

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

THIRD EDITION



DAVID LEWIS

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Non-Governmental Development Organizations have seen turbulent times over the decades; however, recent years have seen them grow to occupy high-profile positions in the fight against poverty. They are now seen as an important element of 'civil society', a concept that has been given increasing importance by global policy makers. This book has evolved during the course of that period to be a prime resource for those working (or wishing to work) with and for NGOs.

The third edition of *Non-Governmental Organizations, Management and Development* is fully updated and thoroughly reorganized, covering key issues including, but not limited to, debates on the changing global context of international development and the changing concepts and practices used by NGOs. The interdisciplinary approach employed by David Lewis results in an impressive text that draws upon current research in non-profit management, development management, public management and management theory, exploring the activities, relationships and internal structure of the NGO.

This book remains the first and only comprehensive and academically grounded guide to the issues facing international development NGOs as they operate in increasingly complex and challenging conditions around the world. It is the perfect resource for students undertaking studies of NGOs and the non-profit sector, in addition to being an excellent resource for development studies students more generally.

David Lewis is Professor of Social Policy and Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science. A social anthropologist by training, he holds degrees from the Universities of Cambridge and Bath. His main interests are the theory and practice of international development, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, and rural development.

Professor Lewis has given us an indispensable text on the evolution of management ideas in international development. It is a domain full of tension between the forces of professional management and social activism. Lewis brings an anthropologist's sensibility to this inquiry, showing that the messy realities of development require NGOs to craft new pluralistic models of management.

Alnoor Ebrahim, *Associate Professor, Social Enterprise Initiative,
Harvard Business School, USA*

This third edition comprehensively addresses the conceptualization, theory, and practice of NGO management. With the current global trend to delegate public-sector tasks to NGOs and allocate vast resources to them, it is more important than ever to understand their roles and how they are managed. This book provides such in-depth and critical understanding in accessible language and is illustrated with insightful examples. I strongly recommend this book to students and development practitioners alike.

Dr. Sylvia I. Bergh, *Senior Lecturer in Development Management and Governance,
International Institute of Social Studies,
Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands*

In this thoroughly revised and updated 3rd edition of *Non-Governmental Organizations, Management, and Development*, David Lewis brings an anthropologist's sensitivities to understanding the operation and challenges faced by development NGOs. These important organizations play central, fast-growing, and often controversial roles in fostering equitable development and poverty alleviation throughout the world. Dr. Lewis draws on his detailed knowledge of organization theory and development studies, as well as his considerable practical fieldwork experience, to produce a book that breaks through the conventional categories to offer a highly original and nuanced understanding of this complex and rapidly evolving field. More than merely a textbook, *Non-Governmental Organizations, Management, and Development* is essential reading for scholars and practitioners alike.

Richard P. Appelbaum, *Ph.D., MacArthur Chair in Sociology and
Global & International Studies, Co-PI, Center for Nanotechnology and
Society, University of California at Santa Barbara, USA*

'Management is management'. Maybe, but in the NGO world, where political, social and financial uncertainties are the default position, it isn't that straightforward. This important and wide-ranging book by a thoughtful veteran of the sector should be essential reading for those who think they understand the management challenges faced by NGOs, including NGO managers themselves.

Ian Smillie, *writer, researcher and consultant on NGOs and
international development*

David has done it again! This is a superb, well-researched, comprehensive and objective portrayal of NGOs, their philosophy, practices and challenges. Yet another significant contribution from him on the discourse and the art and science of development.

A. Mushtaque R. Chowdhury, *Ph.D., Vice Chair and
Interim Executive Director BRAC, Bangladesh*

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A note on the second edition

When this book was first published in 2001, I had no idea that five years later I would have the opportunity to revise and expand it in order to meet increasing interest in the field of NGO management.

Aside from a selective updating of the text, then, the main addition to this second edition has been to draw upon the knowledge of a range of colleagues (some of them former students) working in the NGO sector around the world who have kindly provided me with material for additional and up-to-date information for text box examples of NGO management issues. Here I am particularly grateful to Markus Ketola, Alisha Myers, Mónica Tapia, Yaaminey Mubayi, Agnes Kithikii, Stephan Judge, and Armine Ishkanian. I have also benefitted greatly from useful feedback on the first edition of the book provided by colleagues who have used the book. These include Daniel D'Esposito, Alnoor Ebrahim, Jo Beall, Nidhi Srivas, Diana Mitlin, Simon Batterbury, Paul Opoku-Mensah, and Tony Bebbington. I particularly thank Ann Marie Thomson for her detailed feedback, and an anonymous referee. I'm also grateful for comments from students of Ann Marie's NGO course at University of Indiana, including Megan Hershey, Bobae Park and Rana DeBey and other anonymous contributors to my informal survey. I wish to thank Francesca Heslop and Emma Joyes at Routledge for their commitment to and encouragement with this second edition. Finally, I could not have written this book without the love, patience and support of my partner, Nazneen Kanji.

