DOCUMENTATION OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES OF SELECT AFRICAN NGO LEADERS

Volume One
of the
Nonprofit Leadership Transition
Fellowship Program (NLTFP)

AROCSA
ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH ON CIVIL SOCIETY IN AFRICA

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Introduction
Shariq Siddiqui

The contribution of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and their leaders in social change making in Africa has been phenomenal (Miller-Grandvaux & Yoder, 2002; Lutabingwa & Gray, 1997). They have been pivotal in ending dictatorships and enthroning multiparty democracies, giving voice to the oppressed and expanding the frontiers of rights across a broad spectrum of issues, including bodily integrity, health, education, environment, safety, security, migration, sexual orientation, etc. Their numbers, thematic spread, and geographic locations have equally increased rapidly over a relatively short period of time, triggering what Lester M. Salamon (1994) once described as an *associational revolution*.[1]

However, the sustainability and future of the NGO movement in Africa appears not to be as assured as their numbers and spectrum of activities seem to suggest (Mutua, 2008). The sector, especially the advocacy subset, faces a broad range of challenges that threaten to hinder the full realization of their potentials to sustainably impact change at scale. At the external level, they are confronted with disruption of pipelines for their leadership renewal, such as students' and women's movements (Jega, 2000), dwindling public trust and confidence due to adversarial campaigns by authoritarian governments and vested interests (Hofisi & Hofisi, 2013), inadequate support for organizational and institutional development, and shrinking space for work that ranges from

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[1] This introduction includes sections of the Concept Note for the African NGO Leadership Transition Program that was developed by Dr. Esi Ansah.

limited rights to associate and form civil society organizations, stringent regulation against obtaining foreign funding, and arbitrary/discretionary termination or dissolution of organizations, arbitrary/stringent oversight and control to criminal penalties against individuals (Rutzen & Shea, 2006).

Internally, the movement faces atomization and fragmentation with thousands of new groups formed every year, duplicating the efforts of existing groups without organic linkages; paternalism and amateurism of some leaders in the sector, which stifles professionalism; and weak governance structures, lack of depth and originality, limited contributions to normative development at regional and international levels, high turnover of skilled personnel, lack of succession planning and "founder-director sit-tight syndrome," among other numerous issues they are contending with internally (Mutua, 2008).

Over the years, measures have been taken to address some of these challenges. In response to repression by political authorities, the United Nations showed leadership through the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/144 adopting the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders in 1998, which provides for the support and protection of human rights defenders in the context of their work. Human rights defender was broadly defined to include a person or persons that address any human rights on behalf of individuals or groups and seek the promotion and protection of civil and political rights as well as the promotion, protection, and realization of economic, social, and cultural rights. Since the adoption of this declaration, various support frameworks have been established to support NGO leaders and their families who are threatened in their work, including advocacy campaigns/litigation on their behalf, evacuation/relocation from harm's way, etc.

Support to address internal challenges have included NGO training, capacity-building, and strategy planning, which are among the fastest growing areas within the NGO service sector in

Africa, targeting such issues as training of leaders and new cadres; building the capacity of managers and board to improve governance and professionalism; and supporting organizations to develop thoughtful missions, visions, and strategies around their work that enable them to focus and plan for their future while being aware of the threats and opportunities to which they have to respond. Similarly, scholarship programs have supported the young and middle cadre of leaders in the sector to grow, the most prominent being the British Chevening Scholarship and the former Ford's International Fellowship Program (IFP). Under Ford*Forward*, and particularly the BUILD and Youth Opportunity programs, institutional strengthening of NGOs and support for the next generation of leaders in the social sectors are key pillars, all in a bid to make the sector more resilient and able to renew its leadership by creating more opportunities for young leaders to grow and strive.

However, an important and complementary area in addressing challenges faced by NGOs in Africa, which appears not to have received significant attention in literature and programmatic intervention, is *leadership transition*, particularly the question of where do the leaders go when they exit the sector in Africa (especially those that founded their organizations and/or led them for a long time)? What support infrastructure do they have to plan for their exit and to strive when they leave? And to what extent does the issue of "where do I go from here" contribute in the seeming reluctance of founder-directors to exit, which may partly account for stunted organizational development and the high mortality rate of NGOs in Africa?

This may not be a big issue in the Global North where mobility of labor across sectors and supportive infrastructure for transition are high and enable nonprofit leaders to transition either within the sector or seek opportunities elsewhere. In Africa such opportunities are rare and far between. And where they exist, NGO leaders are not adequately prepared to take full advantage

of them through leadership transition programs that could better prepare them. The consequence is a tendency amongst many NGO leaders to sit-tight in the leadership of organizations they founded, even where it's clear that a transition may be in the best interest of such organizations. This phenomenon poses a big threat to the growth and influence of civil society in Africa as the context in which the organizations work is becoming more complex, constantly evolving, and thus requires the periodic injection of new blood and ideas in leadership positions. This may be more glaring in women's organizations in Africa, where a combination of factors, including the starvation of donor funds, limited labor mobility, lack of succession planning, and inadequate leadership transition programs have come together to weaken a movement that once had a great promise.

This book includes reflective chapters from the first cohort of the Ford Foundation funded ARNOVA/AROCSA African NGO Leadership Transition Program. Fellows included senior civil society leaders seeking to transition away from their civil society organization. One critical challenge that leadership transitions face is the need to preserve knowledge within the institution. In these chapters, the fellows seek to go further than this goal by insuring knowledge preservation and dissemination to the larger African civil society community. For African civil society to build on the work of foundational leadership, it is critical that these important perspectives on building and sustaining civil society movements is shared with future generations of civil society leaders.

Over the course of one year these leaders have sought to distill their past experience into important lessons for other practitioners. At the same time they have sought to frame their experience within the broader literature of the diverse and growing field of civil society studies. Each chapter is based on the experience of the author. However, they come together under the broad theme of "Perspectives on Emerging Nonprofit and Civil Society Practice in Africa." This

book has five sections. In the first section, Tunji Lardner and Nontando Ngamlana help us think of civil society in Africa more broadly and through a historical lens. They suggest that examining our challenges in a broader context is critical for forward progress.

Tunji Lardner pushes back against the myth that Africa or Africans are homogenous. Through his work in the pan-African information technology civil society space he explores the incredible diversity of the continent. He argues that Africa and Africans seem to live their lives in conflated time, simultaneously dealing with the compounded problems of our complex indigenous/colonial past, the mistakes of our postcolonial present, and the tantalizing prospects of a yet to be defined future. Understanding this broader construct will help civil society leaders better serve their social purpose in a more diverse context.

Nontando Ngamlana provides a historical perspective of the role of civil society in South Africa. She defines civil society as the aggregate of nonprofit organizations and institutions outside of government linked by common interests and collective activity toward a common good. Through her firsthand view of historical events, she is able to provide us insight on how civil society isn't a social good. She suggests that an examination of history is critical to help chart a future course.

In the second section, Bhekinkosi Moyo and Jimmy Wilford examine strategic thinking about social movements within the nonprofit context. Bhekinkosi Moyo suggests that transition and succession planning in a 21st-century African nonprofit organization starts with the recruitment of the executive director. He suggests that succession, rather than being an end, is actually the beginning of a new chapter for the civil society organization.

Jimmy Wilford chronicles the journey of taking a grassroots social movement into a formalized nonprofit organization. Not every idea is destined to be formalized into a nonprofit organization. Wilford examines the challenges and opportunities this journey can entail for a social movement, seeking to solve a critical localized problem.

In the third section, Kazanka Comfort, Josephine Chukwuma, and Mutuso Dhliwayo focus on mission or place-based challenges. Kazanka Comfort examines the challenges and opportunities that nonprofit organizations face in a rural context. Much of the attention on African nonprofit organizations is centered around INGOs or those in the urban context. Comfort examines how executive transitions can be undertaken in a rural context in a grassroots African organization. Josephine Chukwuma outlines the role of women and the issue of gender in civil society in Africa. Through a case study of a nonprofit organization focused on gender-based violence she helps provide information on the challenges of working on gender-based issues in Africa.

Mutuso Dhliwayo helps to deepen our understanding of the role of civil society within the context of an authoritarian regime. He pushes back against the myth that the sole focus of civil society in such contexts is on civil and human rights. Through an important case study, he suggests that within authoritarian contexts civil society deepens the meaning of those rights. His study deepens our understanding of nonprofit advocacy in an authoritarian context. He argues that it is possible for CSOs working on natural resources governance to influence legal, policy, and institutional reforms through autonomy and engagement with government.

In section four, Tijani Hamza and Ngozi Iwere discuss internal and external change management to help nonprofit organizations in their quest to solve social problems. Tijani Hamza examines the process through which local chapters of INGOs can develop internal process changes at a country level to better suit their cultural and national context. While this chapter focuses on

an INGO, it has broader lessons for change management within civil society organizations in Africa. The chapter helps contextualize change management to the local context regardless of the nonprofit organization.

Ngozi Iwere examines external changes that nonprofit organizations can bring to their host communities. She examines the adaptation of a grassroots civil society model to the local context as a means to bring about social change. This chapter illustrates how contextualization of existing models to the local context can bring about sustainable change.

The final section deals with resources and fundraising. Theresa Michael, Mina Ogbanga, and Kelechukwu Okezie examine the challenges of raising funds and finding resources to further the social mission of an organization. Theresa Michael examines the critical role of external funding to nonprofit organizations quest for social change. Without needed resources, nonprofits can achieve little. She provides a critique of existing funding sources that privilege INGOs over localized medium-sized nonprofits that are embedded in grassroots society.

Mina Ogbanga argues that viable organizational case statements will strengthen nonprofits and enhance resilience and diversification, especially in developing societies where resource constraints exist and the culture of philanthropy is still evolving. She argues that African nonprofit organizations must have varying case statements that can engage with diverse funding audiences while remaining consistent with the central mission or case of the organization.

Kelechukwu Okezie pushes African civil society organizations to look beyond external funding. He argues that this funding creates external dependency crowding out indigenous solutions. He further states that to achieve project sustainability, the civil society organization

needs to be inward-looking, building local capacities, identifying and supporting indigenous knowledge in an integrative manner, and working as partners in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Collectively these chapters give us a glimpse of the diverse and vibrant nature of civil society in Africa. As the authors remind us, "Africa is not a country" and in fact is a set of diverse narratives and lived experiences across different social and political contexts. This collection of essays suggests that civil society organizations within the African context are similarly diverse. Their journeys help define the way in which they further social change and progress. But these authors also remind me that there are important lessons learned by examining the emerging practices of civil society and nonprofit organizational leaders as we seek to continue to make the world a better place.

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SECTION ONE

Civil Society in Africa: A Historical Perspective

Africa's Time Conflation Challenge
Tunji Lardner

"Ex Africa Semper aliquis novi"—Pliny the Elder (AD23–79)

Abstract

Often times when we look at Africa's developmental challenges it seems like it is one Gordian knot of unassailable problems and challenges. However, when we untangle the knot, we see a multidimensional linear space-time thread, full of perils and promises. This piece attempts to expand and reframe our understanding of Africa's development challenges. I explore this linear space-time construct using my work experiences over the last two decades as a pioneering African technologist working in the ICT4D space, starting with the analogy of an analogue traveler in a digital superhighway, trying to do high tech in a low-tech environment. In exploring this space-time construct, my hypothesis is that one key reason why Africa's problems seem compounded over time and circumstance is that while other regions have marked historical developmental signposts that signify progress in one developmental epoch to the next, Africa and Africans seem to live their lives in conflated time. We live our lives simultaneously in the past, the present and the possible future. This paper examines this new paradox of time by providing new thinking about Africa's past, present, and future and, in unraveling this new approach, offers development practitioners a new map and signposts to navigate Africa's increasingly digital future alongside the burdens of its analogue past.

Postcards from the Information Superhighway

Yes, it does seem that there is always something new out of Africa. The wry observation of the early Roman statesman and man of letters Pliny the Elder has held true over the last two thousand years. Its true meaning has been subject to varied interpretations over the millennia, readily lending itself to appropriation and interpretation. Against this backdrop, I have to be immediately wary of the historical fallacy of the single monolithic narrative about Africa. Africa is not a country but is instead a richly diverse continent. In fact, some would argue that there are many "Africas." Even so, there are recognized developmental challenges, and cultural and socioeconomic conditions, that are common to all fifty-four countries. It is on the basis of these shared realities that I use the term "Africa" in all its "homogenous" diversity.

In my own journey, especially over last two decades of work as a social entrepreneur working in the Information Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) space within Africa, I have been repeatedly surprised by Africa, with something new cropping up at critical moments. I have always been surprised by the improbable juxtaposition of the old/traditional and the new/modern coexisting in an incredible time warping union. One recent example is the runaway success of Kenya's M-Pesa. M-Pesa is a mobile phone–based money transfer service; literally, a mobile phone bank, which has transformed the lives of millions of rural Kenyans who have adopted and adapted this modern technology to their otherwise bucolic existence. This technology has successfully been exported globally to other countries.

Twenty years ago after a stint at the UN/UNDP working on The African Internet Project, for which we travelled the continent advising governments on how to set up Internet gateways, I settled on setting up what turned out to be Nigeria's and West Africa's first Civic Technology Hub, The West African NGO Network (WANGONET). In appropriating the language of the day,

the big task before me was convincing my fellow Africans to journey with me on this new "information superhighway." I was admittedly a new traveler on this modern highway that held the promise of treasures somewhere over the digital rainbow.

Framing these reflections as a journey is appropriate because it introduces the familiar linearity of a developmental process that progresses from one stage to another, not unlike taking one step after the other in an epic trek—in this instance, on the information superhighway. This linear construct, I argue, is but one dimension in the multidimensional cosmos of Africa's existence within the space-time continuum. I want to explore other latent dimensions in this space-time construct in Africa, using my work experiences over the last two decades, starting with the analogy of an analogue traveler in a digital superhighway. My experience has given new insights into what I describe as Africa's time conflation challenge.

Africa's Time Conflation Challenge

In exploring this space-time construct, I attempt to illuminate the key reason why Africa's problems seem compounded over time and why, contrary to Western historical narratives about modernity and progress, Africa and Africans seem to live their lives in conflated time, whereas most other regions of the world, especially in the West, have marked linear historical developmental signposts that signify progress in one developmental epoch to the next.

Hypothesis

Africa and Africans are living their lives simultaneously in the past, the present, and the possible future. We live in conflated time. This means that we are constantly challenged along every notional signpost of this linear space-time construct. In effect, Africa seems to exist in a nonlinear

time frame where the future is always possible but the past and present, though very dynamic, are reduced to moments of now—frozen, as it were, into still snapshots of a dynamic and moving object.

Last year, I participated in the TED Global Africa held in Arusha, Tanzania (Ted Global, 2017), in which the broad themes of Builders, Truth-Tellers, and Catalysts were explored. Almost every speaker spoke about the remarkable work they were involved in and each simultaneously referenced Africa's past with idiosyncratic inflection points, even as they spoke about the present and the future. It was the natural ease with which they traveled back and forth through time that finally crystalized the idea of time conflation in my mind.

In our day-to-day lives, even with the tenuous patina of modernity, the past is never far behind stalking our very move like a tenacious shadow. In our religious worship, which is a dominant part of our lives as Africans, we have the lived experiences of the syncretism of our traditional, Christian, and Muslim religions cohabiting sometimes within the same family. Africa's colonial history is comprised of many influences, especially the Arabic and European influences layered on its ancient traditional culture. In his groundbreaking documentary and book *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, the noted African scholar Ali Mazrui (1987), spoke about Africa's triple heritage. For him, this comprised of:

- The colonial and imperialist legacy of the West,

- The spiritual and cultural influence of Islam spreading from the East, and

- Africa's own indigenous legacy.

To this day, this seemingly unresolved triple legacy persistently reaches out from the past to a politically contentious present and possible future creating distortions, confusion, and uncertainty in Africa's own pathway forward. Our contemporary African experience is like a

palimpsest—a manuscript layered with the historical narratives of other influences intermingled, appropriated, and at times suffocating, but also with the future promise of evolving to write its own stories to add to its ongoing narrative. This possibility, in spite of the freighted history of the triple legacy, can counterintuitively be harnessed to provide a unique luminosity to light the way forward. The colonial past does not necessarily have to be the defining article of Africa's prologue.

In contrast to this nonlinear development signposting, while other regions have clearly marked epochal inflection points, Africa and Africans seem to live their lives in conflated time, simultaneously dealing with the compounded problems of our complex indigenous/colonial past, the mistakes of our postcolonial present, and the tantalizing prospects of a yet to be defined future. The realization that most of Africa's problems, even in this historic moment of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2017, p. 7), remain "analogue" is the key to understanding Africa's time conflation challenge, analogue problems in a digital age. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (*see* United Nations) provide a useful seventeen-point taxonomy for cataloguing Africa's analogue human problematic. The framing of these "analogue" problems refers to recursive persistence of human development problems that seem to defy the forward march of history. In recent times, for example, there has been a resurgence of polio in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nigeria, in spite of the massive global efforts that reduced polio prevalence by 99% in the year 2000. Between 2013 and 2016, there was a serious Ebola outbreak in the West African Countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, and just recently there is report of another outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Coupled with challenges of providing clean, widely available potable water, adequate electricity power supply, and abysmal child and maternal health statistics, one can argue that Africa is the poster child for the SDGs. The challenge for Africa

is how to address these chronic analogue problems, even as it strives to find and establish a sustainable footing in a technologically advanced digital world.

Africa's development, stunted by well-known historical and cultural forces, has not kept apace with the linear historical march of modernity and technological progress. In spite of this, Africa, especially its youth, has been phenomenally quick to embrace digital technology as a means of redressing the knowledge gaps of the past. In addition, the growing population of young second-generation Africans working and living abroad, particularly in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe, but still maintaining close ties to the "mother land," represents a growing reserve of skills, talents, and knowledge waiting to be unlocked and digitally harnessed. The new challenge is how to harness Africa's far-flung intellectual capital instead of the old thinking about reversing the brain drain. Technology has made knowledge fungible and not bound by geography.

Therefore, to fully understand the bewildering complexity of the African experience incorporating its various diasporas, it is necessary to think about the possibilities of the "hidden dimensions" of the African experience. Furthermore, in acquiescing to the existence of these hidden dimensions, shaped and formed in evolutionary time and space, we have to be open to the possibilities of reimagining Africa beyond its clichéd geographic identity. In addition to being a place, Africa is also evolving to become a collaborative virtual space—a virtual digital continent populated by Africa's young digital natives layered on top of the analogue geographic space.

While working in different countries in Africa, any seasoned development worker will invariably reach a head scratching moment of bemusement and incredulity where Africa seems to defy the laws of reason, logic, or even physics. Things that "elsewhere" should logically work seem to collapse into an African "black hole singularity" where all laws of physics breakdown.

Perhaps this should be better qualified as "all known laws of Newtonian physics"—giving the reader the opportunity to be consciously incompetent about what they do not know and open to other possibilities.

This persistent recursive, and perhaps even atavistic, grip of the past in Africa's present and future is one of the hidden dimensions as to why Africa for all its challenges remains of primordial interest to the rest of the world. Deep down, I wager that humanity realizes that we are all Africans. Ironically, this hidden indigenous dimension is what defines the strength and resiliency of the continent, even as it sometimes impedes the enthusiastic embrace of the future. In Africa, as William Faulkner proclaimed, "the past is never dead, it is not even the past."

The Analogue Journey on the Digital Highway

Two decades ago when I began my journey as a binary digital/analogue nomad set to embark on this digital highway, I immediately became aware of this time conflation challenge. What I assumed to be a straightforward plan to create an inclusive platform for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to have emails and generate indigenous content on the "World Wide Web" became a classic catch-22 situation. To generate content from the participating NGOs in our fledgling network, we had to first digitize, edit, and curate the sundry sheaves of paper that passed for content. We then realized that having posted their content on their dedicated pages on our portal, they had no way of navigating the site to see and share their content. The reason was simple enough; they were mostly not computer literate. We therefore had to add on computer training to our roster of services. Now that we have trained them, they had no independent access to the Internet, so we also had to provide Internet access by operating an ISP for our members to dial-up to access their content and send emails.

