

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN FOCUS

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Abstract

The roles of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the development of nations especially the developing ones are progressively becoming significant. Significant in the sense that NGOs have realized that the most important resources of a nation are the people and that the ultimate goal of any nation's development should be an improvement in the general living standards of the people, in this study, related literatures were reviewed to assess the views of experts and authorities in the definitions, roles and functions of NGOs in the development of Nigeria. In addition, the study examined the concept of national development vis-a-vis that of NGOs. Also reviewed were the activities and contribution of these selected NGOs in Imo State, they are Better Life Programme (BLP), the National Council of Women's Societies of Nigeria (NCWSN) and League of Democratic Women (Leads Nigeria). Respondents were interviewed and questionnaires were given to them. The respondents were from the NGOs selected from within the area of study. In the analysis of data collected, it became glaring that NGOs were contributing significantly to the development of the country. It was in view of the findings that certain recommendations were made by the researcher, which if considered would improve the states of these organizations in both their efficiency and impact.

Introduction

As globalization and international trade impact societies, nongovernmental organizations have become increasingly influential in world affairs. They are consulted by governments as well as international organizations like the United Nations which have created associated states for them. There are now thousands of non-governmental organisation (NGOs) in the world, operating in most countries. These organizations are not directly affiliated with any national government but often have a significant impact on the social, economic and political activity of the country or region involved.

These organizations even though they might have been known by other names, have existed longer than most governments. NGOs once perceived by governments and major donors as suspect contributors in the development process have become in many cases centre stage performers. In Nigeria people standard of living have been falling drastically despite the huge human and nature resources especially, the oil and gas reserve. A number of structural deficiencies aided and abetted by political uncertainty and inconsistencies in policy formulation and implementation which has been largely due to bad and corrupt leadership, can be blamed for this scenario; the deficiencies include:

- Heavy reliance on oil revenue
- Weak industrial base and high import dependence
- Out-dated agricultural technology
- Inefficient or non-functioning public utilities.
- Low quality of social services

Many of the largest and most significant non-governmental organizations have relationships and sometimes official associative status with inter governmental organizations such as the United Nations or the World Bank.

Recent years have witnessed the explosive emergence of Nongovernmental organization as a major collective actor in the national development in Nigeria. It is therefore, the intention of this research work to appraise the activities of these organizations and to ascertain whether they are achieving their goals in the country as well as to investigate the obstacles that militate against the achievement of their objectives.

Concept of NGOs and their Emergence in Nigeria

The term NGO has been defined differently by different people one basic fact, however is that the term NGO encompasses many different types of organizations. A definition is only an abstraction from the broad concept and cannot capture the totality of concept Aham (1993:3) some of the definitions offered include:

- a. An NGO can be applied to any non profit, value based organization which depend in whole or in part on charitable donations and voluntary service and are independent from government (Brown and McGawn).
- b. An NGO is any profit, voluntary citizens group that is task-oriented and driven by people with common interest and is organized on a local or international level. They perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens concerns to government, monitor policies and encourage political participation at the community, level (United National Department of Public Information) (UNDP),
- c. NGOs are civil society organizations that are people oriented, not for profit, non-partisan and non consultative forum.
- d. They are civil institutions and organizations, functioning to advance and strengthen civil society for great participation of the citizenry in political, economic and social affairs of the policy.
- e. NGOs are non-governmental, not for profit, private voluntary organizations of civil society addressing development needs.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the definitions, all points to the same fact, that is, NGOs are non-profit, it is voluntary organizations that engage in activities for the betterment of society. In western country like the United States, NGOs (Non-government or profit organizations) in non-profit, voluntary activities although their scope and structures may differ.

Non-governmental organizations have always played vital roles in Nigeria public sectors. A traditional self-help sector represented by community based organizations has existed for a long time and has been active in complementing government effort to provide basic social infrastructural facilities. In the pre-independence era, NGOs though not known by the name were often vehicle for the provision of various kind of advocacy in favour of the populace under colonial rule. Their action was very tailored to make up for the slack in the provision of social facilities and sometimes as compliment and supplement to the efforts of colonial authorities.

However, Nigeria has in the past decade witnessed a proliferation of the modern NGOs which provide more skilled services and who to be known, and henceforth considered as viable and collaborating partners of development agencies and the government. This has happened in response to the failure of officially provided social services and increasing poverty caused by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) official corruption and a general loss of faith in the ability of the government to offer successful service. Another reason is the attention which international donor agencies are beginning to direct to the country and is problem, according to Nwoga (2000:23) incomplete statistics suggest that community based organizations in Nigeria were over 100,000, while non-governmental organizations registered with various agencies would number about 1000 or more.