June 2006

A note on the third edition

More than a decade after first writing this book, NGO management remains an important yet understudied field. When the publishers asked me to consider updating this book for a new edition, it was a difficult request to resist. I have given it what I hope is a thorough overhaul.

In revising this volume for a second time, I decided to try to improve the book in three main ways. First, I have updated the content in the light of the wider changes that have taken place in the world of international aid and development,

and the contexts in which NGOs work. To reflect this, I have also dropped the Northern/Southern (NNGO/SNGO) terminology because I think it a binary distinction that oversimplifies an increasingly complex development NGO landscape. Second, I have substantially restructured the book, in the hope that the main arguments can be made more clearly. I have moved away somewhat from the text book layout style of the second edition, because I felt it had become cluttered and difficult to read, and moved material such as the discussion questions (for those using the book as a course text) to the website. Third, I have changed the title to reflect a more discursive, analytical approach that will I hope draw more readers from both the management and the development fields.

In preparing the revised edition, I spoke to a range of people who helped update me with their insights on an NGO scene that is changing fast in many ways, even while it seems to me that many of the key NGO management issues remain very much the same. I also occasionally drew upon a set of life history interviews with NGO leaders and activists conducted in the UK, Bangladesh and the Philippines during 2006–7, collected as part of an earlier Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) project on sector boundary crossing (Grant reference RES-155-25-0064).

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Finally, I would not have been able to complete this book without the patience and loving support of my family, and in particular, my wife Nazneen.

August 2013

ABBREVIATIONS

ASSEFA	Association of Sarva Seva Farms (India)
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BRLC	Baptist Rural Life Centre (Philippines)
CBO	Community-based organization
CSO	Civil society organization
DFID	Department for International Development
GAN	Global action network
GONGO	Government-organized NGO
GSO	Grassroots support organization
ICVA	International Council for Voluntary Agencies
ID	Institutional development
IDR	Institute of Development Research
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International NGO
INTRAC	International NGO Research and Training Centre
LFA	Logical framework analysis
MBO	Management by objectives
MJ	Manusher Jonno ('for the people')(Bangladesh)
NGDO	Non-governmental development organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NK	Nijera Kori (Bangladesh)
NNGO	Northern NGO
OD	Organizational development
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PLA	Participatory learning and action
PPA	Programme partnership agreement

PO	People's organization
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
PRSP	Poverty reduction strategy paper
PSC	Public service contractor
PVO	Private voluntary organization
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association (India)
SIDA	Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation
SNGO	Southern NGO
TSO	Third sector organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VO	Voluntary organization

PART I

The conceptualization of NGO management

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1

INTRODUCTION

In the old days, rich countries had NGOs which focused on helping poor countries. The world's not so simple anymore.

Cooper (2012)

This book is about non-governmental organizations, better known as 'NGOs' or sometimes more specifically as 'non-governmental development organizations'. NGOs go back a long way. Britain's Save the Children Fund (SCF) was founded by Eglantyne Jebb in 1919 after the trauma and destruction of the First World War. Oxfam, originally known as the Oxford Committee Against the Famine, dates back to 1942, when it was established in order to provide famine relief to victims of the Greek Civil War. The US agency CARE (Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere) had its origins in sending US food packages to Europe in 1946.

NGOs are usually understood to be 'third sector', not-for-profit organizations concerned with addressing problems of global poverty and social justice and working primarily in the developing world. An NGO has an identity that is 'legitimised by the existence of poverty' (Fowler 1997). Some people link NGOs to concepts of charity, while others understand them in more political terms as 'civil society organizations', meaning that they are groups of organized citizens, independent from the government or business sectors. NGOs tend to go about their work either directly through the provision of services to people in need, or indirectly through partnerships, campaigning work and policy advocacy to bring about wider structural change that will improve the position of people living in poverty. While there is general agreement that development NGOs have been growing in numbers and increasing their profile in recent years, no one knows how many NGOs there are in the world. In 1946, there were 41 international NGOs registered at the United Nations (UN), while today there are more than 2,800. There are believed to be over one million NGOs in India, and 200,000 in the Philippines (OECD 2009).

4 The conceptualization of NGO management

International NGOs are estimated to raise around US\$20–25 billion each year, as compared to official development assistance flows of US\$104 billion (OECD 2009). In 2009, around 13 per cent of the total development aid provided by OECD countries was channelled to or through NGOs, a total of around US \$15.5 billion (OECD 2011).

There has been an explosion of academic and practical literature on NGOs over the past few decades, but more attention has generally been given to ‘what NGOs do’ rather than ‘how NGOs work’ as organizations. The large scale of resources commanded by NGOs means that there is growing interest in how these resources are utilized. In a rapidly changing and complex world, people working in NGOs also require more and more in the way of relevant knowledge and skills. NGO management is therefore an important – though still relatively underappreciated – topic. Many people argue that this third sector contains a distinctive type of organization that is different in important ways from the more familiar forms of private sector business or public sector agency. NGO management can be seen as a specialized field that warrants its own study because it requires new creative thinking that goes beyond both existing conventional business management approaches and public sector management science. NGOs face complex, multifaceted challenges in their work and, at the same time, they have distinctive organizational characteristics. In general, NGOs have arguably failed to communicate a clear ‘story’ about just how complex and difficult NGO management is. Under pressure from donors and publics, they often seek instead to present simplicity and effectiveness rather than the true complexity and messiness of their work.