This infrastructural challenge was the "digital divide" writ large. The initial over-confident attitude on our part was, upon reflection, a naive attempt to immediately replicate and import the global digital revolution into a place that was largely analogue. In other words, trying to run a developmental project that was high-tech in a low-tech environment without fully understanding the operational risks involved. Even so, we were encouraged by Nigeria's rapidly changing political environment that seemed ripe for this type of initiative. With the country having just come out of decades of military rule in 1999, we were presented with a promising new democratic third republic that we hoped would readily embrace technology.

Since our primary constituency was the assorted grouping of NGOs and civil society organizations (CSO) that broadly constituted Nigeria's Third Sector (Payton & Moody, 2008, pp. 46–49), a group that hitherto was straining under the weight of a military dictatorship, our unspoken mission was to use knowledge as a weapon in the fight for civil liberty and the consolidation of our fledgling democracy. In our experience, the familiar dualism of public-private operators readily translated into a public sector that could not or would not address our grave developmental challenges and a private sector that also could not address the issue of chronic poverty because of its heavy dependence on public sector patronage.

Introducing WANGONeT

Stepping into the breach between these two sectors was WANGONeT, cocky and sure that technology was going to be the magic bullet that would at once bridge the digital divide and provide the necessary knowledge to address Nigeria's "human problematic" (Payton & Moody, 2008, p. 63). In our thinking, we believed that by providing the requisite training and technology

tools to our clients, we could quickly catalyze a new knowledge-driven social movement that would fight for the proper and rapid democratization of our polity.

We believed that since our political system was styled after the American Republican model that ours would automatically and rapidly, in hyperdrive, evolve to our version of the American political system. We were certain that with the disruptive and exponential technology set to be unleashed with the privatization of the telecoms sector in 2001, we would "leapfrog" into the future, without recourse to the linearity and the embedded lessons of history. We were wrong. Our blind faith in technology did not factor in the socio-psychological mind-set of Nigerians, and we rapidly discovered that, at that time, psychology trumped technology.

It turns out that our "leapfrogging," as a continuous release of kinetic energy, has not separated us far enough from our analogue past with a potential landing point in an indeterminate future. The compounded historical weight of our human problematic remains unresolved and weighted by the past, even as we grapple with the present-day challenges of trying "to perfect our union," without much attention to the coming existential and disruptive challenges of the future.

In the early days of our operations, an interesting operational and learning challenge emerged. We would run classes on basic computer training, there would be a predictable power cut, and by the time we finally fired up the electric generator and came back on line, the lessons of the preceding hour or two would seem lost to the students, necessitating us to start the class all over again, until the next power outage. Then it seemed as if our students had limited retentive capacity. In hindsight, I understand that the challenge was a conditioned response to a life of general uncertainties that prioritized the exigent demands of survival over and above all else. It was the case of two steps forward and then two steps backward or, in the best-case scenario, two steps forward and one step backward, with a net gain of one step. In creating the first civic hub in

West Africa, WANGONeT was essentially an experiment in technology adoption and adaptation by an intergenerational roster of clients. We trained clients from the public sector, judges, senior civil servants, in addition to our core NGO constituents, as well as some private sector clients for whom we built websites and rudimentary applications on a fee basis, even as we provided free services to the members in our network.

Given the universal application of technology, we readily embraced The Filer Commission's concept of the Three-Sector Society, working with clients from the government, the private sector, and the third sector representing NGOs. This caused a lot of challenges with funders and NGOs being used to working in sector-specific silos. It was difficult to explain that we could create a database to help track human rights infractions as well as create another database to track the then growing HIV epidemic. It was difficult then to explain to funders and clients that technology, as a tool, was sector agnostic and a great catalyst for creating and sharing knowledge across different disciplines. In truth, while we naively assumed that "technology" would be the magical force multiplier that would enable us to rapidly diffuse the requisite knowledge, which would dramatically change society for the better, we slowly but surely came to the conclusion that we were proffering "digital solutions to analogue problems." From this experience came the Lardner dictum, "beware of offering digital solutions to analogue problems." The corollary to this is to fully understand the processes of technological disruption and knowing when to apply it, which ironically is, in a way, the application of digital solutions to analogue problems.

In time we learned that there was another hidden demographic dimension to our understanding of the marketplace in Nigeria. There was the inter-generational gap between the growing tribe of young Nigerians, the digital natives that enthusiastically embraced the Internet, and the hidebound digital nomads terrified of the disruptive power of digital technology. We

realized that in-between these bookends was a vast wasteland of analogue Africans waiting to be comprehensively uploaded into the 21st century.

The present-day reality in Nigeria and much of Africa is that in the last two decades, there has been widespread adoption and adaptation of mobile telephony by both sides, but still leaving behind substantial number of Africans yet to be fully integrated into the digital age. According to GSMA (2017), by 2020, Africa will have 535 million unique subscribers (representing 50% tele-density, this figure is up from 420 million in 2016) when penetration was 43%. The projection going forward is that Africans, especially its youthful population with increasing data availability, will increasingly morph into citizens of virtual republics that exist alongside the "real" analogue nations. Given these statistics, the simple challenge before third sector workers is how to use digital tools to help solve the compounded analogue human problematic of a continent struggling with what I describe as the "time conflation challenge." In my experience, I came to realize that the common denominator through Africa's space-time conflation challenge was knowledge; specifically, its quantity, quality, and real time, real life applicability to address the human problematic.

In addition to seemingly being caught in a conflated "time warp," Africa is also trapped in a liminal cultural warp, unsure of how to mine its indigenous knowledge and wisdom from its deep past to the possibility of its yet to be fully defined future. With one analogue leg firmly rooted in the past and the other digital leg stretching across a wide and complex chasm trying to find a firm foothold in the future, it can be argued that knowledge is indeed the power that the continent will require to propel itself to make that quantum leap forward.

My journey of unintentional discovery started off with trying to address the deficits of the "digital divide" by trying to get our indigenous voice heard in the hubbub of the information

superhighway and, in addition, get my compatriots on ramp as fellow travelers. As I reflect decades later, I realize that beyond bridging the digital divide was the bigger challenge of addressing the present knowledge and innovation asymmetry between Africa and the rest of the world. This latest incarnation of the knowledge gap challenge is not as daunting as it once was. In large part due to the disruptive nature of technology enabling Africa to bypass traditional gatekeepers and filters, it is now possible to chip away at the asymmetrical barriers that have stunted its growth and development. A deep understanding of the hidden dimension is however necessary to first surface these arcane challenges and then deal with them.

The Politics of Knowledge

In *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy and Public Policy* (1989), Ellen Condliffe Lagemann writes about the early days of Carnegie, which was chartered to advance and diffuse knowledge and understanding. In it, she reveals a very important and relevant connection between the diffusion of knowledge, politics, and power. In nineteenth-century America, she writes that "this is a politics that has been central to our lives. It involves the creation, organization, development and dissemination of knowledge" (p. 4). She elucidates, "As the United States moved from a preindustrial and industrial state to a postindustrial state, knowledge joined land and capital as a critical national resource. It served as a basis for invention, and hence for the development of new products, services, technologies, and markets" (p. 4). This statement still holds true and with even greater currency in the 21st century.

The increasing value of knowledge as the United States evolved from its preindustrial state to its postindustrial state and beyond illustrates the exponential power of knowledge, with each preceding store of knowledge contributing to the creation of the next echelon of development.

Africa's experience has not been an unbroken chain of development and progress fueled by knowledge, but a fitful trudge up to the preindustrial age and, for the most part, with the exception of South Africa, missing the industrial age entirely and then making a remarkable leap into the information age. Again, the time conflation challenge manifests in the argument that, lacking the aforementioned linearity of history, Africa is subject to consumption of knowledge without any real understanding of the "creation, organization, development, and dissemination" of such knowledge (Lagemann, 1989, p. 4). While it can be argued that in our increasingly technologically networked and interdependent world, knowledge is increasingly being homogenized, there is no denying the persistent politics of knowledge and the powers behind the politics.

This chronic challenge does not mean that Africa does not have its own body of knowledge. Africa does possess her own knowledge, both old and new, respectively archived in its traditional indigenous wisdom and in its multiple diasporas. The main challenge however revolves around how best to simultaneously harness this intellectual capital in real time in order to address the challenges of its human problematic. Adding to this challenge is the need to truly understand Western epistemologies, even as they revisit their own store of knowledge and redress the politics behind the creation, organization, development, and dissemination of indigenous knowledge.

Within this construct where knowledge emerges as paramount to addressing Africa's development anathema, I argue that Africa suffers from a lack of meta-cognition. She is not fully aware of the value of her own knowledge and presently lacks a deep understanding of the "creation, organization, development, and dissemination" of this store of knowledge (and wisdom) both within the continent and the rest of the world (Lagemann, 1989, p. 4). The predations of her historical past have resulted in a huge and continuous net transfer of her human intellectual capital and, alongside this, the depletion of her own domestic store of knowledge. It has been said that

80% of what is known about Africa resides outside Africa, some in the benevolent repositories of its diaspora, but most in the malevolent vaults of the powers controlling the politics of knowledge. This persistent asymmetry is not accidental. Rather, it is a result of Africa's stubborn atavistic colonial past, which in the new framework of "coloniality," has been described as being "in the snare of colonial matrix of power" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, pp. 37).

In his book, *Coloniality of Power in Post-Colonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization*, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) explores the persistence of colonialism even in postcolonial Africa. He describes "the predicament of Africans in a postcolonial neo-colonized world" borne from "the negative processes of Western modernity as it spread across the world" (p. 3). He further reveals that the term, "postcolonial neo-colonized world" is used to capture the multidimensional patterns of exploitation and control, whether epistemological, cultural, or discursive, all of which have entrapped Africans since the "Conquest." With "Conquest," Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) places emphasis through a capital "C" in order to underline both "its foundational influence on the domination of modern African history by global, i.e., Western history," and the fact that this was "a multifaceted process rather than an event" (p. 3).

A New Kind of "New" Knowledge

For Africa to keep pace with the rest of the world and functionally address its knowledge and innovation deficit, it must simultaneous mine its store of indigenous knowledge as well as partake in the creation of the new knowledge of the 21st century. This new age knowledge is mostly a science-driven convergence of biotechnology, nanotechnology, and information technology. While the store of indigenous knowledge is still resident on the continent, albeit scattered in

various learning and traditional institutions, the more modern stock is literally embodied in Africa's diaspora in the Western world. A Pew Research Center analysis (Anderson & Connor, 2018) reveals that migrants from especially sub-Saharan Africa have the highest educational attainment of any group, including native-born citizens of the United States. Elsewhere in the West, highly educated Africans are operating at the peak of their professions, contributing to cutting edge science and other knowledge disciplines.

The time conflation challenge unwittingly yields another opportunity for Africa to condense its knowledge deficit by adroitly and selectively focusing on its past, the present, and future by balancing out embedded theories of development with a new set of hypotheses that, even with limited evidence, can help shape a bold new narrative for Africa. If Africa can successfully harness the knowledge of its diaspora by sharing information and innovation, it can create a new corpus on which a new African narrative can be written.

Some chapters of this new storyline are already being written in the interesting cultural explosion of African films, literature, music, food, fashion, and other African soft power exports. In literature, in addition to the considerable body of contemporary African literature, is the burgeoning new genre of Afro-futurism that explores science fiction in an imagined futuristic Africa unburdened by the weighted epistemologies or narratives of the past, or the human problematic of the present. Such an Africa is the hypothetical basis for the mythical nation of "Wakanda" in the recent blockbuster film *Black Panther* (Coogler, 2018). The tremendous embrace of this movie by, especially, young Africans suggests a grand aspirational desire to transform fiction into fact by moving ahead into the future in spite of present challenges and the historical burdens of the past.

In a good illustration of this ability to be able to draw in the resources of the past and the future in the present, young African technologists and entrepreneurs are rewriting the rules of how Silicon Valley–type startups can be organized and managed. In a CNN story, Uanikhehi (2008) sheds light on Africa's new generation of technologists, who are eschewing the cut-throat competitiveness of Silicon Valley to instead create a new cooperative model based on the ancient African humanist philosophy of "Ubuntu," which encourages collectivism and group solidarity, based on the understanding that "a person is a person through other people."

African political leaders are confronting the time conflation challenge by recognizing the politics of knowledge exists or, more specifically, that politics must create the necessary policies for the creation, organization, development, and dissemination of knowledge. At the recent Next Einstein Forum (NEF) held in Kigali, Rwanda, African leaders, in a major policy declaration, announced detailed plans on how the continent was going to harness all its infrastructural and intellectual assets to create a new sustainable store of knowledge and innovation that help the continent rapidly catch up with the 21st century. In advancing this idea of a new kind of "new" knowledge, the leaders stated that "Africa needs innovative policies that advance collaboration among governing systems, institutional structures and funding mechanisms to accelerate Africa's scientific emergence" (Next Einstein Forum, n.d.).

Leapfrogging 2.0

Africa now has another opportunity to close the knowledge and innovation gaps by creating a new "leapfrogging" model. This superimposes its nonlinear construct on the familiar linear trajectory of development by selectively bringing its past, warts and all, into the future, using "new" knowledge aided by evolving technologies sourced from the rest of the world.

This new leapfrogging hypothesis must however be understood within the context of yet another hidden dimension central to Africa's unique circumstances. As stated before, Africa's human problematic is analogue and therefore adaptive in nature. According to Heifetz and Laurie (2001), who make the distinction between adaptive and technical challenges in the pursuit of change, the adaptive challenge requires "new learning." In contrast, technical challenges can be solved by the knowledge of experts.

The whole WANGONeT experiment in the early days, on reflection, was predicated on the notion that we could implement technical solutions to solve adaptive problems, which we did with mixed results. Over time, we have come to realize that we need "new knowledge" to apply both the technical and the adaptive approaches in carefully calibrated weighting in order to successfully deal with Africa's challenges going forward into the 21st century.

This "new learning" requires an openness to see the continent differently as well as to challenge the orthodoxy of existing developmental theories as they relate to an evolving Africa. One key element of Africa's human problematic is the issue of chronic and widespread poverty with the concomitant challenge of lifting tens, if not hundreds, of millions of Africans out of poverty in the incoming decades. This is really at the heart of all developmental challenges in Africa, manifesting itself in all aspects of the UN's SDGs, as the aforementioned taxonomy that defines the challenges of the continent.

As third-sector workers, our responsibility is to work on new philanthropic, aid, and trade models that deal with Africa's human problematic. Given this, our challenge now lies in discerning how to effectively factor in an understanding of Africa's conflated space-time paradox in our work. The dilemma we must confront involves successfully separating out our past, present, and future in the work we do and sustaining this division. Indeed, to take full advantage of this new

leapfrogging 2.0, we have to deal with the time conflation challenge and the interesting questions it throws up.

The Past:

Africa's "past" is never really the past. We have a compounded historical legacy, especially our recent past, where the lingering legacy of our triple heritage still haunts us. These unresolved tensions and problems have been carried forward by successive generations, especially our post-independence crop of rulers. There is a strong cultural resistance to modernization with its inbuilt technical logic, rules, and epistemologies. Therefore, the question is, can we modernize without necessarily having to Westernize? Can the seemingly inevitable post-postcolonial experience and its attendant formulations, likely borne from growing digital networking and interdependency, still emerge as authentically African, even where liberated from the African "past?" I believe so, but it will require a radical adaptive mindset change.

The Present:

For most African countries two generations into independence, the unresolved problems of the past—venal governments, poor governance, weaponized ethnicity, and the youth bulge—have all come home to roost. As we are confronted with these challenges, we reflexively are drawn to their historical colonial root causes and their present manifestations both alloyed into a new set of challenges that are peculiar to Africa. Essentially, we are constantly trying to solve yesterday's problems as they collide with today's challenges.

The Future:

The optimistic view is that our future is a tabula rasa—essentially a blank slate yet to be written. The pessimistic view is that this new generation of young Africans will make the same mistakes of their forbearers and squander the "frontier market" opportunities to make leapfrogging 2.0 happen. Even so, there remains the residual optimism that the African glass is at least half full.

This enduring sense of optimism about Africa is based on yet another hidden dimension of Africa's strength and resiliency, which is its burgeoning informal sector that undergirds the economies of most African countries. This adaptive and informal sector, particularly in Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, is typically larger than the formal economic sector that exists under government regulations and authority.

In Stealth of Nations:

The rise of the informal global economy, Robert Neuwirth (2011) writes about the vast and hidden informal sector in Africa, is hiding in plain sight. He describes this evolved adaptive response to mineral- and agriculture-dependent formal sector as System D. In a *WIRED* magazine interview, he reveals its evolution. According to Robert Capps (2011), it, "got sort of mutated in the postcolonial areas of Africa and the Caribbean to refer to the street economy, which is called l'économie de la débrouillardise—the self-reliance economy, or the DIY economy, if you will. I decided to use this term myself—shortening it to System D—because it's a less pejorative way of referring to what has traditionally been called the informal economy or black market or even underground economy."

Africa's largely do-it-yourself (DIY) economy will be formally integrated into a bold new attempt at creating a unified common market on the continent. In other words, African leaders are

attempting to provide a new type of solution by merging both the adaptive and technical challenges into a new model for development. In early 2018, African leaders gathered in Rwanda under the umbrella of the Africa Union to create the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA). This new economic union is projected to cover an African market of 1.2 billion young people across fifty-five countries with a gross domestic product (GDP) of $2.5 trillion in the coming decades (African Union, 2018).

For Africans to succeed, we have to learn a new way of seeing our reality within the fast-changing dynamics of the 21st century. We must train a new generation of third sector leaders to possess the ability of cultivating a panoramic 360 degrees view of the hidden dimensions of our problems and their possible solutions. They must be able to identify the problems of the past and the present, even as they create a new vision for the future. They must create a new model for dynamic and sustainable change. Like Buckminster Fuller says: "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

Conclusion

Twenty years on, with the information superhighway transformed into a global networked digital doppelganger of the real world, Africa's growing virtual communities are rapidly integrating into this new reality. We however are not fully equipped to trade in these new market spaces. My new big idea, as I transit from my former life at WANGONeT, is to find a way to address the innovation and knowledge gap that exists between Africa and the rest of the world.

The core idea is to create The African Innovation Exchange, a new African Agora—a virtual marketplace to aggregate, exchange, and trade pro-African, ideas, knowledge, innovative

processes, and products, as well provide a social networking platform for real-world interactions and exchanges. It is my hope that having understood the time conflation challenges and armed with a suite of new enabling technologies and access to Africa's store of old and new knowledge, that this idea will be an important building block for Africa's future. I hope that if we build it, they will come (Gordon, Gordon, & Robinson, 1989)

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A Reflection on Civil Society in South Africa: Lessons for the Future
Nontando Ngamlana

Abstract

The role of civil society in strengthening and deepening democracy in South Africa has received a great deal of scholarly attention over the years. Attention has also been paid to the study of the shifts within civil society, with many studies highlighting the move from mobilizer and instigator against the apartheid government to how civil society was co-creating as partners in the democratic dispensation. With the emergence of social movements and their adversarial manner of engaging the state, many argue that civil society has come full circle. This paper provides an overview of civil society over three distinct periods in South Africa and, in so doing, engages the dominant discourse on civil society. Using phenomenology and case study methodology, the paper identifies key features that characterized civil society over this period of study highlighting the relationship between civil society and the state, as well as that between civil society and the public. Ultimately, this paper supports and refutes some of the dominant views established by those that have studied civil society before. The paper concludes by offering insights and recommendations for future civil society leaders in the process of democratic consolidation.

Introduction

South Africa is deemed a political miracle by many in that, at the time when the world anticipated the transition from apartheid to democracy to be achieved through an armed struggle, it was achieved peacefully. In just over two decades, the country has undergone the basic processes of democratization, namely, authoritarian breakdown, a democratic transition, and, now, democratic consolidation (Mottair, 2002). The role of civil society in the breaking down of authoritarian rule as well as its role in the democratic transition, has received great research attention (Shubane, 1992; Selingman, 1992; McKinley & Naidoo, 2004; Wieldman, 2015). Less attention has been devoted to civil society's role in the consolidation of democracy. This is largely because civil society itself has changed over time, making meaningful comparison difficult.

