

**THE LITERATURE REVIEW OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT
(OD) INTERVENTIONS AND THE ROLE OF THE NON-
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (NGO) SECTOR IN KENYA.**

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ABSTRACT

This review is going to discuss on literature relating to the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) sector and their role in Kenya's economic landscape.

It will also endeavor to cover a general overview of Organizational Development (OD) interventions that will require engagement of certain OD theories and how they are linked to an organization's sustainable effectiveness and in this context the NGO sector in particular. The variables under sustainable effectiveness, that is social justice, ecological health, cultural diversity and economic performance have been reviewed. The conceptual framework has also been discussed under these variables. The NGO sector has seen a proliferation in numbers, but there has also been a slump with many of the NGOs closing shop due to unsustainability and ineffectiveness.

Keywords: Interventions, Organization Development, Theories of Change, Sustainability, Social Change, organizational Learning.

Contextual Meaning of the term Non-Governmental Organization in Kenya

In the Kenyan context, the NGOs Coordination Act (1990) defines an NGO as a private voluntary grouping of individuals or associations, not operated for profit or for other commercial purposes but which have organized themselves nationally or internationally for the benefit of the public at large for the promotion of social welfare, development, charity or research in the areas of inclusive of, but not restricted to health, relief, agriculture, education, industry and the supply of amenities and services. In the context of this study, this definition will be used as it best describes the NGO sector in Kenya.

Role of the Non-Governmental Organizations Sector in Kenya

The NGO sector in Kenya has continued to play a critical role in the political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal and environmental development of the country.

The expanding gap in provision of services, increase in poverty and social challenges in health, environment, education, housing and poor standard of living has resulted in the recognition of the role the NGO sector continues to play in alleviating poverty, inequality and socio exclusion as well as being a key partner to the government and other agencies in implementing Kenya's international commitments such as the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the local instruments such as ensuring the implementation of the United Nations Convention for Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD). The sector was key in drafting of the constitution and has become the ombudsman in ensuring its implementation.

Chakawarika (2011:7) supports Tengende (2005) who states that NGOs have turned out to be increasingly crucial agents of the development process in many developing countries for their work such as humanitarian, relief, long-term development, policy formation and political advocacy.

NGOs also play a very great role in educating and researching on their constituents. For example, a lot of research has been carried out by NGOs under the theme of HIV/AIDS and information has been disseminated through Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, ongoing research among those termed as most at risk persons, prevention of mother to child infections as well as study on discordant couples. They have also been key in the promotion of the uptake and supply of anti-retroviral medicine, HIV/AIDS testing, abstinence, and faithfulness of partners and use of protection. There also many support groups NGOs for those infected or affected as well as taking care of orphans and the elderly caregivers.

NGOs are known to be innovative and have been at the fore front of research and training with an emphasis on participatory approach between the NGOs and the constitutions in the formulation, implementation and management of projects. They have also been proponents of capacity building so as to encourage self-reliance and reduce donor dependency.

Local NGOs also work in partnership with northern donor countries and agencies as conduits for aid and are a preferred partner due to their knowledge and access to local communities by-passing the government which is largely perceived as bureaucratic and in most cases inept in the dispensation of the aid and services. However, NGOs continue to face challenges in their work, one core characteristics of NGOs is their high dependency on international donors, and with the current economic crisis; many NGOs are experiencing diminishing funding.

Poor governance and insider wrangles within the sector have continued to plague the sector with many splinter groups being formed at the expense of the constituents and implementation of projects.

Despite the challenges that this sector continues to face, it has emerging opportunities given the progressive Kenya Constitution (August, 2010) dispensation, the proposed NGO Bill is expected to make a progressive impact in the sector by aligning the law regulating NGOs to the Constitution of Kenya. It is further aimed at improving the regulatory environment for NGOs in Kenya thereby advancing the opportunity for increased regulator efficiency and transparency, increased sector capacity and accountability and developing dialogue between civil society and the government (NGO Coordination Board, 2012).

The approach to Kenya's goodwill has also seen some initiative being fully supported by Kenyans such as the Kenya for Kenyans hunger response campaign.

The introduction of the semi-autonomous government agencies through the being phased out through devolved funds has also been seen to supplement the NGO sector and making the government seem to respond to the needs of the society. Though controversial, the agencies which include, HIV/AIDS fund, Women Enterprise Development Fund (WEDF), Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), and Persons with Disabilities Fund have also been an opportunity for the NGO sector to contribute in terms of finances and skills.