While we may identify NGOs as a specific category of third sector organization, we must also recognize that there are many different types. Some NGOs are small self-help groups or informal associations working at the community level with a membership that barely reaches double digit figures and no paid staff, drawing instead on volunteers and supporters who may be motivated by politics, religion or some form of altruism. Others are large, highly bureaucratized service-providing organizations with corporate identities and thousands of staff, many of whom may increasingly see their work in terms of a professional career. Some organizations see themselves as part of the world of development agencies and institutions working to eliminate poverty and injustice, while others are recreational societies or religious organizations with specialized purposes. Some take a mainstream growth-centred ‘modernization’ approach to development, while others are more interested in alternatives to the mainstream and view development in terms of popular mobilization and empowerment. Some NGOs depend on outside funding, while others mobilize resources locally through their own fund-raising initiatives or through membership fees and subscriptions. Some are private member-benefit in orientation, while others are public benefit.

This book is primarily concerned with NGO management from the perspective of organizations working in the field of development – as opposed to those that work primarily in humanitarian or emergency relief – in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as those in the ‘post-socialist’ areas of the former Soviet

bloc. Readers who wish to pursue further and in more depth issues of development in relation to NGOs – as distinct from the broad management perspectives presented in this volume – are referred to *Non-Governmental Organizations and Development* by David Lewis and Nazneen Kanji (2009), which forms a companion piece to this book. Effort has been made in the text wherever possible to present material and examples from across the globe. However, readers will notice that there is more material drawn from the context of South Asia than from elsewhere, reflecting the author's own experience.

The structure of the book

The chapter map provided (Figure 1.1) offers a guide to the overall structure of the book. Part I is concerned with the *conceptualization* of NGO management, and its wider backdrop. Chapter 1 introduces the book's main structure, themes and basic argument. NGO categories and terms are introduced (Figure 1.2), and shifting public attitudes to NGOs and their work are briefly discussed. Different attitudes to NGO management are broadly characterized as the generic, distinctive and adaptive views, the final of which is the approach taken in the book. The key concepts introduced in the chapter include *NGO diversity* and the *NGO management debate*.

Chapter 2 sets the scene by framing the field of NGO management in general terms. First, NGOs are distinguished from other types of third sector organizations, and development NGOs are then distinguished from other types of NGO. The strengths and weakness of existing academic and other literature on NGOs is briefly reviewed. Different views, both positive and negative, of the work of NGOs are then explored. NGO management is then introduced as a complex but under-researched subject, requiring a focus on both organizations and their environment. The

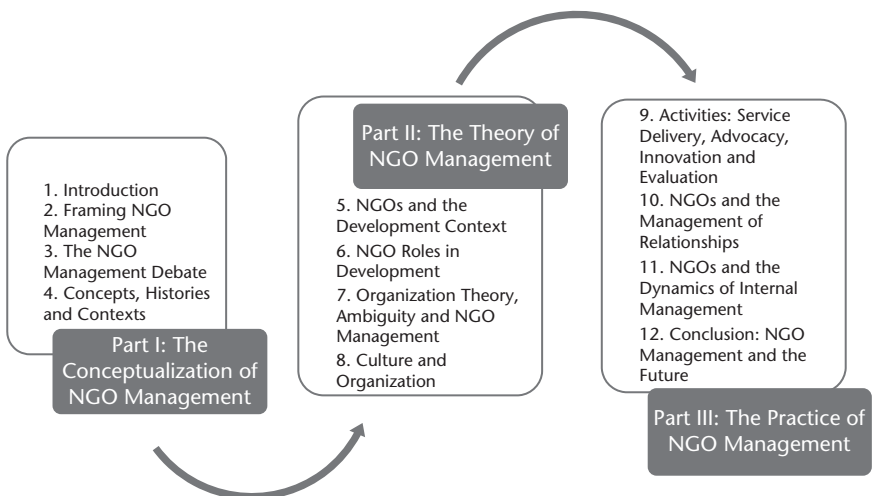


FIGURE 1.1 Chapter map.

challenges of NGO management are set out as lying broadly in three distinct but related domains: (i) internal structures and processes, (ii) the activities NGOs seek to undertake, and (iii) relationships with other institutional actors. All are set against a fourth domain of the organizational environment (Figure 2.1). In each domain, we also find three main roles: (i) the delivery of services, (ii) efforts to catalyze political change and innovation, and (iii) the attempt to build synergies through development partnerships. As a result, a synthesis of ideas from a range of sources will be needed in order to build a composite model of NGO management (Table 12.1). This will be the main task of the book. The key concepts introduced in this chapter include *civil society*, *third sector* and *hybridity*.