This paper provides a snapshot view of civil society in South Africa in the last 40 years from 1977 to 2017. This translates to three distinct periods in the history of civil society, namely, the height of the struggle against apartheid (1977–1991), the democratic transition (1994–2014), and the consolidation of democracy (2015–future). It draws on existing literature, the lived experience of a civil society leader, and case studies. This work presents the key features that defined civil society during each period and draws insights for future civil society leaders toward the consolidation of democracy. The paper supports and refutes some of the dominant views on civil society in South Africa.

While written for a specific audience, this paper presents lessons that are applicable for civil society in young democracies across the world. South Africa is a unique place in which to study civil society for two reasons: it is both ordinary and extraordinary. It is typical of underdeveloped Africa and a developed world all at once. This strangeness makes a reflection on civil society relevant for both developing democracies as well as well-established ones.

South Africa is seen as a model for the rest of Africa and the developing world for the ways in which it has been able build a solid multi-racial democratic government. In the words of Paller (2006) "South Africa cannot fail because its success as a democracy is important for legitimizing democratic transitions in many other countries where conditions for consolidating democracy are thought to be difficult or lacking in similar respects" (p. 24). A study of the contribution of civil society in the consolidation of democracy in South Africa matters, therefore, not only for its people, but for the future of many developing countries and the fate of development worldwide.

In this paper, civil society is defined as the aggregate of nonprofit organizations and institutions outside of government linked by common interests and collective activity toward a common good. This definition deviates from the broad understanding of civil society as the space of unfettered freedom outside of state and family. This paper crafts a definition of civil society that is grounded in the context and polity of South Africa and possibly that of other young democracies with similar contexts. This is discussed in much more detail herein.

In its reflection on civil society over time, this paper engages dominant views on civil society and offers the following insights:

a. The term civil society remains ambiguous and fluid, referring to a multiplicity of interests and groups and its composition is greatly influenced by context. As such, this paper presents a definition of civil society that is informed by the context of South Africa.

b. Civil society is not homogeneous, a linear comparison of it over time is far more difficult than literature seems to suggest.

c. Civil society has always been and continues to be influenced and molded by the country's polity. This influence shapes its character and the nature of its relationship with the state and citizens in general.

d. While shifts in funding have negatively impacted civil society in the last few years, this impact has been minimal compared to the time when civil society was hemorrhaging capacity and skill to the new democratic state in the mid-1990s.

e. Pluralism and diversity in civil society is not bad for the consolidation of democracy. It is its heterogeneity that strengthens rather than weakens civil society.

In its conclusion, the paper offers insights and lessons for future civil society leaders. It argues that civil society has become far more diverse than it ever has been and cautions it to embrace this diversity and pluralism. It proposes a repositioning of the three emerging blocks of civil society in a manner that builds on each other's strengths. It cautions civil society to watch out for those things that have trapped it in the past, such as divisive politics, competition over resources, and divisions over strategy and tactics, etc., but rather to collaborate and connect more.

Literature Review and Research Methodology

The literature on which this paper draws (and supports) establishes that civil society existed during apartheid South Africa and that it contributed to the democratic transition (Shubane, 1992; Chipkin, 2002; Greenstein, 2006; Habib, 2006). Furthermore, it establishes that civil society is necessary in a democratic dispensation in that it exists to promote, consolidate and protect democracy (McKinley & Naidoo, 2004; Malan, 2007; Patel, 2012; Van Syl, 2014; Wieldaman, 2015) and that the sector plays a role in the consolidation of democracy (Hanyane, 2005; Nthambeleni, 2007; Habib, 2006; Patel, 2012; Adelzadeh, 1996; Freedom House, 2017).

This paper borrows its theoretical framing from Albert Bandura's (1961) social learning theory as well as social activism theory. Bandura proposes that learning can occur simply by

observing the actions of others. His theory is premised on the following views: a) people can learn through observation, b) one's mental state is an essential part of the learning process, and c) just because something has been learned, it does not mean that it will result in behavioral change. Social activism theory is founded on the belief that learning takes place in social environments where there are collaborative activities. The foundational view of social activism theory is that people formulate their own views based on what they see and do and through the interaction with others.

Phenomenology and case studies are the two main research methodologies used in this paper. Using this method of study, key insights that have been transferred from one generation of civil society to the next are lifted, with a focus on the character of civil society and its manner of engaging. In its conclusion, the paper highlights lessons that future civil society leaders can use toward the consolidation of democracy.

Civil Society Contextualized

This paper is about civil society, and as a point of departure it makes sense to first contextualize this term. There are a number of divergent and sometimes outright opposed views regarding the exact composition, make up, purpose, and origins of civil society. This makes the term civil society a rather ambiguous and fluid concept; referring to a multiplicity of interests, groups, and motivations, equally and synonymously (Lewis, 2002). The cooption of some facets of civil society into an alliance with the governing African National Congress (ANC) distort the picture of what is conventionally known to comprise civil society. Moreover, the robust civil society of the apartheid-era differs greatly from that of the first 20 years of democracy.

Historically, the term civil society was used to denote that sector in society in which individuals and groups exercised democracy (Seligman, 1992). Implied in this definition was the assumption that civil society was a sphere of unfettered freedom. In this lay an assumption that there exists a social structure in which political citizenship is vested in all individuals and that society is structured such that individuals can influence policies adopted by government. Shubane (1992) argues that embedded in this framing of civil society is an understanding that democracy could only be improved by individuals who have access to citizenship and that those who were without such access first had to strive to obtain it before they could improve its quality.

This discussion still continues in South Africa, with some contesting that organized civic formations that were active during the apartheid-era cannot be referred to as civil society at all. Simply put, the debate is whether or not people who are already excluded from government institutions can ever be said to be in a position to form effective collectiveness that operates outside the institutions from which they are in any case excluded. In this paper we will not engage in this debate, instead we will draw on Shubane's (1992) view that the very idea of modern society contains within itself the notion of a civil society and that any society with a state at any level of development must have some form of civil society.

In this paper, civil society is defined as the aggregate of nonprofit organizations and institutions outside of government linked by common interests and collective activity toward a common good. Emphasis is on the words "outside government"; implying that organized formations that are in a coalition with the ruling party and, by virtue of this relationship, are part of its internal policy decision-making processes cannot be said to be "outside government." The independence of these coopted formations from the same government of which they are a part is questionable. Therefore, organized labor, such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the

South African Council of Churches, and the South African National Civics Organization are not a part of the civil society to which this paper refers. By definition, these organizations fall within the realm generally understood to be civil society, but in the context of South Africa, they are in a collation with the ruling ANC and are part of its internal policy-making processes, their independence from government is therefore questionable.

Civil Society in the Consolidation of Democracy

As with civil society, the concept of democratic consolidation has solicited a great deal of debate and discussion in literature. Some define it synonymously with democratic stabilization and sustainability, others view it synonymously with the process of deepening democracy, while others focus on the structural and cultural dimensions of democratic societies. A common thread in literature suggests however, that democracy is consolidated when it is made stable, vibrant, efficient, and accountable (Abdudwasui & Gado, 2017). This definition addresses both the process of stabilizing as well as that of strengthening the quality of democracy. This is the view through which democratic consolidation is understood in this paper, as both the process of stabilization and strengthening of the quality of democracy.

Civil society is critical in the consolidation of democracy. It can support government to be more accountable, transparent, and responsive to the public, which in turn strengthens government legitimacy. It can contribute in reducing corruption through targeted participatory monitoring and social accountability mechanisms. Finally, civil society can rally society toward a greater commitment to democratic principles and values and by stimulating political participation. This is the role of civil society advocated for in this paper. The sections below present a snapshot of civil

society in the three distinct periods noted above with an aim to draw key lessons that will inform its strategy and positioning toward the consolidation of democracy.

A Snapshot View of Civil Society During Apartheid (1977–1991)

Apartheid (an Afrikaans word that means *apartness*) was a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination in South Africa that legally existed between 1948 and 1994.[1] The system was based on white supremacy and the oppression of the black majority for the benefit of the white minority (the Afrikaners being the most dominant beneficiaries even among whites). From its onset, non-whites resisted apartheid but, for a long time, were not able to bring about real change. Many political scientists and historians agree that the 1976 Soweto uprising was a defining moment in the struggle against apartheid.

On June 16, 1976 more than 10,000 young South Africans marched in protest against Bantu–education and being taught in Afrikaans (among other things) only to be met by the apartheid police with live ammunition.[2] The shooting of unarmed school children sent shock waves throughout South Africa and across the world and led to the swelling of a grassroots anti-apartheid movement and a complete rejection of the apartheid state across many local communities in the country. In large numbers, young people joined what had until then been predominantly an adult-driven movement; connecting in creative ways that were effective with little resources. Reflecting on civil society during this period, there are a few things worth noting:

a. It had unity of purpose: Civil society in this period was as diverse as it is today but was united toward a common goal, that of political freedom and the end to apartheid. This unity meant that it could rise above its differences in pursuit of this common goal.

b. It had an accepted leader and vision bearer: While there were many political and civic formations at the time, straddling different racial groups, the ANC, in exile, and the United Democratic Front (UDF), within the country, were generally the accepted leaders of the struggle. This leadership continued in the transition period, in particular during the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) negotiations.[3]

c. The goals of civil society were interlinked with those of society broadly: During this era, it was not easy to tell civil society apart from all of society. Its goals and activities were interlinked with those of other elements of society. For example, the religious community, the youth, workers' unions, and traditional authorities, etc., were all mobilized, organized and in pursuit of a common goal.

d. Resource mobilization: It is common knowledge that the apartheid struggle was supported and resourced through philanthropic support from the international community. These funds supported the movement in exile, but were difficult to access within the country, as the apartheid state laws and systems made it almost impossible for localized organizations to access these funds. So, local people—ordinary citizens within the country—willingly gave resources in support of the liberation struggle.

e. Nature of relationships: As noted above, the relationship between civil society and government during this period was largely adversarial, characterized by protests that were met with violence by state law enforcement. The relationship between civil society and the general public, on the other hand, was positive, strong, and complementary.

The release of Nelson Mandela in the early 1990s from years of incarceration signaled the dawn of a new day. The years between 1991 and 1994 were spent preparing for the transition toward democracy.

Civil Society in the Democratic Transition (1994–2014)

As it transitioned into a democracy, South Africa still had a vibrant civil society inherited from the struggle for liberation. The new government went to pains to demobilize this civil society. Understandably, it did not want a carry-over of the violent mass protests and militant resistance that was meted toward the apartheid state to be directed its way. Furthermore, the struggle against apartheid was a brutal and exhausting one, it is true that many in civil society were only too happy to resign to a peaceful life and let those elected to govern do so.

On the grounds of the "new balance of forces" civil society was demobilized.[4] During this period, civil society was hemorrhaging its best talent to fill positions in the new government. This crippled civil society in many ways. The reawakening of civil society happened during the second administration of the ANC government. By this time, the effects of the neoliberal macro-economic policy shifts implemented by the first democratic administration were being felt. Midway through its first administration, the ANC had abandoned a mildly redistributive Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in favor of a neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy. This policy shift meant that government would prioritize interests of big business in its pursuit of economic growth. It also meant that the redistribution of wealth would take place according to a trickle-down model (Adelzadeh, 1996). In simple terms, this meant that the majority of previously marginalized South Africans would wait longer for the economic benefits they enjoyed under apartheid (Bond, 2000).

Case Study

Afesis-corplan is a nonprofit established by activists in support of the liberation struggle in South

Africa.[5] Operating in the Border region, Afesis-corplan campaigned against the forced removal of blacks from the inner city to the periphery. It operated as a paralegal service organization and built the capacity of these communities to resist the forced removals. It also served to channel funding from international donors to support activities of the Border region of the ANC. Undoubtedly, the organization was interlinked with the ANC in the Border region, its employees were active political activists who held leadership positions in the ANC. Its activities therefore were aligned with the goals of the ANC's liberation struggle. In the transition to democracy, like many of its partners, the organization lost its senior and most talented employees to the government. It still played a critical role in policy conversations and in the restructuring of the state. It enjoyed a relatively cozy relationship with the ANC in government, as it had links with many of those who were now in key decision-making positions.

When the negative impact of the neoliberal policies of the ANC were beginning to affect the daily lives of many marginalized people, and a growing culture of lack of accountability, and responsiveness and corruption were taking root, it became clear that new ways of engaging with the ANC in power were necessary. The ANC government was drifting far from the vision of an equal and just South Africa, and a robust civil society was necessary to force social accountability and to build the capacity of citizens to engage. Critical views against the state were seen by many in civil society as a betrayal of the vision of a democratic South Africa as led by the ANC, and organizations that spoke against the party were viewed as sell-outs. At about this time, I joined Afesis-corplan.

Looking back, life had prepared me for the role that I would later play at Afesis-corplan. I had been raised in the height of the liberation struggle in a politically and rights-conscious family. The vision of the South Africa we, when I later joined the struggle, were fighting for was vividly

imprinted in my mind. The decision to set Afesis-corplan on a new strategic path when I took over as its director was relatively easy to make. The organization had the potential to contribute to something bigger, my responsibility was to help set it on a path to do so.

This shift in strategy and approach brought with it a number of challenges. Our partners could no longer identify with the organization we were becoming and alliance with us impacted negatively on their cozy relationships with the state, so we were no longer invited to key policy-making consultative conversations. Our board was struggling to identify with the new strategy and our staff capacity and skills were out of sync with it, changes were necessary at both the governance and operational level to make the organization fit-for-purpose. Reflecting back, this was perhaps the loneliest time in my career in civil society. Being in the lead on a number of impactful processes, both in the sector generally and within the organization, was fulfilling, but striking a healthy work-life balance during this period was impossible. The result would later surface in compromised health, among other things.

We worked differently, we built networks and relationships at various levels strategically and invested in harnessing these toward our goals. We focused our efforts toward empowering and building the capacity of local communities to speak truth to power and to demand inclusion in decision-making, resource allocation, planning, and monitoring. Where they wanted to protest, we helped them protest. When they were arrested, we sought legal support to get them out. When doors were closed for these local communities, we used our influence and clout to knock and hold the door open for them to go in. We used media (mainstream and social) creatively toward our cause. We crafted different relationships with provincial and local government based on our assessment of its needs and willingness to engage. This required agility on our side, so we recruited younger staff members who were far more agile and didn't feel nostalgic about their history in the

struggle.

Internally, we professionalized our team and focused on talent retention and staff development. We worked hard on fostering commitment from our staff, not to the organization but to the cause. At any given point in time, we had staff who were able to engage critically in policy debates at the national level but also creatively facilitate capacity-building drives for the most illiterate in the local communities. We developed innovative social accountability and participatory monitoring tools, some of which were adopted by the government and influenced laws and policies related to the areas of our work.

We were able to do all of this with the support of international donors. I have often heard people argue that international donors influence the agenda of the organizations they fund; we have never experienced this agenda-setting influence. We were clear on and owned our agenda, our donor partners bought into and supported a vision we clearly articulated ourselves. There were very few, if any, local philanthropic donors at the time that were willing to support this work, so we relied on international donors. These donors understood that the strengthening of South Africa's democracy depended on the emergence of a "fit-for-purpose" civil society.

Civil Society in the Consolidation of Democracy (2015–Future)

The case study presented above highlights, in summary, the state of civil society and its relationship with the government in the early years of South Africa's democracy. Since then, three distinct blocks of civil society have emerged. These are what Habib (2006) refers to as a) typical NGOs, b) survivalist agencies, and c) social movements. On the one end of the spectrum is a powerful set of formal service-related NGOs that have entered into partnerships with and/or are

sub-contracted by the state. As mentioned above, the relationship between these organizations and the state is that of collegiality.

On the other end is a group of community-based and issue-specific movements that actively challenge and oppose what they perceive as the implementation of neoliberalism. These organizations have an explicitly adversarial relationship with the state. They engage from equal footing, using strategic litigation, lobbying, media advocacy, and sometimes even outright resistance. In-between these two sets of organizations is what Habib (2006) refers to as survivalist and informal organizations. Located mainly in marginalized communities, these organizations have no relationship with the state. They are preoccupied with assisting people to survive the ravages of neoliberalism (Habib, 2006). They receive neither resources nor do they desire recognition from the state.

This paper argues that there is a need for these three blocks individually but also in collaboration with each other. Currently, there exists tension between conventional NGOs and social movements, an "us and them" narrative. This tension is fueled by a number of things, from devaluing each other's tactics and forms of engaging to competition for resources. For a long time there weren't any meaningful partnerships and collaborations between these two blocks in civil society. As younger people rise into positions of leadership and influence in civil society, they have begun to organize in creative ways that are altering the civil society space even further, creating opportunities for partnerships and possibly resulting in new and different strata of civil society.

It is clear currently that as anger in society continues to build due to the failure of the ANC government to improve the socioeconomic conditions of many in South Africa, young people are questioning the legacy of civil society. It is expected that the younger generation will achieve

change differently; engaging the state in different ways, partnering in different ways, and using technology in new ways. All of this will remold civil society. This ought to be seen as an opportunity rather than a challenge, and these are the strengths that civil society ought to draw from as it seeks to change with the times. History has shown that the strength of civil society lies in its collectivity; it is in its numbers and unity that it is strong. As such, diversity and pluralism ought not to divide civil society any longer but unify it. It is in collaborating, working together, and building on each other's strengths that the impact of civil society in the consolidation of democracy will be increased.

Lessons for Future Leaders

There are a few lessons that civil society leaders can learn from as it continues to contribute to the strengthening and deepening of democracy. The diversity of civil society is a strength not a weakness. Presently, there is limited collaboration and interconnectedness among organizations that fall within the three blocks of civil society presented above, this paper argues that for civil society to make a meaningful contribution toward the strengthening of democracy it has to collaborate more, crafting partnerships and relationships that build on one another's strengths, embracing diversity. First, the unifying purpose has to be articulated. If there is any lesson civil society can draw from apartheid-era organizing, it is the importance of unity of purpose. Even when civil society of that time disagreed on ideology, strategies, and tactics, it agreed on the common vision and that kept it united and focused.

In the figure below, we attempt to graphically present the state of civil society at present, depicting the three blocks noted above:

Conventional NGOs	Other service-oriented Organizations	Social Movements
Largely sub-contracted to the state and engage in harmonious ways careful not to jeopardize their relationship with the state	Have no relationship with and receive no funding from the state	Are not funded by or sub-contracted to the state. Have a predominantly adversarial relationship with the state and engage as equal partners

Figure 1: The present state of civil society in South Africa
Source: Author's own

The role of each of the three blocks of civil society needs to be redefined such that they are each oriented and aligned toward contributing harmoniously to a common goal. For example, the conventional NGOs can assume a greater service-delivery focus, rendering services to both government and social movements. These are organizations that in any case render social services and are funded by the state. They are necessary in addressing the socioeconomic challenges in the country. Beyond this, they can play a role in building the capacity of communities at the grassroots level to participate in policy conversations, government planning, participatory monitoring, and service-delivery implementation. They can take the lead in disseminating democratic principles and norms at a grassroots level thereby play a bigger role in democracy education.

Social movements, on the other hand, can locate their work around the protection of civil and group rights and in demanding government transparency and accountability. In this role, they would engage in policy advocacy, either harmoniously or in an adversarial manner, depending on the issues at hand and the responsiveness of government. They can partner with NGOs to connect big national rights and policy issues to the level where communities can identify and engage with the issues. By so doing, the agenda of civil society will be interlinked with that of society.

Case Study

An example of where this has been done effectively in South Africa is with the Open Government Partnership (OGP).[6] Government had cherry-picked for itself the organizations that it wanted to work with (the ANC-aligned civil society) on OGP. Other organizations who were interested in OGP, but were kept outside by the government, pushed very hard to get involved and this saw an emergence of a network of both NGOs and social movements working for inclusion on the OGP. Each of these organizations (NGOs and social movements) understood that their presence and collective effort was necessary in ensuring that a culture of accountability, transparency, and openness prevails in South Africa. They began to find ways of "localizing" OGP, demanding that, where possible, government localizes OGP through funding localized interventions.

