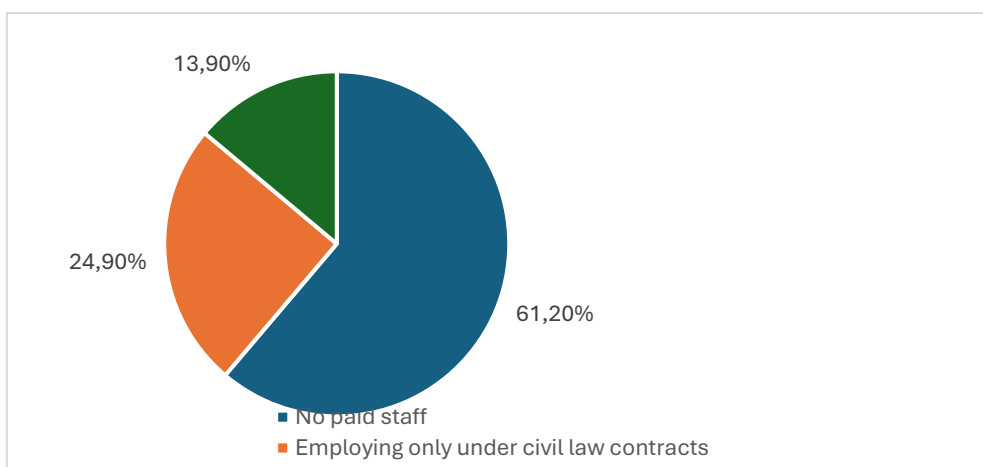
Educated, creative, and competent employees today represent the most dynamic and active part of the resources of any organization. Their utilization determines the effectiveness of the office's functioning and all the resources at its disposal (Penc, 2010, p. 7). Qualitative changes in human resources are conditioned by necessity due to:

- increasing resilience to uncertainty and instability of the environment;
- replacing the existing hierarchy of power with a hierarchy that signifies variable relationships of subordination and superiority, multi-dependence resulting from the tasks performed;

- building authority based on professionalism and effectiveness;
- abandoning standardization of tasks in favour of a creative and individual approach to solutions primarily based on effectiveness criteria;
- increasing the adaptive capacity of organization members and their willingness to cooperate with a broader spectrum of organizations and social groups;
- acquiring openness to all manifestations of otherness;
- rising independence in decision-making by employees, correlated with an increase in their personal responsibility for the outcomes of their decisions;
- adapting to flexible responses of the structure to changing situations through changes in roles and team memberships;
- enhancing personal sensitivity of employees to phenomena they encounter (Sikorski, 2004, p. 252).

The recruitment and selection of employees in non-governmental organizations, especially those operating in dangerous regions, require special consideration of security-related issues. The selection of suitable candidates is crucial here because these individuals must not only possess specific professional competencies but also be prepared to work in difficult, often changing, and risky conditions. Non-governmental organizations strive to choose candidates who demonstrate the ability to work in stressful situations, can quickly respond to threats, and possess strong interpersonal skills. These abilities are essential because the crisis environments in which NGOs operate often carry significant emotional and physical burdens. Below is a diagram showing the structure of non-profit organizations based on having paid personnel in 2022.

Figure 1. Structure of non-profit organizations based on the presence of paid staff in 2022 in Poland



Source: Central Statistical Office.

In Poland, the non-governmental sector is still not as popular a place of employment as the private sector. The reasons for this situation can be attributed to the level of salaries and the fact that one person often handles a very large number of tasks. These differences are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Stages of business recruitment and recruitment in the non-governmental sector*

Business recruitment	Recruitment in non-governmental organizations
Employment planning	Planning the shape of the team
Acquiring candidates	Selection Selection of colleagues
Selection	Selection of colleagues
Adaptation	Introduction to the world organization

Source: Mazurek, (2016).

With the greatest burden of responsibilities typically struggles the first person employed under an employment contract (Bogacz-Wojtanowska, 2006, p. 11). Therefore, the recruitment and selection of employees in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is an extremely specific and demanding process, as they often operate under conditions different from those found in the commercial or governmental sectors.