The impact of NGOs is well documented and the sector remains a critical factor in the socio-economic development of the country.

In addition, Britton (2005:6) notes that the turn of the 21st Century has seen many NGOs facing significant levels of organizational change. These changes have included rapid organizational growth, organizational re-structuring – particularly decentralization of decision making and greater emphasis on partnership working, and technological changing creating a potential learning agenda for the NGOs.

Definitions of Organizational Development

Kirimi and Minja (2011:187) quote Kurt as stating that OD is a long-range effort to improve organizations' problem solving and renewal processes, particularly through more effective and collaborative management of organizational culture, often with the assistance of a change agent or catalyst and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioral science. In addition, Daft, Murphy and Willmott (2010:690) add that it is a behavioral science field devoted to improving performance through trust, open confrontation of problems, employee empowerment and participation, the design of meaningful work, cooperation between groups and the full use of human potential.

From the OD definitions given, it is apparent that OD is a practice that focuses on inter-relationships of employees as well as the organizations. It also aims at improving performance of the employees and aligning their duties so as to have organizational effectiveness, and

consequently sustainability. This practice also considers that the organization is not isolated but a system that interacts with its employees and the environment. This is critical and applicable in the NGO sector, given that the NGO core duty is to alleviate poverty and suffering or create awareness on human vulnerability in the world.

The Role of Organizational Development in the NGO Sector

According to Organizational Development Interventions (2009) to effectively adapt and thrive in today's business world, organizations need to implement effective OD interventions aimed at improving performance at organizational, group and individual levels. OD interventions involve respect for people, a climate of trust and support, shared power, open confrontation of issues and the active participation of stakeholders. Cummings and Worley (2009:17) hold a similar view that NGOs are faced with rapidly accelerating change and OD can help them cope with the consequences of change.

In view of this, it is important to assess the role of OD in the NGO sector because the sustainability and effectiveness of the NGO sector is important in regard to the overall development of the country. The study will assess the role of OD in relation to the NGO sector in relations to the literature reviewed.

Cummings and Worley (2009:639) state that the newest and perhaps most exciting application of OD in international settings are occurring in Global Social Change Organizations (GSCO-NGOs). In addition, Edward (1997:249) argues that NGOs need to monitor and evaluate their work and develop stronger accountability systems both downwards to the grassroots and upwards to the trustees and donors. He adds that in this task, openness, humility service, enquiry, sharing and solidarity as well as strategy and resources are crucial.

According to Britton (2005:9) one of the most important reasons for NGOs to invest in OD would be in organizational learning that aims at increasing the effectiveness of their organization. He adds that improved organizational effectiveness is increasingly seen as the "bottom line" for learning. He adds that learning is important in NGOs as it increases organizational effectiveness, develops organizational capacity and also makes best use of its limited resources and contributes to the organizational health a healthy NGO being more likely to be an effective and adaptable NGO.

The importance of incorporating organizational learning in the conceptual framework is to highlight the purpose of the learning concept as a key facilitator and promoter of organizational change.

The view of Cummings and Worley (2009:647) is that by strengthening local organizations, building horizontal linkages with other like-minded GSCO (NGOs) and developing vertical

linkages with policy-making organization, a change agent can help the GSCO (NGOs) become more effective in supporting the roles of stewardship and, bridging, change agents need communication, negotiation and networking skills. This will affect sustainable effectiveness as an endeavor for long term success aligned with the triple bottom-line performance in social justice, ecological health and economic performance (Lawler, et al., 2011) as well as cultural diversity.

OD has developed to include competencies in social justice, cultural diversity, ecological sustainability as well as economic performance as the bottom-line of effective and sustainable organizations. Therefore, OD strategy in the human process, techno-structural, human resources management and strategic interventions are critical in the NGO sector in response to the turbulent organizational environment that they are facing in the 21st Century.

The Knowledge Gap

The NGO sector has seen a proliferation in numbers, but there has also been a slump with many of the NGOs closing shop due to unsustainability and ineffectiveness. In view of the sentiments shared by the Organizational Development experts in the literature reviewed, there was need to assess OD strategy in NGOs for sustainable effectiveness.

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