There are many other examples where civil society and social movements are beginning to work in creative ways in demanding government accountability, especially around basic service delivery and pro-poor housing development. The housing sector organizations in Cape Town, for example, are connecting in creative ways that build on each other's strengths, partnering on funding proposals and conceptualizing projects that allow for participation of both NGOs and social movements in addressing the accessibility of decent shelter for the poor and marginalized in Cape Town.

The other organizations, the groups that lie in the middle, are necessary in any community in building social cohesion and responsive and resilient communities. They can be allowed to create partnerships with both conventional NGOs and social movements as they want, in ways that support their work. In figure 2 below, we attempt to summarize in a graphic form this proposed role and positioning of each of the three blocks of civil society:
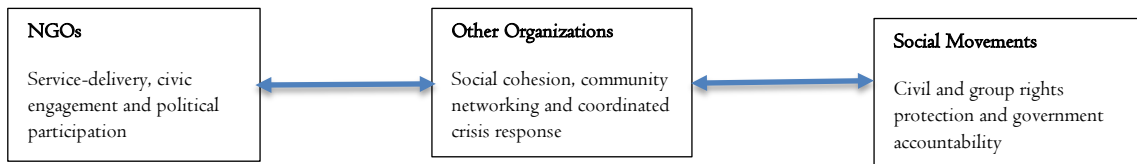
Figure 2: The new proposed role and positioning of the three blocks of civil society

Source: author's own

It is also critical for civil society to note that historically it has been influenced and molded by the country's politics; it therefore needs to be deliberate in creating strategic relationships that makes it much more resilient to these changes as it moves forward. There is no reason why civil society should not work together in meaningful and deliberate ways toward contributing to the consolidation of democracy.

Conclusion

Each generation of civil society can learn from the one that comes before it. These lessons can either be positive blocks on which it builds, or negative pitfalls to watch out for. Reflecting on civil society in three distinct periods in the history of South Africa this paper argues that civil society is stronger in its diversity than it believes. It argues that the goal of civil society at this point in time should be that of contributing to the consolidation of democracy and, in so doing, it ought to create strategic partnerships that build on each other's strengths. Social movements, civil society organizations, and interest groups are all important in strengthening and deepening democracy. They serve as mechanisms for political participation, mobilization, dissemination of democratic principles and norms, and for the defense of basic rights. The lessons carried in this

paper are applicable to civil society in other contexts and democracies across the world.

Notes

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[1] Afrikaans is a language spoken by the Afrikaner people in South Africa who were the major architects of Apartheid.

[2] Bantu Education was a racially segregated education system where inferior education was reserved for non-whites by the Apartheid government, regulated through the Bantu Education Act of 1953.

[3] CODESA was a platform through which a multiparty and multi-stakeholder plenary was convened to deliberate on the mechanisms and technicalities of a transition from apartheid to democracy.

[4] This was in reference to a perceived need to minimize or limit the growth of motives that did not see the ANC as the leader of the process of transformation.

[5] Afesis-corplan is a nonprofit based in East London, South Africa, established in 1983 in support of the liberation struggle. For more on this organization, visit afesis.org.za.

[6] The Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from national and subnational governments to promote open government, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. South Africa is a founding member-state in the OGP.

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SECTION TWO

Social Movements within the Nonprofit Context.

Managing Transitions and Leading African Civil Society Organizations in the 21st Century

Bhekinkosi Moyo

Abstract

This paper is a discussion of civil society leadership in Africa with a special attention to succession and transition planning. Many a times, leaders are brought in to run organizations and they are not well prepared, or the environment is not adequate for them to succeed. In this paper, I explore different factors that lead to success. I conclude that even though there are many factors to consider, in my experience as a civil society leader and from literature, particular attention must be paid to the recruitment process, strategy development and management of transition to the organization and out of the organization.

Introduction

This article seeks to discuss key factors for consideration by civil society leaders in Africa today as they strive to be successful in taking their organizations to the next level. What do leaders need to consider in order to be successful managing their organizations today? The article looks specifically at various moments of the leader in an organization, from recruitment, to strategy development, and other dimensions such as sustainability and succession, among others. These are key dimensions of an organization that are instrumental in pivoting it to the new world that demands different skills and mindsets from those required in leading a traditional organization. While the article draws from literature, I also draw a lot from my experiences leading organizations

in Africa, including my recent turning around of an organization and pivoting it to new ways of working. I was heavily influenced by new technologies and the need to meet new requirements around policy advocacy, sustainability, and people development in the context of the debates and developments around the future of work. While generally there is some literature on some of these areas (Salomon & Sokolowki, 2004; Ndengwa, 1996; Powell & Dimaggio, 1991; Powell & Steinberg, 2006; Kumi, 2017; Arhin, Kumi, & Adam, 2018; Beckert, 2010; Wilkinson, 2016; Li, 2016; Houck, 1971; Kasper, 2008; Conway, 2018; Duta, 2008; Jackson, 2017; Chikoto-Schultz & Uzochukwu, 2016; Amunega, Osanmor, & Kurfi, 2012; Radon & Pecharroman, 2017; Kelly, 2011; Lutabigwa & Gray, 1997, etc.) there is very little written by practitioners based on their experiences (Fowler, 2002; Edwards, 1996). This article adds to the literature by bringing a theorization of practice in the 21st century. It provides practical experiences on recruitment, strategy development, and managing transitions in order to create sustainability for the organization and its interventions. It further focuses only on those groups that are formalized and are by-and-large expected to meet what at times may seem to be complex international and national management requirements that include, among others, the dictates of corporate governance, regulatory compliance, environmental sustainability, and financial accountability, among others.

The dominant view, although certainly not the only one, is that African organizations face several structural barriers, in general, and, in particular, they struggle to achieve their objectives or make a transformational impact due to the manner in which they are governed, led, and managed. These challenges and limitations are complex but primarily they include the phenomenon of founding directors, which over the years has become the Achilles heel for most organizations. Poor governance due to fragmented, dysfunctional, or at times directionless boards, as well as weak institutional frameworks, and the lack of, and/or weak, management controls are

other factors that contribute to the failure by African organizations to meet their objectives. In addition, low trust levels and tensions between boards and management lead to weak organizations with weak financial systems and processes, corruption, unsustainable funding models, and a shortage of critical leadership and technical skills. These are just some of the most cited internal organizational challenges that confront civil society and its leadership in Africa.

In addition to these internal structural and systemic challenges, civil society, in general, and leaders of civil society organizations, in particular, are also confronted by existential challenges, especially as they pertain to the environment in which they operate. At a macro level, Africa is a region that has many problems. Africa is home to the most impoverished countries in the world. Of the 47 least developed countries as classified by the United Nations, 33 are in Africa—and of the 50 poorest countries, 35 are on the continent, according to the *UN Development Report* (2018). Africa is also the only region in the 2018 World Economic Forum's *Global Competitiveness Report* that has one country out of 140 in the top 50 countries doing well in terms of their productivity. In addition, only nine African countries are in the top 100, with Mauritius ranking 49th and South Africa ranking 67th respectively (Schwab, 2018). And according to the World Bank's *Doing Business Report* that measures areas such as starting a business, operating in a secure environment, dealing with day-to-day operations, accessing finance, and finding a location, sub-Saharan Africa has the widest variations in performance rankings, with only two countries in the top 50 out of 190 economies: Mauritius at 25th and Rwanda at 41st (World Bank, 2018).

On the political front, only three African countries are ranked in the top 50 least corrupt out of 176 by Transparency International (2016). These are Botswana (35th), Carpe Verde (38th), and Mauritius (50th). And the Freedom House's *Freedom in the World Report* shows that only

18% of the 1.2 billion people in sub-Saharan Africa are free. The rest are either partly free (43%) or not free (39%), compared to Europe's 618.1 million inhabitants of whom the majority are free (86% free and only 2% are not free) (Freedom House, 2018). We may debate the contextual relevance of these statistics, but in principle, inhabitants of Africa feel that their governments have curtailed their freedoms, just as is the case in Eurasia, where 58% of the 286.7 million people are said to be not free and 42% partly free (Freedom House, 2018).

At the meso-level, looking specifically at civil society, the *2018 State of Civil Society Report* issued annually by CIVICUS, monitoring the crackdown of freedoms across the world, states that 109 countries globally have either closed, repressed, or obstructed civic space. The report notes that attacks have mainly been on civic freedoms, especially the rights of association, assembly, and expression. Only 4% of countries have an open civic space, compared to 37% who have obstructed, 20% who have closed, 17% who have repressed, and 14% who have narrowed the civic space (CIVICUS, 2018). Introducing the report, CIVICUS's former Secretary General summed up this eloquently:

> Something else is becoming clear. Reclaiming the basic rights we are losing in the clampdown on civic space, working out what our democratic rights look like in a digital world, responding to democratic deficiencies exposed by rising tides of populism and recasting our intergovernmental institutions as well as wellsprings of substantive democracy; these challenges are not so much about reviving our weakening democracies, as about reimagining democracy for a radically different world. (CIVICUS, 2018, p. 3)

Undoubtedly, civil society faces even more other pressing issues, such as diminishing funding, weak capacity, negative public image, and very weak infrastructure, among others. The USAID Sustainability Index for sub-Saharan Africa, which measures seven dimensions (financial viability,

legal environment, organizational capacity, advocacy, service provision, infrastructure, and public image) and ascertains where civil society's sustainability is enhanced, evolving, or impeded shows every year that generally groups sit somewhere between evolving and impeded sustainability.

This is not unique to Africa, but there are peculiarities within the African context that make this study interesting. This is by no means a treatise on the leadership styles of different civil society leaders, but rather insights into how the sector has been led over the years as well as trends that are consistent with the performance of various types of organizations. In researching for this article, I was often tempted to just write my biography as a recent leader of various organizations— regional and pan-African. I recently led one organization and positioned it as a premier policy organization in southern Africa with strong leadership functions and intellectual contributions within the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) processes. I also introduced innovations in areas of sustainability and the future of work through automation, among others. I therefore draw at times from my experiences in this paper in identifying key considerations in the 21st century to lead an organization in Africa. The paper also draws from academic literature from across the world, in general, and on African organizations, in particular, to help explain some of the author's observations working across Africa with different civil society leaders and the writer's practical experiences leading and managing organizations in Africa, particularly during daunting and, at times, exciting moments. Because of the centrality of the writer's position in this discussion, the reality is that the article will draw a lot from personal insights and experiences.

The peculiar circumstances in Africa make this an interesting topic to explore. Not only is Africa struggling with economic and social development challenges, its inhabitants, including citizens' formations such as social movements, civil society, faith-based organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector institutions, among others, are constantly

challenged to adapt to new contexts and problems such as climate change, new forms of social exclusion, increased acts of terror, economic stagnation, corruption, and the fourth industrial age, among many others. Competition for resources globally has also increased and new forms of conflict have arisen as a result. Additionally, civil society is not homogenous. Ndegwa (1996), for example, in his study of civil society in Kenya and its role in building democracy, outlines some of the issues that make one organization different from the next, even in a similar situation and environment.

More often, personal politics and beliefs permeate the actions of the organization. Ndegwa's (1996) study of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya showed how the organization often challenged the state and how this challenge was spearheaded by its leader—the late Wangari Maathai (p. 4). In contrast, Ndegwa also shows how the Undugu Society of Kenya did not openly challenge the government, even though it was affected by the NGO legislation that was being introduced. His explanation is that Undungu was institutionalized to an extent that its leaders mitigated radical political action, while on the other hand the Green Belt Movement was not hindered by institutionalization as it operated as a movement. Leaders thus play very important roles in determining the effectiveness of an organization especially the often-contested and hostile relationship between states in Africa and civil society organizations. Duta (2008) argues that executive directors are generally assumed to be the principal agent of success or failure in their organizations (p. 40).

In addition to the role played by executive directors, or the board of an organization, there is the environment that is created by the state, which can either contribute to its success or failure. Still there is evidence that the state continues to limit the operations of civil society in Africa by instituting laws and policies that constrain the activities of civil society (Moyo, 2010). There are

other limiting factors as well, such as diminishing donor funds to Africa, in general, and to civil society, in particular, the ever-changing political and economic contexts that shift the targets of activism by civil society more often than in the past, as well as the need to adapt to the new demands of the new context.

The world generally has become unsafe for most vulnerable people, and for Africans in particular, given Africa's position in international affairs but also due to its ever-increasing population. Civil society in Africa is not spared and its leaders have to constantly navigate this dangerous terrain in order for the sector to continually contribute to democratic consolidation, sustainable solutions, and holding governments and global players accountable. These factors and others, that include the increased use of technology and the fluid nature of the world's problems, have challenged traditional forms of management and leadership. How leaders respond to these changes is an important area to explore, for they will determine success or failure.

Too often leaders faced with these changing contexts tend to rely on outdated strategies and processes meant to lead a traditional organization. In cases of uncertainty, most leaders mimic others, a process that Dimaggio and Powell (1991) have called mimetic isomorphism (p. 67). Very few leaders pivot to the new context and its demands. Those that have made the shift are still very much in the nascent stages of their organizational design and as such do not yet have definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of their new organizational approaches. Despite the early stages of adapting to the new world, there are lessons already to learn from these organizations and their leaders.

As stated earlier, the success of an organization is heavily influenced by the executive director or its chief executive officer, as the case may be. But I contend that it all starts with recruitment. How an executive director or chief executive officer is recruited often has

implications for their success or failure of an organization. Of course there are other contributing factors, but for this article I want to focus on the concepts of succession and transition management.

Succession Planning and Transition Management

There have been several studies over the last 15 to 20 years on succession planning and management in the nonprofit sector, particularly in the United States of America (US) where a number of baby boomers who held leadership positions in the sector started retiring. Jackson (2017) studied the succession of senior executive leadership in predominantly white doctoral universities in the state of Georgia, while Duta (2008) researched succession planning using a discourse analysis of governance dialectics in two nonprofit organizations in the US. These studies generally demonstrate that "leadership succession in non-profits is a convoluted process enacted discursively by conflicting or collaborating key organisational actors huddled around various leadership nuclei" (Duta, 2008, p. iii). Conway (2018) conducted a study of succession planning barriers in a nonprofit organization in Kenya and showed that they manage their succession properly to achieve their goals and those that don't struggle to meet their objectives and goals. These studies also show that a succession plan is likely to be successful if there is a good relationship between the executive director or chief executive officer and the board, especially its chairperson. The studies also demonstrate the importance of embedding the succession plan in the organization's strategy. Conway (2018), for example, argues that "leadership transitions without succession planning can create a gap in the essential role of organisational leadership" (p. 1).

So what does this all mean for a leader in the 21st century? There are two moments of succession and transition management that any leader has to deal with. The first relates to the period of recruitment for the incoming leader. Here the board of directors would have dealt with

the succession question, but the new leader has to manage the transition from the previous leader to himself or herself. The success of the transition in this case mostly depends on many factors, but an important one is how the new leader is recruited. The other factor is whether the outgoing leader is a founder or founding director of the organization or was recruited for the position. The third factor usually revolves around staff relations and their links with the outgoing director or with the board. And the role of the board, in particular the chairperson, determines a number of successes or failures. Below I look at what my experiences with each of these factors means for effective leadership today of a civil society organization.

Recruitment Approach Matters

Different organizations choose different approaches in managing succession and recruiting a director to be the leader. The choice is usually between an internal candidate or an outsider. Generally, an internal candidate is preferred across the world, especially in developed countries and in organizations with a large staff. Additionally, an internal candidate is ideal in situations where the organization's future plans or strategy are not changing a lot. In Africa, in general, and among African civil society organizations, in particular, there are very few with a diverse pool of strong candidates from which to choose a successor. Not only are there limited numbers of strong leaders across the sector, most civil society organizations are small, with limited budgets and fewer staff to choose from. Further, employees in civil society change jobs a lot in search of better pay or for career growth (Adams, 1998, 2002). Boards are therefore forced to look outside as well when recruiting directors or chief executives. This has its own advantages and limitations. In the case of African organizations, leaders recruited from outside normally face resistance and are

usually rejected by the system. Very few succeed. In most cases those that succeed from outside do so under circumstances of massive clean-up, restructuring, or change of direction.

The environment under which one is recruited also matters a lot. For example, if the succession is forced on an organization due to death, resignation, termination of contract, or relocation among others, it is forced to act in haste or in an unplanned way simply because most would not have predicted this. Such an environment may make it very hard for a smooth and successful transition. This is the case with most African civil society organizations. They are caught unprepared and as a result they are forced to adopt an interim strategy where an internal person is recruited in an acting position until a permanent individual is found. And when a substantive director is recruited, relations between the new director and internal staff are strained, making succession very difficult.

In a study of leadership succession in two American nonprofit organizations, Duta (2008) outlined that research has shown that high performance organizations tend to recruit successors from outside. One of the reasons for this is that outsiders are usually more willing to accept positions in high-performing organizations than internal candidates (p. 52). Recruiting from outside can also infuse new ideas, lead organizational change, and reduce internal conflict over the vacant post (Jackson, 2017, p. 60). In contrast, recruiting from within guarantees continuity and stability (Conway, 2018, p. 4). Duta's case studies illustrate these points. In the first case, a director is recruited after she served as treasurer of the board. She then identifies a board chairperson that she invites into the organization and, after three years, the director requests to step down. She is however persuaded to stay by the chairperson for a year. After a year she reminds the chairperson of the board that she still wants to resign. She is offered a sabbatical and upon her return after ten months, she resigns and gives two weeks' notice. She leaves to join another organization, but she

is eventually asked to be the chairperson of her previous organization. The new director takes over and blames the previous director for the problems, except that the previous director is now chair of the board. This is a classic example of what happens in most African civil society organizations. A limited number of people rotate in boards and serve as executive directors of very few organizations. This makes it hard for outside recruits to come in and effect any changes that may be needed for the organization to succeed.

In the second case study by Duta (2008), a director is brought from outside to help an organization that is in financial crisis because of his fundraising capabilities. He comes in and raises a lot of money, but midway his health deteriorates and he fails to raise as much money as he did in previous years. Tensions between the director and the board chair flair up as a result, and the board decides to look for a new director. The director is asked to go on paid vacation and upon return, he decides to retire. I personally can relate to this situation, and from my experience it is much easier for a person recruited from outside to be let go if the situation is no longer tenable than it is for a founding director or an internal candidate. These two cases illustrate different dynamics in recruiting a director from within and from outside as well as the role that the board can play, positively or negatively. Obviously each situation is different and must be treated as such.

In my experience and based on the literature, there are factors that each leader must consider in order to be successful in managing the transition period between appointment and settling in. I have found that it is easier to manage a transition when the new leader is someone who is familiar with the organization, its systems, people, and stakeholders but is not an employee at the time of recruitment. There are very few such cases, but they are worth exploring. I will use my recruitment to illustrate the point. I was recruited to join an organization in 2013 through a

seemingly well-planned process that involved the board chairperson and the outgoing director headhunting candidates for the position. This form of recruitment is supported by a lot of literature that shows that top leadership recruitments, especially at the level of the executive director, are usually managed by the board, in particular the chairperson and supported by the incumbent or outgoing executive director. A study by Balsmeier and others (2011) on the influence of top management corporate networks on CEO succession details the role that is played actively by board members in identifying the right candidate for a top position. There is also literature that focuses on headhunting and matchmaking in the labor market (Raakesh, 2004; Kenny, 1978). This can be done directly by the board or through a search firm. Lim and Chan (2001) argue that as the business environment has become complex, the job of the executive has also become more intractable and demanding. As a result they argue that individual organizations may not have the expertise and time to conduct their own searches effectively. Executive search firms are therefore utilized to handle the increasingly sophisticated function (p. 214).