Funding

Nigeria NGOs get their funding from two main sources: Donor Agencies and Funds generated locally by CBOs.

- a. **Donor Agencies:** There are of two types: foreign donors and local donors NGOs are funded mainly by multilateral donors such as the World Bank, European Union, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, ILO among a host of others. They are also funded by bilateral donor agencies including USAID, DFID (UK) (GERMANY) and foreign missions and embassies in Nigeria. International charities are also active among the donor community. Examples includes the missionary society, YMCA International and Food Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation etc. All these make up the foreign donor agencies.

The multinational companies with subsidiaries in Nigeria also donate to NGOs at the local donor agencies. Notable among them are Shell, Texaco, Chevron, Leventis, Guinness, Nigerian Breweries and Sheraton Hotels,

- b. **Grass Roots Funding:** These are funds generated by grassroots organizations or community-based organizations. Their projects are carried out with funds generated by regular contributions or review. However, because of the present economic situation and the nature of community contribution itself, it is becoming increasing difficult to fund capital projects from this source.

Characteristics of NGOs in Nigeria

In an attempts to characterize NGOs in Nigeria, it is necessary to recognize that existing NGOs are of several different categories and that their characteristics only partly overlap. However, a strong effective and ultimately sustainable NGO has certain identifiable characteristics. They include:

- a. **Non-Governmental:** NGOs are different from governments, whose action are based ultimately on coercion. NGO activities and actions are basically voluntary. This independence from the state is a major attribute of non-governmental organizations and is a pre-condition or real participation. This assumes that NGO independence leads to freedom of action, creativity in researching and seeking solution and a willingness to gather a plurality of views. However, their actions complement government policies.
- b. **Formal Organizations:** NGOs are formal organizations with specific objectives and goals like any other formal organization, they are run by a management and in some cases a board of directors or equivalent governing body. The board provides overall policy direction to the NGO and independent oversight of its management. It customarily performs fund raising and public relations function and bring additional professional and technical expertise to the NGO. Management on the other hand is responsible for the day to day operation of the organization and for monitoring the external environment to sense changes in advance. It is also responsible for ensuring that necessary capabilities exist within the NGO to achieve its mission and strategic plan. However, it must be noted that bureaucracy is less emphasized in their administrative system.
- c. **Not-for-Profit:** The essential element of an NGO is voluntary action. A voluntary action is what one is neither paid to do or made to do. In the broadest sense, non-profit organizations are simply the collective forms of individuals voluntary action. That is, they are vehicles by means of which people pursue together goals that are not primarily remunerative and that they are not forced to pursue. The non-profit feature of NGOs make them significantly different from profit organization in which people together pursue remunerative goals by means of surplus output.
- d. **Dependence on Donors and Public Support:** The non-profit nature of NGOs make them highly dependent on donor agencies and public support for their funding to carry out their programmes, maintain their staff and structure.
- e. **Tax Exempt:** Non-government organizations in Nigeria are exempted from paying taxes since their income is not derived from trade or business carried out by the institution and stipulated in section 19(1) of PIT Decree 104, 1993. However, personal income tax (Pay as you earn, PA YE) is payable by all income earners whether employed or self-employed. Therefore, the income of employees of these organisations are taxed under this law.

Functions of NGOs

In African and in all developing countries NGOs work at two levels. At the community level, they are small, informal organization, which are often invisible to outsiders. These community based organizations remain outside formal organization or structures e.g. women's group, self-help groups, farmers group etc. The activities of these CBOs are limited to local level.

The second level of NGO intervention is at a higher level; national and international. These NGOs which provide services to communities directly or through community based organization and other NGOs include networks and umbrella organizations.

In some areas, NGOs have assumed roles that are almost equal to that of government by providing people with medical services, shelter and food e.g. in Somalia, Zaire, Uganda Sudan etc.

Among the wide variety of roles that NGOs play in Nigeria, the following can be seen as important at the risk of generalization.

- a. **Advocacy for and with the Poor:** NGOs acts as spoke persons or ombudsmen for the poor and attempt to influence government policies and programmes on their behalf. This may be done through a variety of means ranging from demonstration and pilot projects to participation in public forums and the formulation of government policy and plans to publicizing research studies and case studies of the poor. Thus, NGOs play roles from advocates for the poor to implementers of government programmes, and critics to partners and advisers, from sponsors of pilot projects to mediators.
- b. Development and Operation of Infrastructure NGOs through CBOs and Co-operatives can acquire, subdivide and develop land, construct housing, provide, operate and maintain infrastructures such as schools, health centres wells, solid waste collection etc. They can also develop building material supply centres and other community based economic enterprises.