Many NGOs, particularly those engaged in humanitarian, health, educational, or environmental assistance, function in environments threatened by armed conflicts, natural disasters, or other crisis situations. In these challenging conditions, recruitment and selection must be conducted with exceptional care to ensure that candidates possess not only the appropriate professional qualifications but also the ability to work under pressure and resilience to stress.

One of the key aspects of the recruitment process in NGOs is the assessment of interpersonal skills as well as the values and motivations of candidates. Working in an NGO often involves challenges and the necessity to act in culturally diverse and demanding environments. Consequently, candidates must not only be specialists in their fields but also demonstrate empathy, a willingness to work as part of a team, and flexibility in adapting to changing conditions.

Many NGOs prioritize individuals who share their mission and are willing to dedicate themselves to improving the lives of others. This approach is particularly important because financial motivation may be lower in NGOs than in other sectors, and candidates' primary motivation is usually the desire to fulfil a personal mission and passion related to helping others.

The selection process in NGOs often also includes assessing candidates' ability to cope with crisis situations and their readiness to work under heightened risk conditions. Candidates may undergo psychological testing or participate in simulations that help evaluate their responses in stressful and unusual situations.

An important element of the recruitment process is also considering health and safety issues for candidates. NGOs operating in high-risk areas strive to provide appropriate training and support regarding health protection and safety to reduce risks associated with project implementation. As part of the recruitment process, candidates are offered access to courses and training related to personal protection as well as preparation for working in specific environmental conditions such as tropical regions, deserts, or conflict areas. The goal of these efforts is to protect employees' health and lives while preparing them for effective action in the field.

Thus, the recruitment and selection process for employees in NGOs is multifaceted and significantly more demanding than in other sectors. Proper employee selection is one of the foundations of a well-functioning organization. The human resources of an organization constitute capital that must be nurtured at every stage of development (Ciekankowski, Nowicka, Żurawski, and Mikosik, 2023, p. 805).

This process considers both professional qualifications and psychological and health aspects that are essential for ensuring safe and effective implementation of the organization's mission. Supporting candidates and preparing them for work in difficult conditions is a priority for NGOs that carefully select individuals ready to take action for change and help others.

4. Implementation of New Technologies Securing the Safety of NGO Employees

Implementing new technologies that support the safety of NGO workers is becoming an increasingly important element in managing NGO operations, especially in the context of working in difficult and risky conditions. These organizations often operate in areas affected by conflicts, natural disasters, or humanitarian crises, where the safety of employees and volunteers is threatened by numerous factors.

Consequently, the use of modern technological tools, such as monitoring systems, rapid communication applications, crisis management platforms, and GPS devices, can significantly enhance safety levels. These technologies allow for real-time monitoring of situations on the ground, provide the ability for quick responses in emergencies, and facilitate better organization of activities in the face of unpredictable threats. Moreover, modern technical solutions enable NGOs to improve coordination of actions, which ultimately increases mission effectiveness and minimizes risks associated with operations in high-risk zones.

An example of such an initiative is the PARATUS project, which aims to promote readiness for crisis management and resilience to risk through co-developing stakeholder support tools for managing systemic risks from compounding disasters. The goal is to enhance the preparedness of first and second responders in the face of multiple threats and reduce risks related to impacts on various sectors resulting from complex disasters. The project's outcome is the development of an online platform

that offers support in analysing and assessing dynamic risk scenarios and systemic risks caused by complex disasters. (<https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/platforma-dozarzadzania-kryzysowego-i-redukcji-ryzyka>).

Implementing these technologies not only raises safety standards but also supports organizations in their pursuit of effectively achieving humanitarian and social goals under highly demanding conditions.

Research conducted in 2020 by the TechSoup Global Network showed that as many as 75% of NGOs experienced significant benefits after investing in and implementing technology. This not only facilitated work but also increased employee efficiency. However, only 22% of these organizations defined a strategy for achieving technological readiness and its timeline (Data Handling and Digital Readiness in Civil Society Global Study 2020).

Through digital transformation, NGOs can gain advantages in many areas, including organizational processes, communication, and finances. Below are some benefits of investing time and resources into digital transformation:

- Automation and the simplification of processes
- Improved internal collaboration
- Increased productivity and task completion
- Enhanced customer service
- Greater stakeholder engagement and reach
- More efficient data management
- Better protection of IT infrastructure
- Cost savings
- Creation of competitive advantage

<https://www.techsoup.pl/content/transformacja-cyfrowa-ngo>).