Chapter 3 begins with an exploration of the broad idea of management, and the ways this can be related to development NGOs. Reasons for the longstanding ambiguous attitude to the idea of management among many NGOs are discussed. There has been a recurring ‘NGO management debate’ that has been taking place since the 1980s, a theme that will be returned to throughout the book. It then considers some distinctive challenges faced when relating different kinds of management ideas to the field of development NGOs. Taking forward the idea of developing a composite model of NGO management, four main sources of ideas are discussed: mainstream business management, public sector management, development management and non-profit management are each shown to have useful relevance. This makes it possible to establish a conceptual framework for thinking about NGO management based on a ‘composite’ model that draws on different management traditions (Lewis 2003). The key concepts discussed in the chapter include *management*, *managerialism*, *new public management* and the *composite model of NGO management*.

Leaving behind questions of organization and management, Chapter 4 discusses context and broad categories, definitions, and labels (Table 4.1). Development NGOs are found all over the world, and work within very different environments. First, it briefly reviews the history and contexts around the world that have given distinctive shapes to the emergence and evolution of development NGOs. While all NGOs share some common characteristics, their different histories across various geographical locations mean that there are also distinctive variations within and between contexts. The chapter concludes with an overview of the relatively recent rise of NGOs within the international development field. The key concepts discussed in the chapter include *neoliberalism*, *third sector* and *civil society*.

In Part II, we explore the *theory* of NGO management in the context of development work. It seeks to explain how NGOs have come to be seen as important actors in development, and the various approaches that can be used to understand the management challenges that they face. Continuing with this exploration of the context in which NGOs operate, Chapter 5 focuses on the various ideas of development that have emerged, and both mainstream and alternative versions are identified. Different approaches to development have viewed NGOs in various ways (Figure 5.1). The chapter then moves on to trace changing relationships between NGOs and this ‘development industry’ that emerged after the Second World War

that includes the United Nations, multilateral and bilateral donors, and growing numbers of private funding sources. Many NGOs receive resources from the aid system, but face a set of challenges in their relationship with it, including dealing with unequal power relations within development partnerships, and keeping up with the rapidly changing frameworks of international aid. Furthermore, while NGOs are traditionally understood as organizations that work in 'developing' countries, the global balance of power is now changing such that simple distinctions between developing and developed appear increasingly outmoded. The key concepts discussed in the chapter include *development*, *alternative development*, *'big D'/'little d' development*, *humanitarian relief*, *international aid* and *the aid effectiveness agenda*.

Chapter 6 returns to the level of the organization and sets out in more detail the main roles played by development NGOs. These roles were previously identified at three levels as those of implementation, catalysis and partnership. The challenges of each one are introduced and then briefly discussed using some examples. The implementation role is increasingly central to mainstream development approaches and is concerned with the delivery of services to those in need, which raises issues of cost, contracting, quality and targeting as well as broader contextual ones of accountability and citizenship. A crucial question is identified as whether service delivery by NGOs is viewed in the longer term as a means or simply as an end. The catalyst role is often contrasted with that of implementation, and takes in advocacy, community empowerment and innovation and is generally associated with radical or alternative development. Finally, partnership is discussed as an increasingly central policy concept that seeks to build synergies between different kinds of organization in the public, private and third sectors. For NGOs, the key challenge is identified as building active rather than dependent partnerships. The chapter then moves on to consider what makes an NGO an effective organization, and reviews some of the evidence that has been produced in relation to NGO performance. The key concepts discussed in the chapter include *implementation*, *partnership*, *advocacy*, *innovation*, *contracting* and *effectiveness*.

Chapter 7 discusses the ways that NGO management is characterized by a high level of ambiguity, given its composite, multi-stranded nature. The chapter begins with an exploration of the ways different traditions within organization theory (including modernist, symbolic-interpretative and postmodern) are relevant to our understanding of NGO management. Following from this discussion, aspects of resource dependence, neo-institutionalism and evolutionary theory are discussed in relation to development NGOs. This leads us to consider leadership and learning within NGOs as key management issues. In the second part of the chapter, continuities between organization theory and anthropological work on organizations are explored. The argument is made that given the nature of NGOs and their work, an anthropological approach provides a particular useful disciplinary lens through which to analyze power relations, and the local cross-cultural encounters that characterize development work. Finally, both organization theory and anthropology are shown to highlight the concept of ambiguity as helping to explore key aspects of NGO management, such as the increasingly blurred boundaries between

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associational and bureaucratic worlds, and between the public, private and third sectors in many societies. Key new concepts discussed in this chapter include *organization theory*, *resource dependence*, *neo-institutionalism*, *organizational life cycles*, *organizational worlds theory* and *ambiguity*.

Moving away from issues of structure, Chapter 8 is concerned with the complexity of cultural issues in NGO management. It begins by looking at the organizational culture that NGOs seek to promote in their working styles, leadership and interactions with communities. The chapter explores work that discusses different types of organizational culture that have been identified within organizations, and considers relationships between gender and organization culture. Turning to wider societal culture, the chapter considers work that tries to identify wider cultural factors influencing organizational life, including Hofstede's influential work. Finally, approaches that move away from over-generalized culturalist assumptions are introduced in order to engage more fully with issues of complexity, power and hybridity that increasingly characterize the world of NGO management. Key concepts discussed include *internationalization*, *culture*, *organizational culture* and *hybrid organizational systems*.