- c. **Research Monitoring and Evaluation:** Non-governmental organizations carry out research and innovative activities. They monitor and evaluate these innovative activities because these activities need to be carefully documented and shared. Effective participatory monitoring and evaluation would permit the sharing of result with the people themselves as well as with the project

Types of NGOs in Nigeria

Non-governmental organizations are classified based on two criteria:

- a. The method of registration
 - b. Activity content
- a. The method of registration in Nigeria invariably explains the scope and area of coverage of an NGO. Thus we have:
- i. **NGOs Registered with Local Authorities:** These register with the local authorities in which they are. This constitutes mainly recognition of the existence of such a body with the orders of the local authority,
 - ii. **NGOs Registered with the State Government:** These NGOs register with the department of the state government where they are situated which has the primary responsibility for the activity which the organization is engaged in.
- b. The second criterion, which is the activity content, groups NGOs according to the area of focus of their activities. This classification is however not clear cut because an NGO can engage in more than one kind of activity at the same time. Thus we have NGOs that are involved in the following:
- a. Health
 - b. Micro-Credit enterprise
 - c. Environment
 - d. Gender
 - e. Agriculture
 - f. Capacity building/training Research
 - g. Youth Development
 - h. Human rights, advocacy and good governance
 - i. Child Protection
 - j. Education
 - k. Emergency Aid and Response to conflict, disaster

Contribution of NGOs in Nigeria

Economic

A significant economic contribution that non-governmental organizations have made in Nigeria as well as in other developing countries has been the raising of private funds both internationally and nationally for development. Funds that have been used to promote the economic self reliance of their various target communities. Small scale industries have been used to promote the economic self reliance of their various target communities.

The agricultural sector, more than any other missing board became a victim of the oil boom era as the Nigerian currency became widely overvalued and it became easier to pay for unlimited imports. The NGOs sector has responded to this by providing the needed support to farmers and rural dwellers in their target communities. They provided them with multipurpose seedlings for better output, extension services, trained women and youth in food processing, provided materials and equipment to improve productivity and efficiency e.g. palm kernel grinders etc.

Another major economic contribution has been the introduction and use of micro-credit scheme or enterprise. The present scenario in Nigeria, where commercial banks in Nigeria source deposits at very low rates and lend same at high level of savings and investment among the people especially the poor.

NGOs also promoted the growing speed of employment for Nigerians. However, those that work for NGOs are usually paid staff while those who work in community based organizations are usually volunteers.

Social

Social development is the broadest area with which NGOs provide their contribution. The various areas of social development where NGOs are contributing include:

Research Methodology

Just as has been said earlier, this research is designed to find out whether the activities of non-governmental organisations have any significant effect on the growth and development of the area under study. That is, to ascertain if these organization have been able to achieve the development objectives for which they are established.

Research methodology involves the acquisition of relevant data and analysis same by using appropriate standard techniques. This chapter therefore contains the source of data used (data collection), description of the population, area of study, instruments of data collection, validity and reliability of instrument and administration of the instruments.

Research design

The research design is a framework for controlling the collection of data, It ensures that the required data are accurately collected. It also serves as a man of what is to be done and how it is done.

The method employed for this study is percentage method. The percentage method is a statistical tool designed to express in mathematical term. The steps involved in this research method are:

- a. Collection of data
- b. Personal observation
- c. Personal interview
- d. Analysing and interpreting data

3.2 AREA OF STUDY

This research work or study concerns basically on an appraisal of Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) and national development in Nigeria. Owerri North Local Government Area was chosen as a case study for this research work, hi this area, effort was made to know whether the people of Owerri North local government area have benefited from any of the Nongovernmental organisation's programme.

Population of Study

The population of this study comprises of three (3) non-governmental organisations which the number cannot be ascertained. They are:

- a. Better Life Programme (BLP)
- b. The National Council of Women's Societies of Nigeria (NCWSN).
- c. Imo-Self-Help Organisation (ISHO)

Samples size and sample techniques

A total of 30 questionnaires were distributed amongst them. This number was arrived after a careful study of the nature and spread of these organisations and is considered representative enough to yield a valid result.

The chi-square (χ^2) is the major tool that would be used in testing the stated hypothesis in this study. The chi-square (χ^2) statistical test is used to determine if the differences between the observed and expected frequencies are significant.

It is denoted thus:

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum (o_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Where:

- X^2 = Chi-square
 o_i = Actual or observed frequency
 E_i = Expected frequency
 Σ = Sum of all categories

DATA PRESENTATION.