After implementing digital transformation, NGOs can increase their impact among beneficiaries and streamline decision-making processes within their communities.

As many as 85% of representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) believe that new technologies can ensure the success of their activities. At the same time, 93% of them feel that the lack of IT or technical staff hinders the implementation of new technologies within organizations (Nonprofit Trends Report, Salesforce, 2020).

Modern technologies can also support the health safety of NGO employees, particularly in regions where threats related to infectious diseases or lack of access to medical care are serious issues. NGOs utilize applications and devices to monitor the health status of employees, enabling quicker diagnosis of health problems and proactive measures. Telemedicine technologies, which allow remote consultations with doctors, are becoming increasingly common, especially in areas where access

to medical assistance is limited. Employees can use health monitoring applications to send test results or consult with a doctor online, ensuring their safety and faster access to help when needed.

In terms of training and preparation for fieldwork, new technologies offer innovative solutions. In organizations where human resource management is conducted innovatively, employees participate in management and design innovative solutions that improve their work organization and enhance service quality by utilizing new technologies.

In an information society, the tools of work are rapidly changing (Ciekanowski 2018, p. 161), making it essential for NGO workers—who must navigate difficult and often dangerous conditions—to benefit from virtual simulations or safety training that prepare them for various crisis scenarios. These technologies enable field training where participants virtually engage in evacuation simulations, response to attacks, or first aid provision, allowing for better staff preparation without exposing them to real risks.

Moreover, in fundraising efforts, new technologies serve as a communication channel through which grant applications reach recipients and provide relevant information such as announcements about competitions and projects (Szymonek and Wrona, 2019, p. 119).

In an innovatively operating organization, there is a drive to ensure that employee qualifications are utilized effectively, leading not only to the achievement of organizational goals but also to the realization of individual employee objectives (Wyszomierski and Ciekanowski, 2017, p. 27).

Implementing new technologies in NGOs not only improves employee safety but also increases their work efficiency. By employing modern technical tools, NGOs can better monitor the progress of their projects, coordinate actions globally, and respond more rapidly to crisis situations.

Technologies thus become not only a support for safety but also a key element enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian and social actions in challenging conditions. The integration of innovative solutions in NGOs is therefore a step towards more sustainable and safer project management aimed at improving the quality of life for people worldwide.

5. Conclusions

Human resource management in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is a crucial element for effective functioning and the realization of their missions in often demanding conditions. These organizations operate within a specific context that requires not only careful selection of individuals based on their professional

competencies but also an assessment of their readiness to work in stressful and high-risk environments. Effective human resource management in the NGO sector necessitates seeking resilient, motivated individuals who are also aware of the potential threats that may arise during their work, particularly in high-risk regions.

The recruitment and selection process for employees in NGOs therefore considers safety aspects aimed at protecting the lives and health of staff, enabling them to operate effectively in crisis areas. NGO employees are chosen not only for their skills but also for their ability to cope with challenges in conflict environments, allowing organizations to build stable teams prepared for diverse threats. NGOs emphasize verifying candidates for their mental resilience, adaptability, and knowledge of safety protocols, which enables them to operate more safely and effectively in the field.

Additionally, implementing new technologies that support the safety of NGO staff has become essential for their daily operations. Technological tools such as monitoring systems, rapid communication applications, and crisis management platforms help NGOs manage risk better, monitor situations in real-time, and respond immediately to changing conditions.

Modern technologies provide NGO teams with better preparation for working under difficult circumstances, allowing them to quickly transmit data and information about threats while improving operational organization, ultimately increasing the overall safety level of all personnel.

In summary, human resource management in NGOs constitutes a comprehensive process that requires a careful approach to recruitment, selection, and training of employees, particularly regarding safety. The use of modern technologies supports organizations in enhancing team safety and enables them to operate effectively even under the most challenging conditions.

Findings from the analysis indicate that investing in new technologies and systematically raising safety standards not only enhances the effectiveness of NGO operations but also contributes to increased employee satisfaction and motivation.