Part III is concerned with the practice of NGO management. It contains four chapters, three of which each focus on a key area of NGO activity. These are broken down into the three interlocking circles of organization, activities and relationships that are outlined in the conceptual framework in Figure 2.1.

Chapter 9 returns to the main activities undertaken by development NGOs. It expands upon the earlier discussion in Chapter 6 in the light of the issues raised in preceding chapters, and discusses in more depth the challenges of service delivery, advocacy and innovation. Following from this is a discussion of NGO experiences with evaluation, which remain unsatisfactory, and the resultant need for NGOs and donors to think in new ways about approaches to evaluation. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the question of scale, and asks whether scaling up NGO work is a necessary precondition for success. Key new concepts discussed include *innovation*, *evaluation* and *scaling up*.

In Chapter 10, NGO relationships with communities, state, business and other development agencies are discussed. Introducing a strategic management framework that distinguishes between control, influence and appreciation (Figure 10.1), the chapter first argues that NGO managers cannot afford to focus only on the organizational dimensions of their work. The second part of the chapter is concerned with the complex task of managing multiple accountabilities, which lies at the heart of the management of each of these relationships. Different approaches to accountability are then discussed, including external regulation and internal accountability systems within NGOs. The chapter then goes on to review NGO relationships with government, business and local communities in the light of the preceding discussion, and draws out the key challenges for NGO managers. Finally, we return to the increasingly common but often problematic idea of partnership (Figure 10.2). Key new concepts discussed in this chapter include *strategic management*, *accountability*, *contracting*, *gap filling*, *social capital*, *corporate social responsibility* and *partnership*.

Chapter 11 brings us to explore aspects of the dynamics of internal management within development NGOs. It focuses on an increasingly complex set of organizational issues, and draws on emerging issues from the field of third sector management to explore their relevance to NGOs. The nature of third sector leadership, the governance of third sector organizations, and the management of volunteers are each explored using third sector literature. The chapter then moves on to discuss the small but growing literature on the internal organization of NGOs, and reflects on capacity building and organizational learning. The management of information is identified as a key area of NGO management that is gaining in importance as technology advances. Finally, we look at various approaches to organizational change, and the need to engage with high levels of complexity that these entail. Key concepts discussed in this chapter include *third sector management*, *voluntarism*, *governance*, *bureaucratization*, *capacity building*, *information management*, *organizational change* and *complexity*.

Chapter 12 concludes by drawing the themes of the book together and considering the overall theme of 'NGO management', its changing forms and its future. The composite model that draws on four different areas of management (business, public, development and third sector) is set out, along with the ideas of synthesis and improvisation that remain central to the practice of NGO management (Tables 12.1 and 12.2). Finally, three central issues are highlighted for the future – hybridity, ambiguity and uncertainty. Key new concepts discussed in this chapter include *improvisation*, *turbulence* and *diversity*.

The approach to NGO management

Since NGOs became viewed as central actors in development during the late 1980s, a debate about NGO management has taken place that has broadly been polarized around two positions: those who see NGOs as well-meaning but disorganized and therefore in need of sounder management tools and techniques, and others who argue instead that NGOs should fear those seeking to apply more mainstream management because it may threaten their distinctive values or damage their creativity. Instead, this line of argument goes, NGOs need to develop their own alternative appropriate approaches that embody the principles, ideals and values that they seek to deploy in their work.

While there is some merit to both positions, we will see that there are more complex issues involved. Indeed, there can be no single approach to understanding or performing the management of NGOs. We identify three main schools of thought in this book. The first is the *generic* management view that assumes that 'management is management' and that development NGOs should simply strengthen and improve their management by drawing strongly on mainstream business thinking. The second is the *adaptive* view of NGO management, where it is argued that while generic management may be useful and relevant to development NGOs, it cannot be applied in a straightforward way. It therefore needs adapting in the light of NGOs' distinctive values, structure, culture and type of work. The third pushes this point further and argues for a fully *distinctive* view of NGO

management. This view suggests that managers of NGOs face a unique combination of challenges that are different to those encountered by other types of organization. The development of appropriate organizational responses will require further experimentation and research that engages with the real organizational worlds in which these organizations operate, and in ways that can generate new concepts, models and tools where necessary.

All three perspectives can therefore make potentially important contributions. In taking this approach forward, the book makes the argument for a 'composite' model of NGO management that acknowledges two basic truths: (i) the continuing relative lack of available knowledge that exists of this subject field compared to other forms of management, and (ii) the need to view NGO management as a constantly shifting synthesis of management perspectives that is dependent on a range of complex factors linked to context and task. Within an improvisational process of building appropriate practice, NGO managers generally need to draw on ideas from four areas: business management, public management, third sector management and development management. The precise strategic management mix required will necessarily depend on a particular organization's mission, culture and values, and on the forces operating in its wider environment, such as the demands of donors, or the requirements of government.

