

Role of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Social Development in Developing Nations

Samuel N. Nyang'au, PhD *

Dean, School of Business & Economics, Garissa University College, Garissa-Kenya

Richard Nyangosi, PhD

Head, Department of Business Studies, Rongo University College, Rongo-Kenya

Jane Oenga, (PhD)

Institute of Agriculture, Technology and Education, Kibungo- Rwanda

Ame Juma Suleiman

Former Student , Kampala International University, Dar es salaam- Tanzania

Abstract

Lack of social development is a very common feature in many countries of the world those in the developing world being the most affected. Such is taking place in the backdrop of most government efforts to ensure maximum social development. It is in the light of this that NGOs have emerged to complement government efforts in order to realize lasting social development for the benefit of the people. The present study set out to establish the contribution of Non Governmental Organisations in social development in Unguja island of Zanzibar through education support. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design in which systematic sampling was used to get a sample size of 126 people out of the universe population of 773234. Respondents included Non-Governmental Organisation officers, local leaders in unguja, government officials and ordinary people. Random sampling was also used at the time of data collection. The questionnaire for the interview was prepared in two phases. In the first phase, unstructured in-depth interviews were conducted to create the initial interview (the instrument). Further expert opinions on the questionnaire were collected and improvements were made on it. This necessitated some improvements in the final version. In the second phase, a pilot survey was conducted with some respondents to gauge how well the questionnaire was understood and also to test alternative wordings of the question and alternative response options to determine whether some other response option should be provided. Some questionnaires were emailed to those respondents who were well known by the researchers, whereas other questionnaires were administered by field assistants who later handed over the filled questionnaires to the researchers for analysis. Findings showed that most respondents were satisfied with the contribution played by Non Governmental Organisations in social development in unguja Island by supporting various schools. In conclusion, while the government of Zanzibar has a big role to play as a single entity, it is imperative to join hands with Non Governmental Organisations to realize even better results by addressing the various social development challenges as a team and not as single entity. As a matter of policy, this study is a wake-up call to all actors- in the government, academia, industry, private sector, the civil society, and the international community -that the contribution played by Non-Governmental Organisations in promoting social development in Unguja Island is indisputable. Specifically, it will create awareness among the concerned actors and other stakeholders of the important role played by Non Governmental Organisations in the education sector thereby prompting them to embrace Non Governmental Organisations as equal partners in development.

Keywords: Social Development, Unguja Island, Education, Non-Governmental organisations

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, growing amount of development resources are being channeled to and through NGOs in all sectors. In turn, NGOs working to alleviate poverty, improve social welfare, and develop civil society have become more dependent on international donors, leading to an explosive growth of the number of NGOs in many countries. International non-governmental organizations have a history dating back to 1839. It has been estimated that by 1914 there were 1083 NGOs. International NGOs were important in the anti-slavery movement and the movement for women's suffrage, and reached a peak at the time of the World Disarmament Conference. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have played a major role in pushing for sustainable development at the international level. Campaigning groups have been key drivers of inter-governmental negotiations, ranging from the regulation of hazardous wastes to a global ban on land mines and the elimination of slavery.

NGOs have emerged in order to supplement the state efforts in providing sustainable development, social services and programs to its people. NGOs in both developed and developing countries have emerged in order to supplement failures of the state to effectively deliver services and development to all its citizens. It is through complementary efforts of NGOs and interest groups that good governance can be promoted and to ensure that

government goods and services reach the grassroots, the poor, marginalized, the disadvantaged in the society in a fair and equitable way. The state and civil society need to supplement and complement each other's efforts in the developmental and service delivery agenda. In Africa, NGOs emerged particularly, in the 1980s when international financial institutions, donor agencies and Western governments shifted some of their aid from African governments to civil society. (Molomo and Somolekae, 1999).