30 questionnaires were distributed amongst the NGOs. The response rate is shown thus:

Personal characteristics of respondents response rate

Table 1

	Total Number	Percentage (%)
Returned questionnaire	27	90
Unreturned questionnaire	3	10
Total	30	100

In all of the 30 questionnaires, which were administered, 27 were returned correctly filled.

This number represents 90 percent of questionnaires administered.

Table 2: Shows the summary of the respondents Sex

Sex	Frequency
Female	6
Male	21
Total	27

Table 3: Shows the summary of the respondents age

Age	Frequency
20 - 25 years	3
26-30 years	5
31-35 years	11
40 and above	8
Total	27

Table 4: Shows the summary of the marital status of the respondents

Marital	Frequency
Single	5
Married	22
Divorced	0
Widowed	0
Total	27

Table 5: Shows the summary of the academic qualifications of the respondents

Academic Qualification	Frequency
OND	0

HND, S.Sc.	15
M.Sc	8
Ph.D	2
Professional Qualification	2
Total	27

Table 6: Shows the summary of the working experience of the respondents

Working Experience	Frequency
1-3 years	3
3-5 years	6
5-10 years	13
10 years and above	5
Total	27

ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Questions

Table 7: Can lack of individual performance be a major hindrance to the growth and effectiveness of NGOs?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
SA	14	51.86
A	10	37.03
SD	0	0
D	3	11.11
Total	27	100

The above table shows that 51.86% respondents strongly agreed, 37.03% agreed, while 11.11 disagreed. This implies that individual performance is a major contributor to the development and growth of the NGOs

Table 8: Does NGOs contribute to the economic, social, national, development and environmental growth of the target communities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
SA	8	29.63
A	16	59.26
SD	0	0
D	3	11.11
Total	27	100

The above table shows that 29.63% respondents strongly agreed, 59.26% agreed, while 11.11 disagreed.

Table 9: Does employee training scheme have any positive effects on workers?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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SA	17	62.97
A	10	37.03
SD	0	0
D	0	0
Total	27	100

The table shows that 62.67% of the respondents strongly agreed, 37.03% agreed, that employees training affects workers positively.

Table 10: Are foreign donors the major source of funds for NGOs?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SA	3	11.11
A	7	25.93
SD	6	22.22
D	11	40.74
Total	27	100

The above table shows that 11.11% of the respondents strongly agreed, 25.93% agreed, 22.22% strongly disagreed. While 40.74 disagreed to the above questions.

Table 11: Is networking an indispensable tool for NGO?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SA	5	18.52
A	18	66.67
SD	3	11.11
D	0	0
Total	27	100

The table shows that 18.52% of respondents strongly agreed, 66.67% agreed, 11.11% strongly disagreed.

Table 12: Is it necessary for people to appraise the work of the NGOs?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SA	20	74.07
A	7	25.93
SD	0	0
D	0	0
Total	27	100

The table indicates that 74.07% of respondents strongly agreed, 25.93% agreed that people in the communities are needed to appraise the work of the NGOs.

Table 13: Is the refusal of foreign donors to help Nigeria NGOs a result of bad image created abroad by fraudsters?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SA	6	22.22

A	11	40.74
SD	3	11.11
D	7	25.93
Total	27	100

The table above illustrates that 22.22% of respondents strongly agreed, 40.74% agreed, 11.11% strongly disagreed, 25.93% disagreed to the above questions.

Table 14: Can the problems of NGOs be solved by efficient examining and classifying of alternative choices.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SA	6	22.22
A	15	55.56
SD	3	11.11
D	3	11.11
Total	27	100

The table shows that 22.22% of respondents strongly agreed, 55.56% agreed, while 11.11% strongly disagreed, 11.11% disagreed to the above questions.

Table 15: Can NGOs fund themselves?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SA	0	0
A	3	11.11
SD	14	51.86
D	10	37.03
Total	27	100

The illustrations above indicates that 11.11% of respondents, agreed, 51.86% strongly disagreed, 37.03% disagreed to the above questions.

Table 16: Can lack of finance give NGOs some setbacks in their activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SA	27	100
A	0	0
SD	0	0
D	0	0
Total	27	100

The table shows that all the respondents strongly agreed that lack of finance give NGOs some setbacks in their activities.

Test of Hypotheses

In testing the hypothesis, the response of the respondents will be used. The chi-square method with the formula below will be used.

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Where X^2 = Chi-square
 O_i = Actual or observed frequency

E_i = Expected frequency
 E = Sum of all categories

HYPOTHESIS I

H₁: The projects of NGOs have a significant effect on the national development in Nigeria.

H₀: The projects of NGOs do not have a significant effect of the national development in Nigeria.