Each organization needs to find its own unique optimal management composition. None will ever get this totally right, but some NGOs are more effective than others in pursuing this goal. A combination of external and internal pressures means that no organization ever stands still in terms of its scale, activities and identity. For example, an NGO's position within the third sector may shift and take on hybrid characteristics, and these may have implications for the way that it is organized. For example, an NGO that seeks to generate resources from the market to reduce its dependence on funders may increasingly draw on business management ideas, but an NGO moving more fully into government service contracting may need to engage further with public management traditions.

Features of the book

The references in the book bring together relevant classic and contemporary academic research on NGO management, alongside many 'grey' literature references to agency reports, NGO evaluations and other official documents.¹ The subject and author index gives the reader a systematic way to access further information about each of the topics covered, and the means to follow up in more detail on the authors whose work has been drawn upon in the writing of this book.

This third edition includes many new references from the literature that reflect the changing landscape of NGO management in the period since 2007. However, I have also avoided gratuitously scattering contemporary references throughout the text when an older source or example continues to illustrate a particular point or an idea. In my view, many policy debates on development policy and management are imprisoned within an historical 'perpetual present', where there is an unhelpful

emphasis on the promise of delivering ‘the next big thing’ often at the expense of learning from even the recent past (Lewis 2009). My approach is to try to build on experience by maintaining a historical perspective on NGOs and development.

There is also a website associated with the book (<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415816502>). This contains additional materials useful for teachers and students who are using this book for teaching, including chapter learning objectives, discussion questions and links to relevant web sites and video clips.

Terminology

The study of NGOs is a field in which there are an unusually large number of complex and confusing terms, abbreviations and acronyms. NGOs work not just in the development field but also in human rights or environment, as well as in other diverse spheres such as arts, sport and recreation. Most researchers and policy makers tend to stick to ‘NGO’ in common usage whether they are referring to development NGOs, human rights NGOs or any other type. The use of ‘NGDO’ is used by a few authors in their texts (e.g. Fowler 1997) but is not widely used, and is to my mind, a rather clumsy abbreviation. In the first edition of this book, the attempt was therefore made to try to keep things simple by using the generic term ‘NGO’ throughout, rather than deploying the additional ‘D’. As with the second edition, for clarity I begin by explaining the different sub-categories of NGO (Figure 1.2). A glossary is also provided at the end of the book to help guide the reader through this complexity.

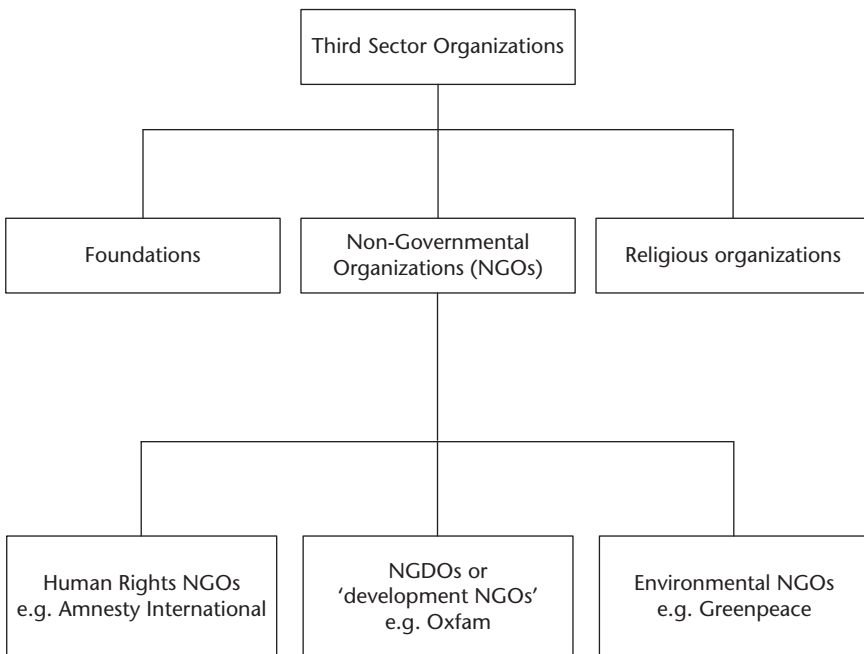


FIGURE 1.2 Situating development NGOs within the third sector.

Around the start of the twenty-first century, the label ‘NGO’ began to lose a little of its earlier shine and it has in some quarters fallen out of favour (Box 1.1). Some organizations that once described themselves as NGOs came to prefer other terms – such as ‘civil society organizations’ (CSOs), ‘not-for-profit’ agencies or ‘social enterprises’. There are multiple, sometimes contradictory, reasons that have contributed to this change: criticisms that many NGOs have come to be seen as inefficient or over-professionalized, that they are unaccountable to those they claim to serve, or an association in certain contexts with opportunism and corruption. There are also critics of the dominance of neoliberal development policies that have come to see NGOs as part of the problem rather than the solution, and who now associate NGOs with the maintenance of the status quo rather than with attempts to change it.