Headhunting made it easier for me to understand what was required of the new director before undergoing an assessment. Headhunting allows for a discussion with the board or consultants on the requirements of the job before a formal process starts. Such a discussion is not usually the case in an open application process. Secondly headhunting helps if the prospective employee has some prior knowledge of the organization. This was the case with me. I was very familiar with the organization. I had previous relations with my potential employer, which made decision-making slightly easier. Like all transitions, there were several challenges that the outgoing executive director and I had to work on. These included matters related to audits, handover processes, and the existence of two centers of power created by the fact that there were, at that point, two directors. In hindsight, I now think that it is very dangerous to have the outgoing

and incoming director share the same office for a long period. In my view, there is a need for a handover process, but it shouldn't last longer than a month. In my case, it took close to a year, which led to much conflict and tension in relation to decisions I had to make for the future of the organization. Some of these decisions were clearly seen as undoing what the outgoing director had done.

The transition happened but it was a difficult one. What were the factors that led to success? The first was that, unlike other executives who, when brought from outside the organization, face the challenge of being rejected by the system like an organ transplant, I was, to some extent, spared because of my prior relationship with the organization. In its early years, I was a consultant and drafted some research papers on civil society and pan-African institutions for the organization. I was also on secondment for a period of nine months in 2009. During that period, I worked on many programs including book on civil society regulation in Africa. Lastly I had been hosted by the organization and had rented office space for about two years before I became director. These factors made the on-boarding process manageable, as I was already familiar with the people, systems, and partners of the organization. It is therefore important for top leadership recruiters to pay attention to the above factors that might make on-boarding manageable. While situations may differ, in today's fluid world, I think that recruiting a leader of a civil society organization in Africa must balance the need to bring in fresh ideas, innovation, and creativity with institutional memory. It seems to me that only an external candidate with knowledge of an organization fits this category and that more often leaders will emerge from this group.

The Importance of the First 90 Days

The above section discussed reasons why it is important to choose a recruitment approach that meets the needs of an organization and the context under which succession is occurring. But once in the organization, the first three months are very crucial. In order to fully grasp the context and understand the strategic thrust of the organization, it is important for the new leader to consult all staff and stakeholders to define its direction and objectives and get to know the terrain. Upon taking over the organization, I held conversations with all relevant stakeholders around the diagnosis of problems, expectations, success indicators, resources, and development needs, where necessary. Watkins (2003) provides a very useful framework for leaders in their first 90 days: STARS, which asks questions around whether the organization one is taking over is a start-up (S), needs turning around (T), needs acceleration (A), realignment (R), or sustaining success (S). I reviewed this framework over and over before assuming my position.

When I joined the organization, I had compiled questions that I felt needed clarification. Even though there were many dimensions to the responses in the conversations with the board, staff, and some partners, I found that the organization needed realignment. The areas that needed attention included financial management, fundraising, staff morale, and the consolidation of successful initiatives. There were, of course, some segments of the organization that needed to be treated as a start-up, others needed turning around, while still others needed acceleration and maintenance of their success.

One of the key considerations for incoming leaders of civil society organization is to invest in canvasing views about the organization as well as understanding different stakeholders' interests. Failure to do so leads to potential tensions between the executive director and the staff, board, and stakeholders. But more importantly, these conversations and the application of the

STARS framework can help in identifying cultural interpreters in an organization as well as build a foundation for the changes that the new leader wants to make. Having applied this method, I am of the view that leaders who don't invest time in consulting all stakeholders and giving them a voice are likely to fail.

As an in-coming executive director, one is in a good position and is encouraged to undertake these consultations. I joined in the middle of the organization's strategy at the time. This allowed me to implement the remainder of the strategy, but also to use that period to start developing a new one and to manage the transition in ways that blended the new and the old. The development of a new strategy, while the remaining elements of the old one are being implemented, is a good time to attend to any problems that the organization might have. The leader can use this opportunity to indicate her or his vision and things that s/he wants to achieve during her or his term. The new leader's direction needs to be seen during the last years of the old strategy and the main areas of focus need to be built into the new strategy very forcefully from day one. These could include such issues as investing in people, strengthening systems and making them compatible with new technologies, repositioning the organization, and sustainability, among others.

In my case, when I joined my last organization, I immediately responded to staff issues that had the potential to generate low morale and low levels of productivity. The organization quickly introduced medical aid to all staff, undertook salary market analysis, and adjusted staff salaries that were below the market. In addition, the organization introduced group life insurance coverage and recruited a wellness company to assess overall organizational health and provide various wellness services to staff. The organization also introduced flexible working hours. These interventions had a positive effect on staff morale and productivity, but they also created an

environment where staff felt valued. Any leader taking over an organization needs to identify those immediate interventions that can act as foundations for building trust and a sense of value for staff. The importance of identifying these interventions is that they become pillars of the new leader's strategy.

It is therefore important for a leader to consider how they are recruited, as this has implications for their ability to manage an organization. It is also important to know what to do upon taking over an organization, who to talk to and on what issues. All this entails working very closely with the outgoing director, the board, staff, and stakeholders. It also involves very delicate negotiations of relations and careful handling of the space between the outgoing and incoming leader. I will come back to managing transitions, but I want to continue with what the new leader needs to do upon settling in as s/he begins to assert her or his direction. The organization's current strategy is often a way to institutionalize a new direction. A new leader can either develop a new strategy, especially in situations where s/he is recruited as one is ending, or can review the existing strategy and introduce new areas that s/he wants to focus on.

Developing an Organizational Strategy

The strategy is a place where a leader focuses her or his attention. In developing a strategy, a new leader needs to anchor it to her or his passions. No doubt a strategy is a product of many actors, including the board, staff, and other relevant stakeholders, but for it to be executed successfully, the new leader needs to anchor it to her or his strengths and interests, which is what most successful organizations do. Secondly, the new leader must focus on a few specific areas in order to achieve effective results.

When developing a new strategy, a leader needs to base its direction on insights from internal conversations with stakeholders and the board and in particular the leader's convictions. In my case, the findings from conversations with staff, the board, and partners, as well as having been privy to some evaluations and assessments (both internal and external), convinced me that the organization was at a point where it needed aggressive action in order to consolidate its gains and, at the same time, position it for the future, both in the region and globally. The strategy was therefore crafted to address the key issues that had come up in conversations: technology, sustainability, people, and policy advocacy.

My team and I used the strategy development process to look forward, reason backward, and to make big bets. It was also a time for building new platforms and ecosystems that would leverage our strengths and power. Strategy development is both a bottom up process and a top down approach. It is for this reason that the new leader has to work with staff to develop internal reviews of existing initiatives and give indications of areas on which they want the organization to focus. Experts are also brought in during this period to assist with the process and consultations with stakeholders are held.

There are key considerations that any leader needs to pay attention to when developing a new strategy. While it is important to see the future, it is also equally of significance to know how to get there. In my experience, there was an agreement that the organization would need exceptional partners (platforms) to enable environmental (ecosystems) resources and talent, as well as highly skilled staff who are driven and adaptable to ever-changing contexts. This agreement and observation also meant that the organization needed to be always ready to adjust its plans as contexts change. For example, in 2014 due to reduced funding, the organization reduced its staff

from over 30 to 16. In making such decisions, the leader must expect resistance and fierce backlash.

In developing a strategy, careful attention should be given to the areas on which the organization will focus. Steve Jobs of Apple once said, "the reason we have succeeded is by choosing which horses to ride very carefully." This might require some very drastic measures, such as restructuring, realignment, as well as downsizing, both in terms of human resources and programmatic scope. There is a temptation in most African organizations to focus on areas where donors are ample, which keep changing as per donors' strategies. In developing a strategy, the new leader must be clear that the areas chosen are relevant, and as such their introduction might lead to changing the structure, for example, or replacing old staff with new talent.

Any strategy requires exceptional skills and further training staff. These capabilities usually include talent, technology, facilities, partnerships, and investments of different kinds. This period is also an opportunity to reevaluate partners' capabilities and objectives so that they are still in line with the organization's new strategy. In my case it was very clear that the new strategy required new ways of working and I needed to harness the power of technology, bring in experts on different areas, as well as invest in partners' capabilities. As a result, the strategy had a particular focus on investing in people. An environment was created for flexible working times and the new office was redesigned to be user- and family-friendly. There was investment in automation, digital platforms, and increased online collaboration as well. Staff were exposed to new trends and resources, making innovations such as Fluux Trends and Ernest and Young, among others. As a result, we pivoted to the future of work, taking advantage of the technologies introduced by the 4th industrial revolution. We worked virtually, automated our processes from procurements to payments, and used the platform economy in dealing with issues of service provision.

Strategy development for a new leader is also about making a big bet for the future. Making a bet is one of the most difficult tasks in the strategy development process for a leader. Most organizations bet on technologies and hope to make the best of them. In my case, I bet on technologies and fully automated the organization. Technology is now at the center of the future of our work, sustainability, and efficiency, among others. The other area that leaders bet on is the changing landscape. Andy Grove once said, "There is at least one point in the history of any company when you have to change dramatically to rise to the rise next level of performance. Miss that moment and you begin to decline." A leader developing a strategy faces this question. I was clear that I wanted the organization to pivot to the future of work but also use the 4th industrial revolution to harness some of its benefits in the ways we worked, communicated, and mobilized resources. A leader in the 21st century needs to be adaptive and manage change, including knowing when it's time to leave. In the next section, I deal with what a leader needs to do when faced with the expiration of her or his contract or when a situation has arisen that forces them to leave.

How One Leaves Matters

The last area I want to discuss in this paper relates to processes that need to be managed when one is transitioning out of an organization. The extent to which the outgoing leader is involved in her or his own succession is very important. Conway (2018) discusses several forms of succession planning, including planning for emergencies and strategic succession. Emergency succession planning is to manage situations such as the death of a leader or a sudden resignation, among others (Wright, 2012). Such a plan involves keeping a record of possible candidates for leadership who can take over in such emergencies. In most cases these are internal candidates who, over time, would have been developed, trained, and prepared for eventual leadership. An emergency plan

also includes easy access to organizational documents and key personnel as well as a communication strategy. Research has shown that most nonprofits do not possess an emergency plan. In a study of the executive directors of 140 nonprofits in the US, most did not have an emergency plan (Froelich, McKee, & Rathge, 2011).

Strategic succession planning, on the other hand, involves the development of a plan that is aligned with the overall strategy of the organization, including linking succession with development employee initiatives and wellness programs, upskilling, and training. Strategic succession planning prepares leaders for roles in the days ahead and develops them to be able to step into leadership positions when the time arrives. This includes taking leadership courses, exposure to leadership functions, role playing, and coaching.

There are very few civil society organizations in Africa whose strategies include succession planning, and of those organizations that include succession planning as part of their strategy, few implement it effectively. There are many factors that come into play, such as lack of leadership buy in, fear of dealing head-on with succession, especially for founding directors, lack of resources to implement the various elements of the plan, and lack of guarantees that the people being prepared will stay long enough to take over when the director leaves. More often, second-tier leaders end up leaving for higher positions in other organizations before the director decides to leave. There are very few leaders in the civil society sector who are guided by term limits. More often leaders leave only when they are asked by their boards, either because they have become ineffective or there is a total break-down in their relationship. Either way, preparing for succession is an important component of any leader. Not only should a leader include succession planning as part of strategy development and annual operational plans, but the leader needs to constantly

engage the board on timelines, process, and key decisions that need to be made in implementing the full gamut of activities related to succession.

Secondly the leader needs to engage staff, especially senior staff, on various elements of the plan. The leader also needs to be transparent with other important stakeholders, such as donors, regarding the different elements of the succession plan. Research suggests that planning for succession is key to maintaining the stability of organizational leadership, and it increases the potential for an orderly transition (Conway, 2018, p. 57). This may be true in most cases, but not in all. Success depends on many factors, such as the relationship between the board and the director, the role played by the director in recruiting his or her successor, staff relations, and organizational culture. In my case, succession planning was included in the organizational strategy and activities related to succession were implemented as part of annual plans. These included leadership mentoring and coaching for senior leaders, exposure to other organizations, training, and role playing. All these were included as part of a strategic pillar on investing in people and a people's plan was developed and monitored by the human resources department.

The existence of a succession plan is not enough. There is a need for those managing the succession to also be able to manage interests. For example, even though in my case there was a plan with timelines and clearly defined roles, in hindsight I think there are areas I took for granted. For example, I thought it was very responsible of me to give the board one-year's notice of my intentions to resign my position, after five years at the helm of the organization. I was of the view that a longer period would facilitate the recruitment and on-boarding of the new director. I realized later that giving such a long notice provided room for new centers of power in the organization. Some senior leaders used the period to cultivate new relations with the board and began undermining the existing management structures. As a result, tensions emerged between those

board members who were engaging directly with some calculating senior staff members and the outgoing director. The outcome was that the board aborted the recruitment of the successor and started a new process, resulting in the director stepping down before the board could appoint a successor. The board thus appointed an interim, internal candidate for four months while looking for a replacement. The replacement wound up being the very same candidate who was favored in the initial recruitment process led by the outgoing director with the supervision of the board.

What are the key lessons here? The first is that the board and the outgoing director need to fully commit to the process of managing the transition. The existence of a succession plan is not adequate on its own. Secondly, the board must fully lead and manage the process of the recruitment of the director, and where the outgoing director is involved, it must be to provide administrative support. During this time, relations between the board and the outgoing director must be prioritized. If not managed, the result is what happened in my case, which was one of careful planning with a bad result. It is therefore important for leaders to understand that the way in which they are recruited plays a huge role in how they are accepted, or not, by the organization. Secondly, managing one's succession and transition requires more than careful planning and strategic succession planning. It requires emotional intelligence, people skills, and good relational and negotiating skills.

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5

Moving from a Grassroots Organization Driven by Energy and Passion to a Formal Nonprofit Structure: Problems and Reflections
Jimmy Wilford

Abstract

This paper adopts the qualitative research paradigm to assess how the Students and Youth Working on Reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) has grown from being a nonprofit grassroots organization driven by passion and energy, to a formal nonprofit organization in Zimbabwe. It reflects on problems associated with the shift from a grassroots organization to a formal nonprofit structure. Using Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), the paper highlights how nonprofit organizations rely on a variety of activities and resources to support their mission-related work (Froelich, 1999). The paper argues that while a nascent grassroots-driven agenda requires support from various stakeholders, such aid comes with its own challenges and opportunities. The paper traces the birth of SAYWHAT and the journey the organization has travelled so far with special focus on how it sought to sustain passion and energy through collaborations and how it responded to the environment and embarked on a formalization process to ensure the realization of its founding objectives. The paper notes SAYWHAT's impact on students in Zimbabwe and beyond. It advocates for a contextual-based formalization process that avoids frustrating grassroots' passion and energy with too much bureaucracy. It notes that while a formal structure has great potential to attract funding, there is a need to put in place systems that avoid exclusion or disempowerment of grassroots organizations. The paper suggests a formulation of mechanisms to effectively handle potential conflicts that might arise between the new structure and the existing

one. It is aware of the costs associated with a formalized structure, considering the demands of highly skilled staff members and other administrative requirements.

Introduction

This descriptive qualitative case study reflects the problems associated with moving from a grassroots organization driven by energy and passion to a formal nonprofit structure. Nonprofit organizations rely on a variety of activities and resources to support their mission-related work (Froelich, 1999). Inevitably, a nascent grassroots-driven agenda requires support from various stakeholders, which undoubtedly comes with its own challenges and opportunities. This paper reflects on a student-based and -serving grassroots-driven organization in Zimbabwe, how it was borne out of grassroots passion and energy, how it sought to sustain passion and energy through collaborations, and how it responded to the environment and embarked on a formalization process to ensure the realization of its founding objectives.

In order to offer closer and concise reflections, this paper examines the Students and Youth Working on Reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) using resource dependency theory (RDT) (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). RDT will be used to highlight the journey of SAYWHAT from being a grassroots organization driven by passion and energy to a formal nonprofit organization in Zimbabwe. In particular, the paper uses the theory to reflect on: (a) resource mobilization, (b) an interorganizational exchange of resources, and (c) inherent power differentials. With the aid of RDT, the paper explores, firstly, how grassroots energy managed to obtain financial resources needed for the organization to operate; secondly, how the movement utilized already-existing organizations and managed inherent power dynamics; and lastly, how the movement appointed the board in response to the environment as part of coming up with a formal structure. While

contributing a different perspective to a nonprofit's transition from being grassroots-driven to a formal structure, this paper gives valuable insights into the other side of the impact of the external environment on grassroots-driven organizations.

In order to offer a closer look at the three aspects mentioned above in connection to grassroots-driven organizations and the external environment, this paper will start by critically looking at resource dependency theory, which is followed by a literature review examining what scholars are saying about how grassroots organizations respond to the environment. The paper equally presents the evolvement of SAYWHAT in fundraising and hosting by the Community Working Group on Health (CWGH). This is followed by the registration of SAYWHAT as a trust and subsequent appointment of its board of trustees.

Sadly, some funding partners aren't concerned with strengthening a CBO that already has strong administration systems. Actually, the funding partners uses international frameworks to evaluate the work of the CBO and uses the CBO remuneration framework resulting in some CBOs failing to survive after transitioning. The paper concludes that while SAYWHAT's transition from a grassroots organization driven by passion and energy was not flawless, it is stronger and is likely to impact more students beyond Zimbabwe's borders now. Therefore, it's imperative to advocate for a contextual-based formalization process that avoids frustrating grassroots' passion and energy with too much bureaucracy. While a formal structure comes with the great potential of attracting funding, there is a need to come up with systems that avoid the exclusion or disempowerment of grassroots organizations. Mechanisms should be put in place to effectively handle potential conflicts that might arise between the new structure and the existing one. Lastly, a formalized structure is very expensive to maintain, given the demands of the highly skilled staff members and other administrative requirements.

Resource Dependency Theory

Resource Dependence Theory seeks to explain organizational and interorganizational behavior in terms of critical resources, which an organization must have in order to survive and function (Johnson, 1995). The theory perfectly strengthens reflections on the pressure that the external environment puts on grassroots-driven organizations. The theory posits that an organization responds to and becomes dependent on those groups or entities in its environment that control resources that are both critical to its operations and over which it has limited control. An organization leader uses various strategies in attempting to alleviate the challenges and limitations that are brought by the external environment. Accordingly, RDT focuses on the following: (a) resources, (b) the interorganizational flow or exchange of resources, and (c) power differentials (Johnson, 1995). Power differentials are caused by inherent unequal resource exchanges within cooperating organizations. It is argued that organizations possessing necessary resources are in a power position, whereas those depending on others are vulnerable to control (Maletesta & Smith, 2014).

The notion of power differences is explained by Emerson (1962) using social exchange theory. Emerson explained that according to resource dependency theory, power, and resource-dependence are inversely related. Thus, organization A's power over organization B is equal to organization B's dependence on organization A's resources (Malatesta & Smith, 2014). Furthermore, Emerson contends that organization A is dependent on organization B to the extent that B controls some resource or performance valued by A, and to the extent that A cannot obtain this resource or behavior from alternative persons. Such dependency is true in the case of SAYWHAT's lived realities on two distinct fronts: when it was housed under CWGH and

secondly when getting into agreements with funding partners for the purposes of program interventions. The power differences to a large extent played a critical role in the growth of the organization from its founding stages.

As was argued by Blau (1964), situations of asymmetric dependence and power are very unstable and can result in the less powerful actor pursuing activities that seek to minimize the effects of power differentials. In the same vein, SAYWHAT would at times be forced to abandon some planned work that did not resonate with donors, or tweak the framing of its intended work to suit available resources. According to Froelich (1999), organizations are constrained by their environment as a consequence of their resource needs. She further argued that the importance and amount of resources needed determine organizational dependence. On the other hand, organizations are supposed to modify the locus of their dependence (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) even though it's not always easy for a grassroots-driven initiative to do so. Furthermore, Froelich (1999) stated that an organization "must identify and appropriately respond to the criteria for continued resource acquisition from each key provider" (p. 248). Resultantly, SAYWHAT would not solicit or receive money from any donors who did not support health, in general, or reproductive health, in particular. In their early days, new organizations might be tempted to take any money that comes their way, including that for directly mobilizing youth to participate in general national elections. SAYWHAT made a conscious collective decision not to receive such money and to focus on direct health issues. SAYWHAT epitomizes the experiences of grassroots-driven organizations' untold lived realities as they seek to survive and, at the same time, ensure the realization of their intended objectives.