TESTING OF TABLE 8 QUESTION 2

Response	O _i	E _i	O _i - E _i	O _i - E _i ²	$\frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E}$
SA	14	6.7	7.3	53.29	7.94
A	10	6.7	3.3	10.89	1.62
SD		-	-	-	-
D		6.7	3.7	13.69	2.04
	0				
	3				
Total	27				11.06

X² calculated = 11.06
 Expected frequency = 14 + 10 + 0 + 3 = 27
 $\frac{27}{4} = 6.7$

X² critical of 0.05 = 5.99 (table)

DECISION RULE: Reject the null hypothesis if x² calculated is more than 5.99 which is the x² critical (table), otherwise accept it.

Therefore, since x² calculated is 11.06 and greater than the x² critical which is 5.99, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. That is, the projects or NGOs have a significant effect.

HYPOTHESIS II

H₁: Lack of fund is a major factor that has hindered NGOs from achieving their objectives.

H₀: Lack of fund is not a major factor that has hindered NGOs from achieving their objectives,

TESTING OF TABLE 15 QUESTION 10

Response	O _i	E _i	O _i - E _i	O _i - E _i ²	$\frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E}$
SA	27	6.57	20.25	40.06	60.75
A	0	0	-	-	-
SD	0	0	-	-	-
D	0	0	-	-	-
Total	27				60.75

X² calculated = 60.75

DECISION RULE: Since x² cal is 60.75 and greater than the x² critical which is 5.99. The null hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis accepted. That is lack of fund is a major factor that has hindered NGOs from achieving their objectives.

Findings

In this study, efforts have been made to identify and discuss the various areas of appraisal of non-governmental organization and National Development in Nigeria; three (3) NGOs have been specifically studied.

However, inspite of these lofty roles, this work has been able to identify some of the problems that hinders these organizations from achieving their goals effectively. Above all things required for the effective operation of an NGO is project funds. The dependence on project funds for their survival partly explains this situation, the reality being that once the running cost of a project has been exhausted, there is very little else for personnel, administrative and other institutional development costs.

In addition, total lack of funds from donors stalls the implementation of well articulated projects and programmes that some of these NGOs came up with. A key challenge for NGOs remains how they can effectively operate without a financial fall back plan and a self-promotion strategy. There is no doubt that they need these funds both to ensure their organizations sustenance and autonomy and to educate their various public about their mission.

Also managerial and infrastructural problems were identified as some of the other hindrances encountered by these organisations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this paper, it was revealed that nongovernmental organizations are playing vital roles in the national development. These enterprises form an important sector as they act as a facilitator of development especially in areas where governments presence is inadequate or lacking. The present condition of the country calls for such an actor to facilitate or complement the efforts of government.

Although, the selected NGOs studied are based in Imo state, their contributions went beyond the state. Also the roles of non-governmental organizations in developing and less developed countries can be said to be synonymous. In Nigeria, the NGO sector is hoping to witness a more active and committed intervention on its part in the service of the people, the environment and sustainable development.

Recommendations

For non-governmental organizations to serve the expected role as a facilitator for development in the country, the following suggestions are proffered,

1. Non-governmental organisations must actively explore more independent and multiple avenues of funding for their work especially their overhead and personnel costs. In other words, they should diversify their earning potentials instead of relying totally on donors funds and when those funds don't come, they fold their hands and remains idle or they accept projects that are not in line with their stated mission and objectives. None of these moves will significantly reduce the altruistic mission of NGOs.
2. To be able to influence governmental policy and effectively mobilize support across political boundaries, NGOs should have very strongly articulated knowledge and research based and popularly endorsed policy platforms. Theses should be on key areas of policy and governance that relate to sustainable development and they must have a demonstrable capacity to mobilize their public behind such platforms.
3. Nigerian NGOs should package their own locally initiated training programmes. This would provide an avenue to introduce both prospective and already engaged NGO staff to key issues, debates and analytical and project management skills in the policy, planning and implementation of sustainable development without such training, these NGOs would be unable to retain qualified staff and effectively upgrade the skill and competence of personnel in relation to the environment where they operate.
4. Government should go beyond the statues of governing, regulating and registration of NGOs. to seeking out areas of collaboration and co-operation with these organisations. There are many problems especially at state level above which XGO skills and resources would be very helpful to the government, such collaborative interventions would be able to help these XGOs both as a local fund mobilization strategy and a means of intervening in and influencing official policies and programmes that are targeted at NGO constituents and other marginalized and vulnerable groups
5. Considering the enormous activities of XGOs we suggest that further research should be carried out on specific areas of NGOs such as in the area of health, education, skill acquisitions etc in which people are also needed to appraise their works.

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