However, I continue to use the abbreviation ‘NGO’ for three main reasons. The first is that I think it better to keep to the terms most people still use ‘on the ground’ and in the UN. The second is that the majority of texts on development NGOs on which I draw use the term ‘NGO’, and it would probably confuse matters even further to have different terms used side by side in the text. Finally, I think

Box 1.1 THE ‘BUSINESS OF HELPING’?: NGO MANAGEMENT IN THE HEADLINES

‘Sins of the secular missionaries’ (Economist, 29 January 2000)

In particularly florid journalistic style, this article argues that NGOs, ‘once little more than ragged charities’, increasingly act as large-scale private contractors for Western governments. It also suggests that in many developing countries NGOs have become vehicles for unscrupulous individuals to connect opportunistically with aid resources. The article then goes on to chart the increasing scale of NGO operations, and argues that ‘non-governmental’ is often a misnomer because many NGOs increasingly depend on public funds. Overall, the article is critical of this new ‘business of helping’ and while it acknowledges that many NGOs ‘do achieve great things’ it hints darkly that NGOs ‘can also get into bad ways because they are not accountable to anyone’.

‘Hearts and minds at any cost’ (The Guardian, 13 July 2004)

This article argues that humanitarian efforts have been increasingly co-opted into the ‘war on terror’. It illustrates the ways that boundaries between public and private agencies in Iraq and Afghanistan have been eroded, making it difficult for NGOs to exist in an independent and critical ‘civic space’ away from both US government policy and the terrorists. The article to some extent blames many of the NGOs themselves for having outgrown their ‘charitable’ origins and become largely funded by governments.

'The \$1.6 trillion non-profit sector behaves (or misbehaves) more and more like big business' (Newsweek, 5 September 2005)

This story covers the growth and scale of the NGO sector and argues that greater regulation is needed. It begins by describing Oxfam GB's Director Barbara Stocking, referring to her 'no-nonsense manner' and 'power broker's schedule'. It suggests many NGOs 'are dropping their image as anti-capitalist do-gooders and adopting the look of the Fortune 500 companies that they have been known to criticise'. But the article also comments on the search by many NGOs for more independent non-governmental sources of income from private giving and fair trade activities, citing the Iraq conflict as a wakeup call to some NGOs. While Oxfam GB with more than half a million individual donor supporters was able to take a clear position against the war, the article points out, CARE USA, which receives approximately half its income from the US government, had to 'tread softly'. In Iraq, the US government compelled US NGOs to display American logos on aid deliveries and has required that discussions with the press be officially cleared first.

The Truth About NGOs: Haiti (BBC Radio, 5 January 2012)

This was one of three hard-hitting programmes that asked difficult questions about NGO work in the contrasting settings of Haiti, India and Malawi. Despite the tabloid style title, these programmes were good examples of balanced and investigative public service broadcasting. Yet each took a far more critical tone than would arguably have been the case a decade ago. This episode begins: *'NGOs are facing what some describe as a mid-life crisis. Hard questions are being asked. Should international NGOs be a conduit for aid? And are they ignorant of local realities, wasteful and undermining of democracy? As we approach the second anniversary of Haitian earthquake we take a look at the Caribbean country sometimes referred to as "the republic of NGOs" ...'*

other terms are not used consistently and it therefore makes sense to keep things simple.²

I use the term NGO in its broad form in this book. It includes both national and international organizations, those from both 'industrialized' and 'developing' country contexts, organizations that are funded from the development industry and those that are not, and finally both membership and non-membership organizations. I do not follow the convention in some texts that the use of the term NGO implies an organization that receives foreign aid (though many NGOs of course do so) or that an NGO is necessarily formally registered as such.

Finally, this is not a book about 'how to manage an NGO'. Other people would be far more qualified than I am to write such a book, although I have my doubts,

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given the diversity of organizations, approaches and contexts, whether it would be very useful to do so. The tone of this volume is therefore intended to be discursive rather than prescriptive. It is hoped that by reviewing the relevant literature, a preliminary understanding of our subject can be achieved, and that through further action, debate and research, this understanding can be taken forward. The intended main audience for this book will be researchers and students of development management, social policy and non-profit management, at either graduate or undergraduate level. I hope also that those interested in managing development organizations and people working 'on the ground' in NGOs might also find the book useful.

2

FRAMING NGO MANAGEMENT

While bookshops may brim with the latest and greatest tomes on running a more successful corporation and there are endless courses and seminars to attend, there is little to help leaders of INGOs with the relatively more complex task of managing an INGO.

Ronalds (2010: xiv)

Introduction

This chapter introduces the complicated subject of development NGOs, and discusses the main sources of information that we have about them. Our knowledge base, particularly about the *management* of NGOs, is limited in some important ways. It also considers some of the criticisms that have been made about development NGOs. Putting both of these observations together, this chapter makes the argument that we need to understand more about NGO management because we need to address knowledge gap, and that doing so will help with the normative challenges of improving NGO performance. The chapter ends with a basic conceptual framework with which to frame our exploration of the subject of NGO management. This is based on the main roles and activities of NGOs, the diversity of organizations and contexts, and on the idea that in order to understand NGO management we will need to draw upon a range of other management fields.