In Zanzibar, several NGOs have made a positive impact in the social development realm both in the urban and in the rural areas. There is no doubt that with increasing demands on the state by the citizens, the state can no longer be the sole provider of goods and services. Poor performance of government in meeting the socioeconomic quests of citizens has been identified as one of the reasons behind the proliferation of NGOs in the new millennium. Along this line, Wahab (2000) observed that people in developing nations have until recently looked up to their governments in meeting their basic socio-economic demands. In response to people's demands, Zanzibar, in particular has undertaken many different approaches in attempting to promote social development of individuals, families and the society in general. In spite of all these efforts, the government alone is not able to fully improve education sector, hence the coming in of the NGOs to fill the gap. Therefore, this research generally assessed the contribution of NGOs on social development by focusing on the services provided by NGOs to schools in Unguja Island.

The objectives of the study were to examine the contribution of NGOs in providing sponsorship to students in Unguja Island, providing teaching materials in Unguja Island the construction of classrooms in Unguja Island providing furniture to schools in Unguja Island

2. Research Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design in which the researchers used both qualitative and quantitative data. The target population for this study was 420 (census 2002) consisting of people from Urban west region, South Unguja region and North Unguja region. This involved government officers, NGOs officers and ordinary people/citizens. A sample size of 126 respondents was selected from a target population of 420 to represent accessible population. This sample size was large enough to generalize findings and draw conclusions for the study. The sample size was selected by the use of systematic sampling which involved dividing the respondents into homogenous groups which included public leaders especially local ones. Random sampling was also used at the time of data collection.

Respondents for this research were NGO officers, local leaders, government officials in Unguja and ordinary people, male and female. These people helped to provide data relating to the government policy and procedures as well as the contribution of NGOs in social development. Primary data was collected from the respondents using well-structured comprehensive questionnaires. The questionnaire was prepared in two phases. In the first phase, unstructured in-depth interviews were conducted to create the initial interview (the instrument).

Table 1: Sample size

MALE	NGOs OFFICERS	7	5	7
	NON NGOs OFFICERS	20	15	20
FEMALE	NGOs OFFICERS	3	3	3
	NON NGOs OFFICERS	17	13	13
TOTAL	126	47	36	43

Further, expert opinions on the questionnaire were collected and improvements were made on it. This necessitated some improvements in the final version. In the second phase, a pilot survey was conducted with some respondents to gauge how well the questionnaire was understood, and also to test alternative wordings of the questions and alternative response options and to determine whether some other response option should be provided. The questionnaires were validated using feedback from academicians and practitioners. Questionnaires were emailed to those respondents who were well known by the researchers, whereas other questionnaires were administered by field assistants who then sent the filled questionnaires to the researchers.

3. Findings of the Study and Discussion

Collected data was entered into the computer, coded, edited, and analyzed. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and tables were employed to come up with the expected results. The collected information was analyzed in detail so as to help the researchers in getting the perception of the respondents in regard to the study under investigation.

NGOs and Education Development

Table 2 NGOs involvement in Student Sponsorship

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Most satisfied	1	0.7
Satisfied	72	57.1
Neutral	26	20.6
Unsatisfied	4	3.1
Most unsatisfied	23	18.2
Total	126	100.0

Source: Field work data

In terms of student sponsorship, the table above indicates that majority of respondents, (57.1%), were satisfied, (20.6%) were neutral, 3.1% were unsatisfied whereas (18.2%) were most unsatisfied. This indicates that NGOs in Unguja played an important role in sponsoring students to study in various schools. This proves their contribution in social development of the Island.

Table 3 NGOs involvement in the Provision of Teaching Materials (Books, Laboratory devices etc)

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Most satisfied	1	0.7
Satisfied	81	64.2
Neutral	22	17.4
Unsatisfied	6	4.7
Most unsatisfied	16	12.6
Total	126	100.0

Source: Field work data 2011

On the part of provision of teaching materials by the NGOs, the table above indicates that majority of respondents, (64.2%), were satisfied, (0.7%) were most satisfied, (17.4%) were neutral, (4.7%) were unsatisfied whereas (12.6%) were most unsatisfied. The implication here is that the NGOs were significant in providing teaching materials to various schools in Unguja Island.