Literature Review

Payton and Moody (2008) argued that philanthropy will always exist because of two lived realities about the human condition: that is, "things often go wrong and things could always be better" (p. 63). In order for things to be better, some actions will have to be taken. In most cases philanthropy is done through nonprofits. It is therefore critical to explain whether nonprofits and voluntary activities are driven primarily by demand or by supply (Frumkin, 2005). Key questions always emerge as to what individuals are doing to address the challenges of the human condition. Notwithstanding some exceptions, there is a deep moral conviction that each society must accept some responsibility for their own well-being (Payton & Moody, 2008). The assumption of the responsibilities has to be understood, whether it's a response to unmet demands or whether it is an important supply function that creates its own demand (Frumkin, 2005). Thus, nonprofits exist because they are able to meet important social needs. Frumkin (2005) posited that many people starting nonprofit organizations are young, ambitious, and trained in business and policy schools. This was, however, not true for SAYWHAT, as the founders had no any other technical training except activism skills. It can be argued that the absence of such skills delayed the growth of the institution, which can be explained by the fact that "programmatic outcomes of nonprofit and voluntary action are increasingly being measured and evaluated using metrics borrowed from the business and public sectors" (Frumkin, 2005, p. 23). In response to the increased levels of nonprofit entrepreneurship, there has been a rise of nonprofit management as a field of study and practice (Frumkin, 2005).

Background of SAYWHAT

SAYWHAT is membership-based and is now registered under the Private Voluntary Organisation Act under Zimbabwe law. The organization was founded in December 2003 as a platform where students in tertiary institutions could discuss their sexual and reproductive health challenges. SAYWHAT's membership is drawn from more than 38 tertiary institutions (colleges and universities) across all provinces in Zimbabwe. SAYWHAT's overarching aim has been to foster among the students a sharp sense of personal responsibility for maintaining good sexual and reproductive health status. In the process, SAYWHAT seeks to mobilize students to participate in the promotion of global targets and goals for better sexual and reproductive health.

SAYWHAT, having being formed by students for students, with students, is coordinated by students through an elected national coordinating committee (NCC). The NCC is made up of students from different tertiary institutions across the country. Due to the desire to comply with certain tenets of governance at the request of some of its funding partners, SAYWHAT appointed individuals to provide oversight and technical support to the organization. The board is also the custodian of SAYWHAT's assets.

At a provincial level, SAYWHAT is coordinated and led by the provincial coordination committees (PCCs) from the colleges within each province. At the college level, local coordinating committees (LCC's) are responsible for institution-level planning, coordination, and the implementation of activities. Within colleges, SAYWHAT works with student support groups such as student affairs departments along with health and life skills departments.

At the national level, SAYWHAT participates in various technical working groups and forums to advance the interests of students' sexual and reproductive health and rights. SAYWHAT

now has an executive director to implement the organization's projects, coordinate stakeholder engagement, and mobilize resources as well as oversee the day-to-day administration of the organization. The administration works within the framework and priorities conceptualized by students and student support structures under the overall supervision of the advisory board.

Resource Mobilization—Fundraising

The operation of a nonprofit organization in the developing world is dependent on donor funding, SAYWHAT is no exception. According to SAYWHAT's annual reports, the organization has been 100% donor dependent since its inception, making it very relevant to look at how that was made possible by grassroots initiative. It is therefore of interest for this section to examine how SAYWHAT managed to finance its operations by looking at the techniques utilized to solicit for funding from various donors, how the scarcity or abundance of resources impacted the grassroots initiative, and at the current funding flow. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) suggest that the key to organizational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources. These resources are not easily acquired from various donors due to a number of factors and challenges. SAYWHAT was formed at a time when the socioeconomic conditions in Zimbabwe were poor. The political environment was a not conducive to prospective donors.

As was mentioned by Froelich (1999), the process of acquiring and the subsequent maintenance of adequate resources requires established organizations that interact with individuals and groups that control resources. Even though the founders of SAYWHAT had no experience in fundraising, they were, however, experienced at networking and relationship cultivation skills. It was through networking and relationship cultivation skills that SAYWHAT managed to secure

program-based funding through a low-cost and high-impact strategy. With this strategy, SAYWHAT would approach already-established like-minded organizations and invite them to reach out to students in the colleges. SAYWHAT volunteers undertake the logistics for these events at no cost to the other organization. At little to no cost for the already-established organization and at no cost for SAYWHAT, trainings and workshops could be done that benefited the students. These trainings and workshops helped to increase the visibility of SAYWHAT within the colleges, resulting in the leadership being invited for stakeholder meetings representing young people.

The founders further exploited the direct relationship that previously existed with the SAIH programs officer who used her discretion to trust the vision of the grassroots initiative. It is imperative to note that she just did not buy into the vision; she also influenced how SAYWHAT was structured in order to get support from SAIH. Once an initiative starts implementing programs on the ground, feasibility is increased, and more funding partners came. The first budget allocation to SAYWHAT from SAIH was US$ 5,000, which came through CWGH, as will be explained later.

The seed funding that came from SAIH motivated further the volunteers who had been working on the project. The motivation came mainly from fact that they were now able to do activities that were contributing to the attainment of the group's vision. The visibility that was generated by the small grant also attracted other funding partners. The first funding partner to develop interest in working with SAYWHAT appreciated the absence of capacity and came onboard to develop that. That other organization's mission was to identify and build the capacity of emerging community-based organizations (CBO). In order for SAYWHAT to be taken on-board, a capacity assessment was done, which confirmed that the organization had only passion

but no systems. The report showed that SAYWHAT had no board, no strategic plan, no employee contracts, and no operating office. Very interestingly, the capacity assessment was done in the rented boardroom of another organization. In other words, the report indicated everything about SAYWHAT was emerging.

The capacity-building processes resulted in SAYWHAT being able to attract more supporting partners. Since 2009, SAYWHAT has been receiving financial support from various partners, including UN agents, foundations, embassies, and bilateral development agencies. In some cases, SAYWHAT has been an implementing partner of other local and international nongovernmental organizations. The issue of capacity, accountability, and governance structures would pop up more often during what they refer to as a pre-award capacity assessment, which means that SAYWHAT's capacity was measured using external templates to judge its qualification to receive grants.

Interorganizational Dependency

The growth of SAYWHAT is associated with a number of defining, complementary moments. One such example was the decision to be hosted by the Community Working Group on Health. It is understandable that an organization founded on passion and zeal by technically inexperienced young people would not pass a rigorous systems and frameworks test, even that of the most lenient donors. This section examines the various organizations that SAYWHAT depended on during its formative years. Guided by resource-dependency theory, this section reviews the nature of these relationships and how they came about.

Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) state that choices and actions are informed by the situations in which organizations are located as well as the pressures and constraints that emanate from those situations. SAYWHAT found itself in need of financial support from SAIH but did not have the capacity yet to manage the funds, let alone a bank account. The Norwegian Students and Academics International Assistance Fund had a funding agreement with the Community Working Group on Health, and they were warming up to SAYWHAT's case for funding. In the continued conversations, SAIH proposed that SAYWHAT work with CWGH in order to receive financial support. Both SAYWHAT and CWGH had limited options. This was a marriage that was influenced by their eternal environment, this time by their funding partner.

The decision to have SAYWHAT hosted by CWGH benefited the nascent organization through CWGH's already-established systems. SAYWHAT benefited from the maturity of CWGH in terms of their systems and community work experience. This relationship needs to be understood against the provided background, which later faced challenges, as the mentorship process was not clearly defined. What happened between CWGH and SAYWHAT resonates with the resource dependency theory critique by Maletesta and Smith (2014) that "the ties that bind organizations have important consequences for the balance of power and, ultimately, for organizational survival." This evidently manifested itself in the relationship between SAYWHAT and CWGH after five years. The relationship between the two organizations broke down irretrievably, leading to CWGH abruptly giving an ultimatum for SAYWHAT to look for an alternative working space and removing it from its network members list. Consequently, the CWGH executive director, who had become part of the inaugural SAYWHAT board, resigned. While the incident was very unfortunate and provided some keys lessons, it did not affect the

operations of SAYWHAT. It does show the inherent power asymmetries that exist between organizations, even during collaborations.

The Board Appointment Rational

Despite what the literature says about board appointments, the SAYWHAT board was appointed only to conform to the external environment, in particular to meet donor requirements. In order to understand SAYWHAT's choices and actions, in regard to board appointments, there is one must begin by focusing less on the dynamics, values, and beliefs of its leaders and more on the situations in which the organization found itself and the pressures and constraints that emanated from that (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The composition of the SAYWHAT board was heavily influenced by the situations that surrounded its grassroots, passion-driven foundation. The situation was brought about when the organization was forced by circumstances to regularize its registration status in order to fulfill donor requirements.

To confirm that the SAYWHAT board came about as a response to external pressure, one only has to look at when the organization was founded and when it was registered as a trust. The organization was founded in December 2003 and only registered as a trust in 2007. The decision to register came about to affirm the legal status of the grassroots initiative and comply with donor requirements. It is an expectation of prospective funding partners that a nonprofit organization will have a board. There was an option to make students members of the board of trustees, however that could not be done due to the fluid nature of the students. Others argued that while this organization is for students, by students, and with students, there was need to have a mature voice

to provide guidance on certain issues. In particular the students resolved to appoint an advisory board that would be registered as trustees.

The identification and nomination of the trustees did not follow any particular formula or concept; it was undertaken through consideration of people among the SAYWHAT stakeholders. It was agreed that the board was going to be gender balanced. The CWGH executive director was proposed to be on the board because they hosted SAYWHAT since its inception. The CWGH board chairperson, who was a lawyer by profession, was also approached and he accepted. He was nominated because he was a lawyer and had assisted SAYWHAT in creating its first constitution. SAYWHAT, being a student-based organization, approached the person at the Ministry of Tertiary and Higher Education who was in charge of Health and Life Skills to ensure that the ministry was represented on the board to further strengthen the standing of the organization. Linked to that, SAYWHAT started with a strong presence within the agricultural training colleges that the Ministry of Agriculture administers. The decision was also made to invite the HIV and AIDS Coordinator, also at the Ministry of Tertiary and Higher Education, to be part of the board. Two other people were also nominated from already-established organizations: one focuses on youth issues and the other, men's issues. The last board member came from the National AIDS Council, a parastatal that was established through a parliamentary act to lead the response to HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe.

After the nomination and acceptance of the board members, SAYWHAT was registered as a trust in 2007. The roles and responsibilities of the board were not very clear, as they were invited just to give advice, with students assuming responsibility for the organization. The administration would be responsible for the day-to-day operations, including fundraising through proposal writing. The absence of roles and responsibilities meant that the terms for the board members were

not very clear. Over the years, some board members have resigned, citing various reasons, and new members being assigned.

Conclusion

The decision to register SAYWHAT as a trust in 2006 was inevitably followed by the appointment of a board of trustees, in line with the provisions of the law. This was the genesis of the shift from being a grassroots-driven organization to a formal nonprofit. While this can be viewed from various perspectives, its imperative to point out that it's a necessity for nonprofits to have structures that aid good governance in order to attract funding. Complying with the governance requirements make the organization eligible for receiving much-needed donor funding. This is evident in the case of SAYWHAT, in that the grassroots initiative has managed to formalize itself and has received funding from various partners, including the Ford Foundation. Partners have more trust and faith in a formalized organization that is made up of professionals.

While moving from a grassroots, energy-driven structure to a formalized structure is crucial, more must be considered beyond donor focus. Strategic judgment has to be employed to ensure that the process does not create problems in the future. In other words, the changes might be too technical for a grassroots organization to do alone without adequate help. In the case of SAYWHAT, it did not work with technical people to guide the changes required, which led to the appointment of board members without really establishing their roles and responsibilities. In particular, the board of trustees was appointed in 2007 to facilitate the registration of the organization as a trust, but the first board operational rules were not drafted until 2010. One would wonder how have they operated without them. The reason is that the grassroots organization only

appointed this board to meet external requirements, not necessarily grasping the depth of this decision. Due to limited resources, the draft was generated internally and was not very exhaustive regarding the board's responsibilities, including tenure of office. Such technical gaps were also exposed when board members resigned, as there was no clause to guide their replacements. It is therefore imperative to provide adequate funding for such processes, as technical expertise requires a sound budget.

Some technical gaps are symptoms of the incapacity of the driving forces of the grassroots organization, which brings to fore that a formalized structure is very expensive to maintain, given the demands of highly skilled staff members. SAYWHAT, as a grassroots organization, was driven by young volunteers who lacked the required and expected technical expertise to be drivers of the organization. Over the years, this has changed and is reflected in the newly high operational costs, which are largely caused by staff salaries.

When grassroots-driven organizations see an opportunity for interorganizational dependence, there is a need to enter into a time-bound mentorship agreement that has clear progress markers. Grassroots-driven organizations and those intending to support them should avoid facilitating "marriages of convenience" that can potentially derail the intended mission. It was a good decision for SAYWHAT to be housed and mentored at CWGH, however, the decision lacked details like a timeframe and progress makers. The partners involved should ensure a well thought-out mentorship action plan. Indeed, SAYWHAT benefited immensely from the partnership, but the circumstances surrounding its conclusion were unfortunate.

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SECTION THREE

Place-Based Challenges

6

Succession Planning within an Integrated Rural Development Model in Nigeria
Kazanka Comfort

Abstract

The design and implementation of an integrated rural development approach to poverty can be stepwise, with more programs added over time as in the case of the Fantsuam Foundation, or it can be a master plan fully designed and funded from its inception. Whatever approach is employed, a common characteristic of the integrated development paradigm is the interdependence and mutually reinforcing nature of the various components of the plan (Cohen, 2005). This essay explores the major challenges of the integrated rural development approach in order to gain a better understanding of why and how the Fantsuam model has stood the test of time and also describe a succession strategy for its key officers. The Fantsuam model is comprised of services in health, education, sustainable livelihoods supported by a volunteering program, social protection, and gender awareness within the constraints of a rural economy that has been adversely affected by cycles of sectarian violence.

Introduction

The Fantsuam Foundation (FF) was founded in 1996 by a group of Nigerian professionals in the United Kingdom diaspora. These professionals were originally from the Kafanchan area. Nigeria is made up of thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Fantsuam is located in one of the northern states known as Kaduna. Each state in Nigeria is divided into administrative units

known as local governments, and FF is in Kafanchan, the headquarters of the Jama'a local government. The professionals who founded FF recognized the need to empower community members, particularly women, to find means of employment and income and meet their own development needs. FF is now working in 50 communities across seven local government areas in Kaduna state and close to 15,000 individuals benefit from Fantsuam's services every year. In 2017, the organization records showed that over 400,000 people have benefited either directly or indirectly from Fantsuam Foundation's activities. Fantsuam's mission is to eliminate poverty and disadvantage among women in Kaduna State through integrated development programs, and its vision is to be the most effective model of integrated rural development in West Africa. Fantsuam's integrated suite of programs is crucial to its effectiveness in eliminating poverty and disadvantage in its host communities. Its combined focus on sustainable livelihoods, health, education, and peace building, with an emphasis on women and older people's roles, has evolved from Fantsuam's ability to recognize and respond to the needs of its beneficiary communities.

In the Fantsuam integrated rural development strategy, the host communities' needs form the basis for policy and project designs and this strategy drives the choices FF makes. For example, it was the microfinance program that led to the development of an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) program. As the number of clients grew, paper records became inefficient. Therefore, in 1997, Fantsuam purchased an IBM 286 computer in order to maintain a database of its clients. This computer was also used to provide basic computer training, first for the female clients and later for the entire community. Within five years of its commencement, by 2002, the ICT services had grown into a regular computer training program that included a Cisco certification, a professional training program in information technology (IT) provided by Cisco.

Fantsuam's integrated strategy came under scrutiny during the visit of an international funding agency in 2006. The agency's first impression, reflecting a common practice and wisdom in the nonprofit community, was that Fantsuam has embraced too wide a field and it should consider scaling it down. Specifically, they felt that the ICT program was superfluous. The funder then paid for an international consultant to come and work with FF for two years to develop a "more focused" strategic plan. At the end of the first year, the consultant was convinced that the integrated approach was unique, logical, and relevant to FF's local contexts and should be the basis for its strategic plan.

The ICT program for women in the Fantsuam rural location received further endorsement in 2001 through an international award to Kazanka Comfort, FF's founder: the first Africa Hafkin Prize. In the words of Professor Hafkin (2001), "Kazanka Comfort demonstrated that information technology is not an unnecessary luxury for rural women in poor countries, but rather a tool to help them meet their needs. The project was not technology driven; it was woman-driven!" She noted that women's empowerment is central to the elimination of poverty and that ICTs can address poverty-related issues such as lack of access to education and health services and lack of information on agricultural production. It is significant that later, Jeffery Sachs (2018) of the Millennium Promise came to a similar conclusion that any serious attempt at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) must make women an urgent global priority within an integrated development environment. This essay describes the global and national context of the FF integrated development approach, its challenges, successes, and plans for going forward.

Integrated Rural Development

FF's programs are needed and appropriate for the population it serves. The world development indicators also reported that Nigeria's rural population has increased from 44.3 million in 1968 to 96.4 million in 2017 (WDI, 2018) and the current rural population in Nigeria is 50.48% of the total population of 197,309,077 (World Bank Group, 2018). This growing rural population is mostly subsistent farmers whose development needs also continue to grow and change.

The challenge of providing equitable access for half of the national population with meaningful and inclusive development projects has been part of the Nigerian government's planning process since 1975 (Nigeria, 1975). The minimal success of the efforts is reflected in the worsening poverty situation in the country. The world bank reported that 49.1% of Nigerians now live below the poverty line (World Bank, 2018), with most of them living in rural communities.

The increasing rural-urban poverty gap in Nigeria placed it among the low-income countries that accessed the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) support for economic and financial programs in 1999 (IMF, 2015). This poverty reduction strategy approach (PRS), started in 1999, required that participants should provide Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Annual Progress Reports (APRs) as a basis for debt reduction. Nigeria's last recorded APR was August 3, 2007.

An alternative funding mechanism to ease the poverty burden of developing economies was the introduction of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) into the management of international aid. This confidence in the probity and efficiency of NGOs to participate in funds and project management led to a major increase in the number of NGOs both locally and globally. The increase in the number of NGOs is generally associated with the end of the Cold War when there was a global interest in promoting more decentralized and democratic governance (Kamat,

2004; World Bank, 1997). By 2015, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (*OECD)* was channeling more than 20% of its aid through NGOs. The view of NGOs as agents of probity in governance and decentralization of the political power structure was particularly relevant in so-called third world countries where military dictatorships were quite common.

In Nigeria, the inclusion of NGOs in international aid management coincided with the period of military dictatorships. To circumvent the international donor's requirement for NGO inclusion in fund management, the incumbent government merely created their own NGOs that were managed by families and cronies (Smith, 2010). The absence of transparency and accountability in the newly created NGOs led to inefficient use of donor funds. By the time Fantsuam started its operations in 1996, the rural/urban poverty divide had increased significantly, and this gap informed the development of the mission of the organization: the elimination of poverty and disadvantage among women and youth through integrated development programs.

In the Millennium Declaration signed by world leaders in September 2000, the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was to "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger" within fifteen years. The declaration stipulated that there would be quantifiable evidence of the reduction of extreme poverty in its various dimensions: "income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and social exclusion, while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability" (Obinna & Taylor-Robinson, 2016). All the MDGs were interdependent, thereby providing the first global attempt at promoting an integrated approach to reducing extreme poverty.

However, if the integrated development approach is such a good idea that it has also been adopted by the United Nations, why is there a general perception that it is, for the most part, a

failure? Some studies of the integrated development model over periods of years have reported poor performances of the projects. In Robert Agunga's (2010) article, "Making Integrated Rural Development Programmes Work: A Communication Studies Strategy for Ending Poverty in Africa," he begins from the premise that most of these programs have been a dismal failure. His broad perspective may warrant such a position, but some integrated rural development programs have succeeded and much can be learned from their successes. One such program, Fantsuam, has worked well, although its successes have been accompanied by some challenges. Taking Fantsuam as a case study reveals some of the elements that enable integrated rural development programs to serve their communities well and some elements that may support Agunga's perspectives. Robert Agunga's work thus provides part of a broad conversation about the challenges of integrated rural development programs among both academics and practitioners.