Surveying the landscape: the ubiquity of NGOs

Some two decades ago the US academic Lester M. Salamon (1994) wrote of a 'global associational revolution' that was taking place. He suggested that third sector organizations, so called because they form an important arena of social, cultural, economic and political activity alongside the state and the market, were growing in

numbers and playing increasing roles in public policy. Whether providing services to citizens, promoting particular kinds of values, forming the basis for community self-help initiatives or campaigning on public issues, third sector organizations have gained an increasingly high profile right across the world. They are active across a vast spectrum of activities from welfare services to sports and leisure, and from political activism to arts and culture (Salamon and Anheier 1999). Since the end of the Cold War and the rise of neoliberal policy agendas in particular, they have become a feature of most societies.

Non-governmental organization (NGO), a designation normally associated with organizations working in the field of development, environment or human rights, are a subgroup of the third sector organizational family. The acronym NGO originated after the Second World War in the context of the newly formed UN. Although the UN was primarily an organization of governments, provision was made for certain international citizen organizations that were independent from UN member governments, to observe and participate in UN affairs. These organizations were concerned with issues that included development, human rights, peace and environment. Many of these were not new organizations. For example, the Red Cross had existed since the nineteenth century. But recognition by the UN provided these organizations with an important new international status and elevated their profile. While NGOs are a subgroup of organizations within this wider third sector, NGOs themselves also form a highly diverse organizational category (Figure 1.2).³ The primary focus of this book is on non-governmental *development* organizations, as opposed to other forms of NGO whose focus may lie more squarely within the fields of environment, conservation, human rights, peace building, the arts or a range of other less related specialized activities.⁴

NGOs are 'third sector' organizations that are engaged in development, poverty reduction and social justice work at local, national and global levels. Some NGOs set out simply to deliver services to people who need them, while others are activist groups campaigning for a better world. Many NGOs try to combine both aims. The profile of NGOs has increased steadily among development policy makers, activists and researchers in both the rich industrialized countries of the 'North' and among the low-income, aid recipient countries of the 'South'.⁵

For Mitlin *et al.* (2005: 4), what is crucially important about NGOs is not so much their capacity to undertake specific tasks as the roles that they may play in generating new ideas and in demonstrating 'alternatives' to the status quo:

NGOs exist as alternatives. In being 'not governmental' they constitute vehicles for people to participate in development and social change in ways that would not be possible through government programmes. In being 'not governmental' they constitute a 'space' in which it is possible to think about development and social change in ways that would not be likely through government programmes ... they constitute instruments for turning these alternative ideas into, and alternative forms of participation, into alternative practices and hard outcomes.

BOX 2.1 NGOs AND 'CIVIL SOCIETY'

By the 1990s, NGOs were being connected in the minds of policy makers with a newly rediscovered idea: 'civil society', or the uncoerced space for citizen action that was believed to lie between state and market. It was argued that a strong civil society was good for development because it provided an arena for citizen voice and curbed the excesses of government and private sector. Development agencies also favoured the idea that if synergies and common purposes could be fostered between government, business, and civil society, this would strengthen economic, political and social development.

The idea of supporting civil society became a key development objective for donors, and was conceptualized at three levels. The first was the *organizational level* (individual NGOs) where there was a need seen to clarify organizational values, identities and strategies (linking longer-term vision and project activities, learning from experience), to build organizational capacities for governance, decision making and conflict management, and to develop human resources (mobilizing skilled staff without undermining social commitment) and organizational learning (building systems to avoid losing experience in the day-to-day demands on time). A second was the *sector level* (viewing civil society as a sector) where NGOs and other civil society actors such as associations or grassroots movements were seen as needing to create opportunities for building shared perspectives and joint action, such as through coordinated networks and campaigns. They could also promote mechanisms to represent key sectorial issues, such as alliances to ensure that land reform or minority rights remained on the policy agenda. Finally, the third was the *societal level* where NGOs were viewed as able to create institutions to establish and safeguard the independence of the civil society sector itself, such as legislation that gives proper voice to NGOs in policy dialogue, and consultations with civil society over the reform of policy.

Source: Brown and Tandon (1994); Howell and Pearce (2001)

NGOs have also come to be seen by many as part of an emerging 'civil society' in many countries that may serve to balance or challenge the excesses of the state and the market (Hadenius and Ugglä 1996; Glasius *et al.* 2004) (Box 2.1).

The importance of NGOs goes well beyond the worlds of narrowly defined international development and humanitarianism. In the field of international relations and politics, there has been a growth of interest in non-governmental networks of environmental, gender and human rights campaigning organizations (Keck and Sikkink 1998; DeMars 2005). Within public policy, NGOs in many countries are involved as contractors and lobbyists nationally as well as internationally. They are also part of the world of social policy. Deacon *et al.* (1997) draw attention to the ways in which international non-state actors are increasingly contributing to