Table4. NGOs involvement in Construction of Class Rooms

Frequency		Percentage
Most satisfied	4	3.1
Satisfied	82	65.0
Neutral	28	22.2
Unsatisfied	4	3.1
Most unsatisfied	8	6.3
Total	126	100.0

Source: Field work data

On involvement of NGOs in classroom construction the above table presents the results of the respondents. The table shows that majority, (65.0%), of respondents were satisfied, (3.1%) were most satisfied, (22.2%) were neutral, (3.1%) were unsatisfied whereas (6.3%) were most unsatisfied. This indicates that NGOs play an important role in the construction of classrooms in Unguja Island.

Table4. NGOs involvement in the Provision of Furniture (Desks, Chair, Tables etc)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Most satisfied	1	0.7
Satisfied	74	58.7
Neutral	23	18.2
Unsatisfied	4	3.1
Most unsatisfied	24	19.0
Total	126	100.0

Source Field data

The table above presents the results of respondents in regard to NGOs provision of school furniture. From the table, it is clear that majority of the respondents, (58.7%), were satisfied, (0.7%) were most satisfied, (18.2%) were neutral, (3.1%) were unsatisfied and (19.0%) were most unsatisfied. This finding illustrates that NGOs play an important part in the provision furniture to schools.

4. Conclusion, Policy Implication and Recommendations

This study explored the role played by NGOs in social development through education support in Unguja Island. The results of this study confirmed that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the role played by NGOs in social development in Unguja Island by supporting various schools. For instance, in the area of providing

furniture to schools, 58.7% were satisfied, in classroom construction 65% were satisfied, on the provision of teaching materials 64.2% were satisfied, whereas 57.1% were satisfied with sponsorship services the NGOs were giving to needy students. This study is a wake-up call to all actors- in the government, in academia, in the industry, in the private sector, the civil society and the international community- that the contribution played by NGOs in promoting social development in a developing country such as Tanzania is indisputable. Specifically, the study results will create awareness among the concerned actors and other stakeholders of the important contribution NGOs play in the education sector. This will make them (various actors) to reframe their policies in ways so as to align them with those of the NGOs. It will act as a mirror through which the government of Zanzibar will examine its relationship with the various NGOs and give them support where necessary. It is strongly recommended that a comprehensive investigation be carried out to determine various obstacles hindering the activities and operations of NGOs in Unguja Island and how such obstacles can be overcome in order to enhance and bolster their activities in the future.