In Africa, Ghana is the only West African country to rank among the top five most politically stable countries, the others are Botwana, Mauritius, Cape Verde, and Namibia (IOA, 2018). As a neighbor of Nigeria, both countries have several geographical, sociocultural, and economic similarities. Although Ghana has experienced relatively steady economic growth and a stable political environment over the years, its targets for poverty reduction from 1992 to 2013 have not been met. Instead, the poverty inequality gap seems to have worsened (Cooke, Hague, & McKay, 2016).

Reports of the outcome of the efforts by the Nigerian government to implement an integrated approach to poverty reduction has been controversial. While the government claims to have met some of the MDGs ahead of the deadline (Akosile, 2015), available data tends to contradict this claim (Ajiye, 2014; Oleribe & Taylor-Robinson, 2016). Although some governments may have failed in their implementation of the integrated rural development

programs, the role of NGOs has come under increasing scrutiny, and while the jury is still out, available evidence suggests that they may not be providing the much touted "people-driven development alternatives."

In a meta-analysis of over 3,300 peer-reviewed publications on NGOs and international development, Allison, Brass, and Robinson (2018) posit that the perception about the failure or success of NGOs rests on the idealized perception of their roles as "efficient private alternatives to government and as grassroots challengers to entrenched power structures" (p. 138). It is almost impossible for the NGOs to succeed in both endeavors. Therefore, the indictment of the stakeholders of the integrated development approach must be context-specific in terms of how much the governments understand and facilitate an enabling sociopolitical environment for the implementation of agreed programs. While there may be instances of collusion, corruption, or sidelining of critical stakeholders of the integrated approach, there are instances of a successful integrated approach, and Fantsuam presents such a case study. In their publication titled "NGOs and International Development: What Have We Learned, How Did We Learn It, and Where Should NGO Research Go Next?" Allison, Brass, and Robinson found that most of the articles were highly specialized and were focused "either on NGOs' roles in providing services or in advocacy or social mobilization—articles rarely depict NGOs doing both." Fantsuam, on the other hand, deploys advocacy and social mobilization as a deliberate strategy to enhance the sustainability of its services.

In a study of the lessons learned over 30 years of implementing integrated rural development by different donor organizations, USAID (2005) observed that "follow-on project evaluations reported unsatisfactory performance of Integrated Rural Development, IRD, efforts for the most part" (p. 2). Integrated rural development programs are usually complex, multi-

sectoral efforts with mutually reinforcing elements that require an optimal level of participation by all key stakeholders. One of the key lessons learned from the USAID study is the primacy of the participation and ownership of the project by the beneficiaries and "local institutions and community organizations often lack financial, human, and physical resources that hinder their effective participation in IRD projects" (p. 3). Other challenges recorded in the USAID report included project design and implementation, which lacked an awareness of the local power dynamics, sustainability issues such as "heavy reliance on technical assistance with little training for the local staff to effectively take over the implementation," and a "low level of community involvement and lack of sense of ownership" (pp. 4–5).

The Ethiopian rural development project funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) is regarded as one of the earliest integrated development projects of the 1960s. The project had expert inputs into its planning, development, and implementation, but it failed to deliver on its expectations (Cohen, 2005). But Cohen argues that a vigorous understanding of the dynamics of an integrated rural development approach is required in order to avoid a hasty denouncement of the entire approach. It appears to him that conclusions were drawn from generalizations rather than from in-depth case studies. He suggests that many critics of the integrated development approach may have been more interested in pushing a change of approach for the international aid community than in undertaking a vigorous and fair test of the strategy. The Fantsuam experience tends to support his thesis that "under the right conditions, appropriately designed integrated rural development projects can play an important role in bringing development to small-scale farmers and their regions" (Cohen, 2005, p. 9). Projects that are undertaken in dynamic sociopolitical situations, such as during sectarian violence, require flexibility and resilience in order to deal with immediate development challenges while preparing the

communities for life after the crisis. This was the experience of the Fantsuam Foundation when it self-transformed into a humanitarian organization in order to provide protection, food, and medicines at the height of sectarian violence and was immediately able to resume its services of inputs, schools, communal recreational and cultural activities, celebrations, and harvests, etc.

The Fantsuam Model of Integrated Rural Development

The available literature on the challenges faced by donor-funded integrated rural development all seem to agree that donor-funded projects were very much top-down in their implementation and were not sufficiently integrated into the prevailing socioeconomic realities of the beneficiary communities. Sometimes excessive resources were provided without the commensurate building of the internal capacity of the recipients for its management. In some cases, cultural factors that could militate against the project were poorly understood and therefore not accommodated.

A common assumption about the integrated rural development model is that it is the same as agricultural development. While it is true that most inhabitants of rural communities are farmers engaged in subsistence farming, it is important to appreciate that challenges of rural existence include inadequate or non-existent health facilities, high illiteracy, poor roads, malnutrition, and inadequate housing, etc. Therefore, integrated rural development, while supporting improved agricultural methods, must also focus on other non-agricultural indices of development: rural road construction, family planning, children's nutrition, public health, community markets, and recreational activities, etc. It is this combination of agricultural and non-agricultural activities that makes for integrated rural development. A subset of agricultural development is the integrated agricultural development strategy. Songhai Farms (2018) is an excellent example of a professional integrated agricultural program. It differs from the FF model because FF integrates the various

aspects of rural life (health, education, and sustainable livelihoods, etc.) into a comprehensive development model. The Songhai model uses a holistic ecosystem in which the mutual dependence of all components of the agricultural value chain are given due recognition and support. The FF model is home-grown and did not have the benefit of external development partners and funders. This model of integrated development, developed in 1996, predates the Millennium Declaration of 2000. It is interesting that while the declaration was more elaborate than the FF mission, it covered all its essential elements. Its recognition of the many perspectives of poverty also reflects the programs that were implemented under the FF approach.

FF's growth and success emerged from its participatory approach to identifying the development priorities of its host communities. Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) has been defined as "a citizen-centred method of development. The process empowers locals by including them directly in the issue identification and evaluation process and, in many cases, in the final implementation and post-construction monitoring" (Fletcher, 2017). Using PRA, FF identified the following as the development priorities of its host communities: health, education, and sustainable livelihoods. The secondary elements that were cross-cutting and reinforced the core elements were gender, HIV/AIDs, volunteering, and social protection.

The linkages between the components of the integrated program can be illustrated through sustainable livelihoods. The people needed a minimum level of education in order to derive optimal benefit from their participation in the income generating activities of sustainable livelihood programs. In addition, they needed a minimum level of good health to access the educational and the sustainable livelihood opportunities. Due to the rural-urban drift a large percentage of rural dwellers are female, thereby introducing a gender dimension to the programs. The patriarchal system in these communities often resulted in the rights of women and other

vulnerable members being at risk, making it necessary to ensure that such affected persons were provided some level of social protection. For all these services, there are not enough trained personnel to provide facilitation and training and this leads to the need to engage volunteers who have the requisite background and can be available to provide their time and resources for the program. The communities had been devastated by HIV/AIDs, and the primary carers of victims are usually women. These women need to retain their own good health and access a source of livelihood to support their affected family members.

The perceived responsibility that the women had for the survival of their families was the deciding factor for the recipients of FF microfinance services. Fantsuam Foundation (FF) entered into its first microfinance program with a tentative and modest approach. Its localized version of the Grameen model worked so well that, twenty-two years later, FF still operates a microfinance program. The microfinance program soon revealed that poverty eradication is not only about money, but it also has to be multidimensional and multi-sectoral, with multiple funding strategies. Twenty-two years ago, this integrated approach was not always readily understood by funders. However, when the funders began to adopt it as model of choice, certain vital elements were omitted, and this has contributed to the poor performance of many the integrated rural development projects.

Challenges and Opportunities

Some of the challenges faced in the Fantsuam model include the perennial insufficiency of funds to meet the various competing needs of the project. The retention of well-trained staff, especially when competitive wages could not be paid, often meant attrition to urban-based, better-funded

organizations. The cycle of sectarian violence in the host communities often meant the scaling down or cessation of some activities, with attendant loss of human and material resources.

The key elements of the FF strategy that have worked well are:

1. Its choice of women as its primary target groups.

2. An early adoption of the PRA and ability to allow the communities to decide their own development agenda and priorities.

3. An appreciation of the role of ICT as an enabler.

4. A focus on continuing capacity-building for its staff and host communities.

5. A deliberate strategy to build internal revenue generation capabilities in order to be relatively independent of external donors.

6. Its residence within the host communities enabled it to get a better understanding of their culture and power relations.

7. Fantsuam Foundation has committed to life-long service rather than a short, time-bound approach of donor-funded models.

8. The program evolved intuitively rather than starting off with a master plan. This facilitated the necessary flexibility to deal with the exigencies of unstable local political and economic conditions.

9. Development of a succession plan for its key officials.

Next Steps: Succession Planning

A rural integrated development program has unique challenges when it comes to developing a succession plan for its key offices, and it is especially true for organizations that work in remote and under-served communities because identifying staff that can take on such assignments at the

available wages on offer can be daunting. The long-term approach is to identify individuals within the host community and build their capacity to levels that can enable them to take up leadership positions within the organization. Given the cultural realities of the host communities, investing in building the technical and administrative capacities of women seems a more viable option because in many cases, the women do not relocate from their communities; it is the men that tend to go farther afield into urban centers in search of employment opportunities.

Conclusion

The design and implementation of an integrated development approach to poverty can be stepwise, with more programs added over time as in the case of the Fantsuam Foundation, or it can be a master plan fully designed and funded from its inception (for example, the MDGs, Millennium Promise, The Integrated Rural Development Program [IRDP] of India, 1978). Whatever approach is employed, a common characteristic of the integrated development paradigm is the interdependence and mutually reinforcing nature of the various components of the plan because "success in one affects success for others" (UNDP). The advantage of local residence, long-term commitment, and continual capacity-building for the staff and host community have contributed to the internal resilience of the FF model.

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7

Feminist Advocacy and the Gender-Based Violence Response in Nigeria: Case Study of Project Alert on Violence against Women
Josephine Chukwuma

Abstract

This study analyzes the various feminist advocacy strategies adopted by an NGO, Project Alert on Violence Against Women, in responding to the various forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Nigeria, being the first civil society organization to focus on the issue in the country. Using a case study theory and method of analysis, the study will attempt to provide insight and knowledge on how the organization initiated and executed several intervention strategies that have helped in breaking the silence, bringing about social change, and providing support services to victims and their families. The principal question of the study is how impactful is the feminist advocacy approach in responding to GBV in Nigeria.

Introduction

Prominent community organizer Saul Alinsky (1989) said "an organizer must first rub raw the resentment of the people" in order to mobilize them to action from anger to passion and action. This defines me and how I became a women's human rights activist and an advocate for zero tolerance for violence against women and girls. Growing up as a young girl in Nigeria, I was angry about a lot of things I observed around me—in the community I grew up in, in school, among my peers, and in my young adult years. I was angry about the way women and young girls were being

treated in their families, in relationships, at work, etc. Violence, discrimination, and exclusion seemed to be the acceptable norm for women and girls. I often asked, "is it a crime to be a girl/woman?" This question remained with me for a long time, as I struggled to understand the socialization pattern and gendered nature of our society. My anger turned to passion and then action, as it led me to founding Project Alert on Violence Against Women, a nongovernmental women's rights advocacy and support services organization in Lagos, Nigeria.

The catalytic event was the 4th World Conference on Women and the NGO Forum in Beijing China in 1995. I was a young 29-year-old feminist and women's rights activist, with a master's degree in Women and Development and a lot of passion. It was my first time attending such a large gathering of women, discussing women's issues, with state and non-state actors in attendance. An unprecedented 17,000 participants and 30,000 activists attended the conference (United Nations, n.d.). At the time, I was the Program Officer, Women & Children, at Constitutional Rights Project, CRP (one of the two foremost human rights organizations in Nigeria). At the end of the conference, I emerged with the strong resolve to start an organization that would focus on one of the twelve critical areas of concern (referred to as the Beijing Platform for Action, BFA), identified at the conference—violence against women. Gender-based violence has come to be synonymous with violence against women.

The feminist movement set the stage for GBV issues, especially domestic (DV) and sexual violence (SV) in the late 60s and 70s. Feminist advocates brought GBV issues to public notice during this period, which coincided with second wave feminism that pushed equality in society and its need to start with equality and nonviolence in the home. Since doing so, GBV has caught the attention of advocates, researchers, policy makers, and legislators. While advocates and researchers have over the years provided more knowledge on the prevalence, forms, causes,

consequences, and potential solutions to the issues, legislators and law makers have broadened the legal options available to victims. As the knowledge base on the issue has expanded, so also has the conceptualization of the problem shifted from the personal characteristics of the individual perpetrator or victim to structures, institutions, and systems in society, such as social contexts, culture, patriarchy, and the need for a range of support services for victims (Koss et al. 1994).

GBV, especially domestic and sexual violence, is rife in Nigeria. According to the 2012 Gender in Nigeria Report, up to one third of Nigerian women report that they have been subjected to some form of violence, with one in five having experienced physical violence (British Council, 2012). It is not only a human rights issue, but also a health and developmental issue. It is both a cause and a consequence of unequal power relationships between men and women and a public health concern with serious consequences for women's physical, sexual, reproductive, and mental health. Although acts of GBV can perpetrated against both men and women, it is undisputable that women bear the brunt of this vice, so much so that GBV has become synonymous with violence against women and girls.

This paper provides a case study analysis of how an organization in Nigeria, Project Alert on Violence Against Women, using a feminist advocacy approach, brought about social change, while also rendering support to female victims of violence. These support services include opening the first shelter for abused women in Nigeria and providing counseling and legal aid services to victims and their families. This case study proves that a feminist advocacy strategy of both direct victim support and social change advocacy is the model to adopt in responding to GBV.

The paper is divided into five sections. Section 1 provides a brief overview of project Alert and its various program areas. Section 2 reviews the literature on feminism, feminist advocacy, and the evolution of various theories on GBV. Section 3 attempts an analysis of the direct

intervention services that Project Alert embarked on and the successes and challenges recorded. Section 4 concludes the chapter.

About Project Alert

Project Alert on Violence Against Women (Project Alert) came into existence in January 1999. At the time, Project Alert was the first organization to focus on GBV in Nigeria. The organization's name spoke to its vision, mission, and core values. Project Alert's vision is a Nigerian society in which there is zero tolerance for all forms of violence against women and girls. The mission is to provide information on all forms of violence against women and render practical support services to victims and their families. In order to achieve its mission, Project Alert has three main program areas. These are Research and Documentation, R&D; Human Rights Education, HRE; and Support Services, SSP. Under SSP, Project Alert set up the first shelter for abused women, known as Sophia's Place, in May 2001 in Lagos, Nigeria. The facility to date has sheltered 425 women and thirty families. Project Alert currently has five full-time staff, three part-time staff, three interns (every quarter), and volunteers.

Feminist Advocacy and Gender-Based Violence: Literature Review

Defining feminism, including who is a feminist, has over the decades become very problematic, as more and more modifiers are attached to the terms and variants created. Also, over the years some negative connotations have been ascribed to the concept and those women who call themselves feminists, such as being a social movement that seeks to overthrow men, women who are men haters, and women who also want to be above men. But as Richards and Baumgardner

(2010) said, "By feminists, *we* mean each and every politically and socially conscious woman or man who works for equality within or outside the movement, writes about feminism, or calls her- or himself a feminist in the name of furthering equality" (p. 54). Thus, feminism as a concept and feminist advocacy as an approach/strategy are concerned with ending all forms of injustices (social, political, economic, cultural, etc.) against women and girls the world over.

The feminist advocacy approach is made up of two parts: survivor-defined practices (direct support services) and social change activism. Recently feminist advocacy has also added intersectional approaches. Survivor -defined practices, also referred to as direct support services, work to empower abused women/girls through the provision of information, resources, and support for them to make their own decisions. This approach led to the creation of shelters and the provision of legal services and economic empowerment programs to GBV victims. The survivor-defined approach assumes that women's agency considers individual cases and needs and provides resources and support to empower the victim (Goodman & Epstein, 2008; Lehrner & Allen, 2009; Jordan et al., 2010). Survivor-defined advocacy is more effective as it empowers and respects the victims by allowing them to make their own choices and, by so doing, take full responsibility for the choices they make.

Social change activism involves the recognition of the gendered nature of different forms of violence against women/girls and works to change the socio-structural inequalities that support it. It refers to actions aimed at bringing change that ensures equity, inclusion, fairness, and justice. It is an intentional action to bring about legal, social, political, economic, and environmental change, and, according to Goodman and Epstein (2008), social change activism has produced all of the social services and justice system resources available to victims of gender-based violence.

Intersectional approaches, on the other hand, work to increase access to services, the needs of survivors from various backgrounds and identities, such as race, and women with disabilities. It is the recognition of barriers based on intersecting identities (Arnold & Ake, 2013). The feminist advocacy approaches came about with the evolution of various theories on GBV, especially domestic and sexual violence. The leading theory at the beginning of the feminist movement in early 1970s, was *psychopathology*—male batterers as being mentally ill and in need of psychiatric attention, therapy, and medications (McCue, 2008). The focus thus was on batterers undergoing psychological evaluation and treatment. This theory has often been criticized as being inaccurate and shortsighted as there were not only a lot of men battering their wives (raising the question, are most men mad?), but also that batterers' behavior was inconsistent with mental illness (Gondolf, 1999). The theory also provided an excuse for perpetrators and overlooked the role of gender, culture, and social context.

Closely following this theory was the *social learning theory* developed in 1977, which considered abuse to be a learned behavior that men adopt and women, who witnessed abuse as girls, internalized and sought in their adult relationships (McCue, 2008). However, research into this revealed that only one third, or 30%, of boys who witnessed violence in the home grew up to be violent adults (McCue, 2008). Instead they were more likely to become violent adults because of information from broader society that it was acceptable for men to abuse their wives/partners and, by so doing, reinforce patriarchal norms. This is closely linked with patriarchy theory, which was first discussed in 1979. The underpinning of patriarchy theory as asserted by feminist Gloria Steinem is that the home is the most dangerous place for women; that women are likely to be attacked "not an unknown man in the street, or an enemy in wartime, but a husband or a lover in the isolation of their own home" (Corry, 2011). Proponents of patriarchy theory assert that

domestic violence is fueled by patriarchal norms in culture because of conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity.

There were also the loss of control (Klein, 1997) and learned helplessness (Walker, 1977) theories in the 1970s. The loss of control theorists explained that men, out of anger and frustration and sometimes after drinking alcohol, became violent. However, such men deliberately chose where and on whom to lose control and be violent. Most times this happened at home with their wives/partners and not at work with their bosses. No matter how angry and frustrated a man is, he will rarely lose control and beat up his boss. Learned helplessness theory states that constant abuse leaves women helpless and without will to leave their abusers. This theory, according to Short et al. (2000), did not take into account several social, economic, and cultural factors that may make a woman stay in an abusive relationship.

These theories evolved into what is now referred to as the power and control wheel, which captures the various ways and tactics deployed by abusers to maintain power and control over their victims. Violent incidents are not isolated instances of loss of control, or even cyclical expressions of anger and frustration. Rather, each instance is part of a larger pattern of behavior designed to exert and maintain power and control over the victim (Shepard & Pence, 1999). The elements that formed the basis of earlier theories—a boy witnessing battering as a child, substance abuse—may be contributing factors, but do not *cause* the violence. Rather batterers use violence as a means of power and control to ensure that their spouses are submissive to them. In the next sections, an analysis of the various feminist advocacy strategies used by Project Alert to respond to GBV in Nigeria will be done.