However, there remains a need for further analysis. Continued research into optimal recruitment methods and ways to implement new technologies is necessary to better tailor human resource management to the specific operational conditions of NGOs.

Particularly important are ongoing studies on the impact of new technologies on personnel safety and the challenges associated with their implementation across various geographical and cultural contexts. The development of tools supporting safety management could contribute to raising operational standards for NGOs worldwide while minimizing risks associated with their activities.

References:

- Bogacz-Wojtanowska, E. 2006. Zarządzanie organizacjami pozarządowymi na przykładzie stowarzyszeń krakowskich, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Ciekanowski, Z. 2018. Innowacyjne zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi w przedsiębiorstwie, „Nowoczesne Systemy Zarządzania”, Zeszyt 13, nr 3, ss. 149-162.
- Ciekanowski, Z., Nowicka, J., Żurawski, S., Mikosik, P. 2023. Human Resources in Organizational Security Management. *European Research Studies Journal*, Volume XXVI, Issue 4, pp. 802-812.
- Data Handling and Digital Readiness in Civil Society Global Study 2020, A TechSoup Global Network Summit 2021 Publication.
- Grobelak, M. 2022. Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi w organizacjach pozarządowych – wybrane problemy. *Edukacja ustawiczna dorosłych*, nr 4, pp. 147-155.
- Jamka, B. 2011. Czynniki ludzkie we współczesnym przedsiębiorstwie: zasób czy kapitał? Wolters Kluwer Polska, Warszawa.
- Korbus-Then, L. 2022. Rekrutacja pracowników w NGO, Kraków: Fundacja Biuro Inicjatyw Społecznych.
- Księżki, K., 2013. Prawno-finansowe przeszkody w rozwoju polskich organizacji pozarządowych: zarys problematyki. *Rocznik Samorządowy*, nr 2, pp. 116-136.
- Mainwaring, S. 2011. *We First. How Brands and Consumers Use Social Media to Build Better World*, Nowy Jork.
- Mazurek, A. 2016. Ludzie w organizacjach pozarządowych. In: *Zarządzanie organizacjami pozarządowymi. Monografie i Studia Instytutu Spraw Publicznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, Kraków, p. 102
- Nonprofit Trends Report, Salesforce, 2020.
- Nowicka, J., Ciekanowski, M. 2019. Kapitał ludzki we współczesnej organizacji. *Nowoczesne Systemy Zarządzania*, Zeszyt 14, nr 1, pp. 79-90.
- Ochyra-Żurawska, K., Ciekanowski, Z. 2017. Organizacje pozarządowe w tworzeniu bezpieczeństwa społecznego. *Przegląd Naukowo-Metodyczny. Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa*, nr 4, rok X, pp. 215-231.
- Penc, J. 2010. *Komunikacja i negocjowanie w organizacji*. Wydawnictwo Difin, Warszawa.
- Platforma do zarządzania kryzysowego i redukcji ryzyka, NGO.pl Portal organizacji pozarządowych, <https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/platforma-do-zarzadzania-kryzysowego-i-redukcji-ryzyka>.
- Sikorski, C. 2004. *Zachowania ludzi w organizacji*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa. In: J. Kowalik, *Między partycypacją a zarządzaniem. W poszukiwaniu determinantów skuteczności samorządów miejskich*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, Kielce.
- Szymonek, J., Wrona, S. 2019. Komunikowanie wirtualne organizacji pozarządowych: facebook i ochotnicze straże pożarne. In: *Młodzi badacze o zarządzaniu publicznym*, red. Wrona, S., *Monografie i Studia Instytutu Spraw Publicznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, Kraków.
- Surma-Wisniewska, A. 2023. Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi w organizacji – konflikty. *Ogrody Nauk i Sztuk*, nr 13, tom 13, pp. 116-127.
- Transformacja cyfrowa NGO, Techsoup. <https://www.techsoup.pl/content/transformacja-cyfrowa-ngo>.
- Wyszomierski, R., Ciekanowski, Z. 2017. Współczesne zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi w organizacjach. *Nowoczesne Systemy Zarządzania*, Zeszyt 12, nr 4, pp. 15-29.