References

- Abegunde, A.A. (2003). "Rethinking Polarization of Raw-Material Inputs to Regional Centres: A Panacea to Rural Economic Development". *Environment and Behavior*.
- Alan, (1998). 'NGOs, Civil Society and the State: Avoiding theoretical extremes in real world issues,' *Development in Practice*.
- Baccaro (2001). *Civil Society, NGOs, and Decent Work Policies: Sorting out the Issues. A Discussion Paper Series* presented the preliminary results of research undertaken by the *IILS in Geneva*.
- Bebbington, Lester (1993). "Non governmental Organizations performance and Accountability". In Edwards, M and Hulme, D(eds) (1996) West Hartford: Kumarian press.
- Boreham, N. (2004). "A Theory of Collective Competence: Challenging The Neo-Liberal Individualisation of Performance at Work"
- Brown (2005). "Non-governmental Organizations on Development Issues." *Global Issues*. 01 Jun. 2005
- Caira, N.M, Lachenmayr, S., Sheinfeld, J. Goodhart, F.W. Cancialosi, L., Lewis, C. (2003). *The Health Educator's Role in Advocacy and Policy: Principles, Processes, Programs, and partnerships*
- Cleary(1997) *Community Based Targeting Mechanisms for Social Safety Net*" Department of Economics, Williamstown MA and Institute of Economic Development, Boston University.
- Covey, J.G., (1994). "Accountability and Effectiveness of NGO Policy Alliances".
- Desai, V. (2005). "NGOs, gender mainstreaming, and urban poor communities in Africa". *Gender and Development*, 13(2)
- Hulme, (1994) 'NGO Performance and Accountability: Introduction and overview' of Non-Governmental Organisations: Performance and Accountability Beyond the Magic Bullet, Earthscan Publications Limited.
- Finger, M. (1994). *NGOs and Transformation: Beyond Social Movement Theory*. In: Princen T, Finger M (Eds.): *Environmental NGOs in World Politics: Linking the Local and the Global*. London: Routledge,
- Fowler. (2002). *Evolving Partnerships: The Role of NGOs in Basic Education in Africa*. USAID, Bureau of Africa, Office of Sustainable Development, Washington DC.
- Friedmann, J. (1992). *Empowerment: "The Politics of Alternative Development"*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- James. (2004). *The Role of NGOs in Implementing the Millennium Development Goals in Africa*".
- Karlshausen (2003). *Toward an Interactional Approach to Sustainable Community Development. Journal of Rural Studies*, 15(4)
- Korten, D.C. (1991). *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. West Hartford, Conn: Kumarian Press.
- Kulig J (2000). "Community resilience. The potential for community health nursing theory development". *Public Health Nursing*, 17(5): 374-385.
- Langran (2000). "The Role of NGOs in Primary Education" A Case study of Six NGOs in Africa. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* No. 2530.
- Lavery, S.H. (2005). "The Community Action Model: A Community-Driven Model Designed to Address Disparities in Health". *A.m. J. Public Health*. 5(4)
- Laura(1997):*Supporting Civil Society: The Political Role of Non Governmental Organizations in Central America*, Palgrave Macmillan
- Lehtonen, M.(2004). *The Environmental-social Interface of Sustainable Development: Capabilities, Social Capital, Institutions* Panda, B.(2007). *Top Down or Bottom Up ? A Study of Grassroots NGOs' Approach. on Health Management*, . West Hartford: Kumarian Press.
- Racher, F.E. (2007). *Running Head: The Community Health Action Model: Health Promotion by the Community*, Brandon University.
- Raphael, D.T., Steinmetz, B., Renwick, R., Rootman, I., Brown, I., Sehdev, H.,

- Phillips, S. Smith, T. (1999). "The Community Quality of Life Project: A Health Promotion Approach to Understanding Communities". *Health Promotion Int.* 14(3)
- Rappaport J (1987). Terms of Empowerment/Exemplars of Prevention: "Toward a Theory for Community Psychology". *American Journal of Community Psychology.* 15(2)
- Robinson (2000): Evaluating Transnational NGOs: Legitimacy, Accountability, New York: Palgrave, Macmillan.
- Roff, S. (2004). Nongovernmental Organizations: The Strengths Perspective at work. *International Social Work,* 47(2)
- Salamon, L. (1993). "The Rise of the Non-profit Sector". *Foreign Affairs,* 73(4)
- Stephenson(2003). "Non-governmental approaches to community health Sage".
- Somolekae (1999). "Non Profit Organization as Developer Affordable", Cornell University Press, New York.
- Stephen, A. (2001). Participation, Empowerment and Sustainability: University of Toronto.
- Streeten, P. (1997). "Non-governmental Organizations and Development". *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 554.
- Stromquist, N.P. (2002). "NGOs in a New Paradigm of Civil Society". *Current Issues in Comparative Education,* 1(1)
- Teegen, H.D. J., Vachani, S. (2004). "The importance of nongovernmental organisation in global governance and value creation" Washington: Vol. 35.
- Veneklasen (1994). "West African Civil Society Position on the Millennium Development Goals and Their Implementation", Paper presented in West African Civil Society Forum on Millennium.
- Wahab, B. (2000). "Sustainable Community Development Project Approach in Osun State, Nigeria, in the new Millennium