

A background on non-governmental organizations

[Business](#), [Organization](#)



According to the World Bank, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the diversity of NGOs may hurt even the simplest definition that may be attributed to it because they include numerous groups and different institutions that are either entirely or largely independent to the government and have humanitarian objectives rather than commercial. They are private groups in industrial countries that support international development. NGOs include religious associations, charitable groups, independent cooperatives, different associations, women's groups, among others.

Non-Governmental Organizations were built primarily by private individuals or group of individuals and does not have any representations from the government. They are largely independent, in terms of its functions and how it executes its main objectives and how it handles its funds for its various projects. As much as possible, no person from the government can join or handle any NGO to maintain its non-partisan stance and to retain its objectivity in the execution its mission. Individuals who bring about the existence of NGOs believe in certain common social principles that act as their framework in executing their activities to bring about the development of communities they give service to. Furthermore, they also assist in empowering the civil society

There are numerous types of organizations, as mentioned by the World Bank. NGOs is often used as an alternative term with that of an independent sector, civil society, volunteer sector, grassroots, social movements and non-state actors. They play a pivotal part in forming the development of a nation or a state and the betterment of the lives of the people. Their method of executing and attaining its objectives varies: some NGOs acts as lobbyist to

promote their causes while some conducts various programs to solicit support and funds. Most of the time they find the need to maintain healthy relationships with the public if they wish to attain their main goal. Although there may be some interest groups that plays an important role in politics, this is mainly because of its ability to influence both social and political outcomes.

As the world move further in internationalizing its different facets, NGOs, like any other group, manages itself in different forms. Most of the existing organization in the world uses two management types: (1) the diversity management; and, (2) the participatory management. The first type of management deals with different cultures within the organization. It is the type of management being used to avoid intercultural problems and difficulties. On the other hand, the participatory management style is used in most NGOs, regardless of what their objectives are or its primary location. This type of management is associated with the concept that all people within an organization are perceived to be sources of knowledge and skills.

For its funding, they get their money through various means and major sources include the following: (1) its membership dues; (2) sale of goods and services; and, (3) grants from international private institutions. However, even if NGOs are supposedly independent from governments, there are a number of NGOs that heavily depends for their funding. And this is where their non-partisan stance is most of the time being questioned. This sometimes causes confusion to people whether these NGOs are still free to decide on its own without any influence from government. Independence

from any group with vested interest and the government is still the best solution to this dilemma, to allow NGOs a respectable position in the society.

NGO's as Unaccountable, Ineffective and a Mechanism of the Elite: A Sweeping Generalization

There are an alarming number of criticisms about NGOs, this may be borne out of the fact that they have been actively engaging in different causes and have been cooperating more with the government in pursuing their objectives. They have also been cooperating and negotiating with the group of elites that have been very helpful in pushing for their advocacies. On the account that NGOs are unaccountable, ineffective and a mechanism of elite capture, I refuse to accept this as a general fact, for various reasons.

For one, an NGO, as it has been said many times over, is any non-profit, voluntary groups that are organized in either a local, national or international level. Most of the people who work with these NGOs are task driven and goal oriented people with one common interest. They perform various humanitarian services and acts as the voice of the common people to their government. They likewise advocate and monitor different laws and policies and provide information to people as a way to encourage them to participate in the politics of their own government.

NGOs are accountable for their own actions, as they represent a number of people who believe in their advocacies. They are accountable to the people who believe and support them because these people are one of the reasons for their existence. They share common beliefs and they share common interests, without these people, NGOs will not function the way it is designed

to function. NGOs work hand in hand with the Civil Society and most of these NGOs try hard enough to maintain harmonious relationship with the society. However, they are not accountable to the government as they independently and for as long as they remain non-partisan and independent, they are not and should be held accountable to the government. Due to this argument, I stand by not agreeing that NGOs are unaccountable.

On the other hand, the effectivity of any organization, just like the government, is relative to how it executes its different goals and interests. NGOs have different methods in going about its main goals. For example, what may be an effective way of promoting and representing people from the grassroots may not be an effective way for an NGO who are working for the women's rights. Although both are NGOs, they have different needs and they address these using different methods. For this alone, I do not agree that NGOs are ineffective.

Although it is true that NGOs has to maintain a certain amount of relationship with the civil society, NGOs still maintains a respectable amount of distance. Donations from individuals, specifically the elite, may be seen as a chance for these groups of people to manipulate the ongoing of a NGO. While it is true that a large portion of the funds that the NGO receive may have come, most of the time, from individuals coming from the elite group, it should not be generalized that they are the ones making the decisions for the people who manages the NGO. Again, NGOs are non-profit groups and whatever that keeps them going are funds being donated by those people who believe in what the NGO is standing for. It is therefore more appropriate

to think that NGOs work with the civil society than to think that it is a mechanism of the elite, or the chosen few.

The existence of NGOs is born about the many changes in the world today. These have been brought about by the need to have a unilateral voice that would stand up for the people. Whether it is effective or not is relative to how it executes its own programs or advocacies or mission and objectives. However, to generalize that all NGOs are unaccountable and is a mechanism of the elite to be able to have an advantage in promoting their own interest may be a harsh generalization and needs to be pondered upon.

Conclusion

In conclusion, NGOs have been existing for so many years, maybe even before civilization has began. NGOs main existence is not to jeopardize the relationship between the people and the government but rather to stand as a medium to bridge the gap between them. They act as the voice of the people to different issues and concerns, like women's rights, environment issues, and peace advocacy, among others. They are to be seen as a catalyst for change, for the betterment of a place where people and government live harmoniously.

NGOs should remain non-partisan so that it would be able to maintain its independence from the influence of either the government or the elite. This will enable them to carry out their objectives and goals without having to give in to the dictates of these powerful groups. This will also help in ensuring that they will be more effective in promoting their own programs.

Although a friendly and harmonious relationship with the government will give them more benefits than loss, for this will allow them to be heard.

On the other hand, it is best to keep a very good and healthy relationship with the civil society, which stands as their main client. This will allow them to properly voice their concerns to the proper authorities and will enable them to address each issue with objectivity. The civil society is one of the major stakeholders of NGOs and it is but proper to continue a healthy relationship with them. They are accountable to these people, as they represent them and not any other vested interest.

NGOs should remain committed to the root causes of the societal problems to enable them to help in trying to better the quality of the lives of people, especially the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized in certain areas of the world.

Although NGOs are often seen as a group that works in the international level, with the presence of the United Nations, there are numerous NGOs within countries, and they work on a national level. They work hand in hand with the civil society, as well as the government, to promote the good of the majority and to help in attaining a better world to live in and a better life for each person. The both NGOs and governments represent the people, they should continue to work hand in hand, rather than against each other, for in the long run, it is the people who will benefit from all the positive results of a peaceful and harmonious co-existence.

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