Feminist Research on GBV in Nigeria: Research Informing Actions

One of Project Alert's three program areas is research and documentation. The basic strategic intent for the R&D program is to provide an empirical basis for intervention work and knowledge and understanding of GBV prevalence, its forms, causes, and impact for both advocacy and academic purposes. Project Alert came into existence at time when there was a dearth in information on GBV in Nigeria. No research had been done to document the prevalence of GBV or women's experiences of GBV in Nigeria.

Project Alert, on opening its doors in January 1999, started off with three projects under research and documentation. These were (1) a quarterly newsletter known as *Violence Watch*, (2) national research on violence against women in Nigeria, and (3) a media monitoring project on reported attacks on women, resulting in an annual report. The newsletter reported existing and emerging trends on violence against women, nationally and regionally, and by so doing, helped to mobilize knowledge on GBV. National research, on the other hand, was carried out in two focal states across the six geopolitical zones that make up the country, including twelve out of thirty-six states with a total sample of 4,650.[1] The findings of this research, published as *Beyond Boundaries: Violence Against Women in Nigeria (2001)*, informed the opening of the first shelter for abused women in Nigeria, known as Sophia's Place, because women interviewed during the research stated that two of their reasons for staying in abusive relationships were that they had nowhere to go and a reluctance on the part of their family members to take them in when they ran to them. The research findings supported the power and control theory of acts of gender-based violence against women and girls as not being isolated instances of a loss of control or even cyclical anger and frustration, but the need to obtain and maintain power, especially in a patriarchal country like Nigeria.

The third project undertaken by Project Alert is the annual report on attacks on women and girls compiled from newspapers and magazine reports: *No Safe Haven: Attacks on Women in Nigeria.*[2] These annual reports documenting women's experiences of various forms of violence have been strong advocacy tools for legislative and policy reforms in Nigeria with regard to GBV. This has been the foundation of the social change activism that Project Alert pioneered in advocating for zero tolerance for all forms of violence against women and girls.

Survivor-Defined Practices

Survivor-defined practices, also referred to as practical support services for female victims of violence, is a key approach of feminist advocacy. This involves immediate one-on-one responses to cases as they occur. This approach was nonexistent up until the 80s in Nigeria and remained very limited in scope in the early 90s. Women's human rights advocacy, in general, and GBV, in particular, were in their infancy. The issue of women's human rights and cases of violence against women were treated on an ad hoc basis. They were often considered to be isolated cases and as such no efforts were made to systematically deal with the issues. A woman being abused by her husband was not expected to go to the police or report it to anyone outside of her home other than to the family of the very person abusing her—her husband's family. If she ventured to report the abuse to "an outsider" (including her own parents), it would mean that she wants out of the marriage. The woman's husband and his family could send her packing. This fear is used to keep women in abusive relationships silent. Of course when women ran to their abuser's family, little or nothing was often done, and in most cases, they would even be chastised for not being good wives; of arguing with their husbands, leading to abuse; of not being submissive enough, etc. Silence thus was a weapon used to keep women in abusive marriages.

Shelter Services

In order to address these issues, survivor-defined practices, those based on the needs of survivors, became a major feminist advocacy approach adopted by Project Alert. Within two years of opening its doors in 1999, Project Alert set up the first shelter for abused women in Nigeria, known as Sophia's Place. Sophia's Place was born out of a specific recommendation that emanated from the national research study on VAW titled *Beyond Boundaries: Violence Against Women in Nigeria* and a need assessment survey with several battered women. In these two research studies, women who were interviewed said they stayed in abusive marriages because of a lack of somewhere to run. They could not run back to their birth families, for fear of this being interpreted as them no longer being interested in remaining married. For most women in abusive marriages in Nigeria, they want the violence to stop. They do not necessarily want their marriages to end.

Located in a Lagos suburb, Sophia's Place still serves as a halfway house for victims of domestic and sexual violence whose lives are threatened and who require space away from their abuser/s and the abusive environment. Specifically, the shelter offers an opportunity to survivors of domestic and sexual violence to reflect on their particular situation while receiving professional assistance. The shelter offers battered women and often their young children a temporary but safe and confidential shelter for a maximum stay of four weeks.

Specific objectives of the shelter project include the following:

- Protecting "battered" women and their children from their abusers.
- Providing a peaceful environment that offers residents space and time to reflect on their past and present experiences and decide their way forward.
- Providing group and one-on-one counseling services to survivors.

- Providing free legal advice/aid to victims.

- Empowering female victims of violence financially.

Project Alert faced several challenges in deciding to set up the first shelter for abused women in Nigeria. First, there are strong cultural and traditional beliefs in women playing a central role in the "success" of a marriage, and domestic violence is not talked about or considered an issue to end any marriage. To ensure the safety and security of the shelter and its residents, which includes Project Alert staff (the Shelter Administrator), the shelter is not located where the office is, and the address of the shelter is not publicized. The non-disclosure of the location of Project Alert's shelter has worked for the organization, despite the current movement toward open shelters. The movement toward open shelters is highly controversial among advocates for victims of domestic violence. Some believe that this philosophical sentiment is a naive ideal that is bound to put women and children in more jeopardy than an anonymous shelter would. They say the only way that women in an open shelter can feel safe is if accused abusive husbands and boyfriends are arrested immediately, which is seldom the case (Belluck, 1997).

Yet another challenge faced by Project Alert, on opening the shelter, was sustainability. The Project Alert shelter is not funded by government. The organization continuously has to fundraise in order to keep its doors open. The organization in 2009, severely threatened by the impact of the global economic recession on NGOs (as most NGOs are dependent on international donor support), organized a fundraising dinner to coincide with its 10th anniversary to raise funds for the shelter, which was at the time operating from a rented apartment. The rent had become too high and the organization was facing possible eviction. Through the fundraising event, Project Alert got the sum of $150,000 to buy its own building in 2010 to house the shelter. By so doing, the sustainability and continuity of this direct service to victims was guaranteed. One major

achievement of Project Alert in setting up the first shelter in Nigeria is its partnership with the Lagos State government, which led the Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs to set up the first state-owned shelter for abused women in August 2009. A few other organizations have followed suit.

Feminist Advocacy for Social Change

Social change activism is a major program of Project Alert, falling under the Human Rights Education program, HRE. Project Alert, in its nineteen years of existence, has initiated or partnered with other organizations to change the face of GBV in Nigeria. Social change activism has broken the silence on GBV and brought about change in structures and institutions in society. The following activities have brought about change in response to GBV issues:

- Engaging law enforcement agencies, especially the Nigerian police.

- Legislative advocacy.

- Engaging of judicial officers.

- Community advocacy.

Engaging Law Enforcement Agencies

The increased awareness on GBV and the feminist movement on the continent has, in the last two decades, led to the enactment of new laws on various forms of GBV, such as domestic violence, female genital mutilation, widowhood disinheritance, and sexual violence, etc. However the existence of these laws has not always translated into enforcement by the police, who most times blame the victims for their victimization; don't allow them to file their reports of abuse, saying it's a private, family matter; and encourage victims to go back home "and be good wives."

Recognizing the key role of law enforcement agencies, especially the police, in the prevention and response to gender-based crimes, and the insensitivity they often display to victims when they report violence, Project Alert had to embark on a series of trainings for officers and men of the Nigerian police in Lagos and some other states across the country. The trainings focused on gender-based violence and women's human rights, legal instruments for protecting women's rights, and a referral list of organizations rendering services to victims. With support from the Open Society Institute for West Africa, OSIWA, Project Alert set up Gender Desks (manned by trained police officers) in the Human Rights offices located in all the Area Commands of the Lagos State Police Command.[3] This increased reporting and improved police service to victims.[4] Recently (2013–17), Project Alert worked with consultants under the Justice for All (J4A) project of the United Kingdom Department for International Development to set up Family Support Units, FSUs, in selected police stations across the country as a pilot project.

Legislative Advocacy

Legislative advocacy is activism for a major social change embarked on by feminists in addressing the issue of GBV. Through legislative advocacy, feminist organizations can work to improve laws and policies that are responsive to the needs of victims, their children, and their families. According to Mehta (2009), "getting involved in the legislative process and having a say in policy discussions is not just an appropriate role for non-profits; it is vital. If non-profits are not speaking on behalf of their own vulnerable communities, chances are nobody else is either."

Project Alert, in its pioneering work on GBV in Nigeria, identified the importance of legislative advocacy. The organization came into existence when specific GBV laws didn't exist

in Nigeria. Laws that existed at the time, in the criminal or penal codes, were either inadequate or outright discriminatory to women and girls.[5] There were no specific laws on domestic violence; while sexual violence was defined narrowly. Project Alert, in partnership with other organizations, embarked on various legislative advocacy projects at the state and federal level. These projects resulted in major legal reforms, such as the Domestic Violence Law of Lagos State that was signed into law in 2007. It is the first law in Nigeria specifically focused on domestic violence and is quasi-civil in nature. It grants protective orders to victims of domestic violence, which legally bars or places limitations on an abuser contacting or coming within a stipulated range with his victim. This order could apply at home, the workplace, or school, etc.

At the federal level, the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) was enacted in 2015. The law came to fruition after a 14-year-long joint social, media, and legislative advocacy championed by women's rights groups and gender advocates. Project Alert was one of the founding organizations of the Legislative Coalition on Violence Against Women, LACVAW, the coalition that advocated for the law.[6] The law, though titled violence against persons (a strategy that had to be adopted to get it passed by the majority male federal houses—senate and house of representatives), prohibits several forms of gender-based violence and discrimination such as domestic, sexual, and psychological violence; harmful traditional practices; and provides maximum protection and effective remedies for victims and punishment for offenders. The law also expanded the scope of rape to include anal and oral sex. Importantly, the act contains provisions on effective remedies available to victims, which includes their right to legal assistance. According to Section 38 of the law, "Every victim is entitled to receive the necessary materials, comprehensive medical, psychological, social and legal assistance through government agencies and/or NGOs providing such assistance."

Engaging of Judicial Officers: Access to Justice

The judiciary plays a major role in female victims of violence accessing justice. Access to justice encompasses a recognition that everyone has protection under the law. Rights are meaningless if victims of human rights abuses cannot access justice. It requires, among other things, awareness of various legal provisions (old and new) by both the judges/magistrates and the citizenry, understanding of and confidence in the justice administration system (be it criminal or civil), and easy access to the justice administration mechanisms and institutions that have the duties of ensuring justice.

In Nigeria, the inordinate delay in justice administration in Nigeria is phenomenal. Justice delayed is justice denied. Cases suffer numerous adjournments in courts and litigation could go on for years. Litigation cost is high and a lot of female victims of human rights abuses, especially GBV, cannot afford it. And that is why you will hear victims say, "I leave it to GOD" (meaning I cannot afford going to court, so let GOD be the judge). Project Alert's social change activism targeting the judiciary occurs at three levels—advocacy for reduced litigation costs, the appointment of more female judges, and sensitization of judges on gender-based violence and the new GBV laws. The sensitization of magistrates and judges on new laws happens first through one-on-one engagements in court, when these new laws are cited by our lawyers, and the magistrate or judge is not aware of it. This is often the case with very new laws that have just been enacted, and some judges are not aware because the state Ministry of Justice has not sensitized them. Project Alert lawyers, in such instances, seize the opportunity to engage judges. The second manner in which magistrates and judges are sensitized is through Project Alert either organizing a seminar for judicial officers or a member of staff being invited as either a resource person or guest speaker at a judicial event. These strategies have yielded results over the years, as currently 50%

of judges in Lagos State are women. This in turn has led to major changes in the Lagos state judiciary. The changes include the setting up of family courts; and recently (January 2018) four specialized courts for sexual abuse cases in Lagos State. The state government has also set up a Domestic & Sexual Violence Response Team, DSVRT, to respond to reported cases.

Community Advocacy

Uniting the community to prevent and respond to GBV is yet another feminist advocacy strategy. Community advocacy increases community awareness on the issue of gender-based violence and provides a platform for a call for systemic change. Project Alert's community advocacy involved the organization going into various communities in Lagos to conduct sensitization programs in the palaces of traditional rulers, churches, markets, and motor-parks, etc. In carrying out its community advocacy, Project Alert adopted an intersectional approach, recognizing the violence women and girls with disabilities face. Gender-based and disability-based violence intersect to create brutal barriers to the well-being of women and girls with disabilities.

Project Alert, in its community advocacy project, organized a series for various community stakeholders on GBV and women with disabilities. The meetings brought together the government agency responsible for handling disability issues in the state, the Lagos State Office of Disability Affairs, LASODA, traditional rulers, religious leaders, and civil society organizations working on GBV in the media and women with disabilities. The result of these meetings is the commencement of collaborative work between these stakeholders, which has given rise to an integrated response to GBV and disability issues as it relates to women and girls. The result of these efforts has been increased community awareness of and initiation of community-based activities promoting zero

tolerance for discrimination and GBV against women and girls with disabilities. In communities in Lagos, faith-based organizations are not only preaching zero tolerance for violence and exclusion, they are practicing it. Communities are organizing monthly meetings in which reports on violence as it affects women with disabilities are received and action is taken. Policing of areas/homes where women with disabilities are known to live, have been incorporated into community policing being done by neighborhood watch groups.

Conclusion

Gender-based violence is a global issue that continues to impact the lives of millions of women and girls the world over. Theories of it have evolved over the decades from the personal to structures and institutions in societies that aid its perpetration. Power and control is at the basis of all forms of GBV. Project Alert, in responding to the issue in Nigeria, adopted the feminist advocacy approach, which does not only focus on rendering assistance to victims, but also social change—addressing the structures and institutions that cause the manifestation of GBV in individual acts. Survivor-defined services enabled Project Alert to render shelter, legal aid, and empowerment services to over 2,000 women and families in its 19 years of existence. Social change activism, on the other hand, has brought about systemic changes at local, state, and federal levels in Nigeria. The silence has been broken and there is increased intolerance for GBV, especially domestic and sexual violence.

Notes

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[1] Nigeria is divided into six geo-political zones as follows: south-south, southeast, southwest, northeast, north-central, and northwest.

[2] *No Safe Haven* is a compilation of media reports of attacks on women and girls in Nigeria. Print, electronic, and social media are monitored over a 12-month period and cases are compiled, analyzed, and published at the end of the year.

[3] Open Society Institute of West Africa (OSIWA), part of Open Society Foundations (OSF), is an international grantmaking network founded in April 1993 by business magnate George Soros. The foundation financially supports civil society groups around the world, with a stated aim of advancing justice, education, public health, and good governance.

[4] Between 2008 and 2010, when Project Alert, in partnership with the Nigerian police, trained police officers on GBV response across various police area commands in Lagos State, and set up gender desks in the area commands, DV and SV reporting increased by 100%.

[5] Nigeria operates two distinct criminal legal systems—the criminal code system in southern Nigeria and the penal code system in northern Nigeria.

[6] The Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against women (LACVAW) is a coalition of civil society groups in Nigeria who came together in 2001 in response to the need to amplify the voices of various NGOs across the country that were proposing various bills on violence against women and girls.

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8

Engagement and Organizational Survival Under an Authoritarian State: The Case of the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association
Mutuso Dhliwayo

Abstract

Authoritarianism is on the rise globally. Geographically, it is mainly pronounced in Africa, South America and Asia. The most prominent targets of authoritarianism are Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The targeting of CSOs by authoritarian states is resulting in shrinking civic space. The question therefore is how can CSOs remain relevant and continue to influence legal, policy and institutional reforms in the face of rising authoritarianism. In this paper, I argue that it is still possible for CSOs and Community Based Organisations (CSOs) working on natural resources governance to continue to influence legal, policy and institutional reforms using the two strategies of autonomy and engagement. These strategies are applicable at the national, regional and continental level. I use the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA), a public interest law organization that works to promote democracy, good governance and sustainable development using natural resources as a framework, as a case study.

Introduction

Throughout history, authoritarian regimes have thrived on suppressing and crushing perceived forms of democratic dissent. Perhaps the most prominent targets of contemporary authoritarianism are Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Throughout the world, authoritarianism has been on the rise (CIVICUS 2016, 2017, 2018). By geography, authoritarianism is prevalent in Africa, South

America, and Asia (CIVICUS & Publish What You Pay, 2016) and has been characterized by the conflict between governments and CSOs. A direct consequence of this rise in authoritarianism is the shrinking of CSOs' space to influence legal, policy and institutional reforms in natural resources governance. As this space shrinks, various "CSOs" face dire prospects, ranging from closing shop, taking flight, or making dangerous compromises. The choices open for most CSOs are generally determined by the nature of their work within a particular state. However, despite the rise in authoritarianism, I argue in this paper that it is possible for CSOs working on natural resources governance to influence legal, policy, and institutional reforms through autonomy and engagement with government.

In particular, the two hypotheses underpinning this paper are:

(i)   CSOs working on natural resources governance can survive and remain relevant to influence legal, policy, and institutional reforms under authoritarian regimes;

(ii)   Autonomy and engagement are two strategies that CSOs can use to engage authoritarian regimes without being coopted.

For purposes of this research, this paper focuses on the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA), a CSO working in Zimbabwe's natural resource governance spaces as a case study with a special focus on the mining sector. Zimbabwe is an interesting case study in terms of natural resources governance and authoritarianism. It will not be possible to address Zimbabwe's democratic deficit without addressing natural resources governance. Zimbabwe is a highly mineralized country (The Zimbabwe Geological Survey Report, 1990) and has been under an authoritarian government since 2000.

Conceptual Framing of Natural Resources Governance

As an organization, ZELA has followed the general conceptual understanding of natural resources governance. While ZELA is based in Zimbabwe, it operates at the regional level and its experiences are very reflective of the experiences of other CSOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in other countries working at the national, regional, and continental level on natural resources governance (CIVICUS & Publish What You Pay, 2016).

The major assumption underpinning this paper is that, although authoritarian regimes often regard natural resources governance as threat to their rule and hold on power, it is possible for CSOs working in natural resources governance to survive and remain relevant under authoritarian regimes and be able to influence policy, legal, and institutional reforms. This is possible through autonomy and engagement.

For ZELA, this engagement approach has been possible despite the government's exploitation of mineral resources being largely used to undermine democracy, good governance, and sustainable development (Partnership Africa Canada, 2010). Thus, while there are a number of strategies that can be used by CSOs to deal with authoritarian regimes, for ZELA autonomy and engagement has provided the most possible avenue to make an impact.

Accordingly, ZELA has worked with the understanding that natural resources governance, as defined by Patti, Zhang, and Triragon (2011) refers to:

> the rules, laws, policies, institutions and processes through which a society exercises powers and responsibilities to make and implement decisions affecting natural resources and natural resources users and to hold decision makers, implementers and natural resources users accountable.

In the context of this understanding, natural resources governance is conceived broadly to include issues to do with the environment, namely land, water, forest, air, wildlife, mining, oil, and gas issues. Natural resources governance has been chosen by ZELA as an area of study because as the global demand for resources grows for economic growth and development, natural resources have become the new frontier for promoting democracy, good governance, and sustainable development. Natural resource governance issues are fundamentally social, economic and environmental issues and not civil and political matters. The interconnectedness, interrelatedness, and interdependency of these two kinds of rights must not be downplayed, or ignored. This is a big departure from the traditional thinking of CSOs that confronted authoritarianism from a purely and exclusively civil and political rights perspective.

Theoretical framework and methodology

This paper is based on grounded research theory, also known as case study research. Sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss developed grounded research theory, which uses a qualitative approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It is a theory derived from data that is systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process (Khan, 2014). Through the grounded theory approach, a framework with which to understand the phenomenon under investigation is developed. The grounded theory approach is relevant in this research because it enables constant comparison analysis and permits replication and extension among individual cases.

Literature Review

There is considerable literature that deals with CSOs' strategies under authoritarian regimes in Africa and throughout the world (Obadare, 2014). According to research, 185 killings were committed against human rights defenders working on natural resources governance in 16 countries in Asia, Africa, and South America (Global Witness, 2016; Front Line Defenders, 2016). The way natural resources are exploited and the resource rents managed can either result in the protection and realization or undermining of human rights. CSOs' work in natural resources governance is under threat because of exclusion and power imbalance, commodification and financialization of natural resources, corruption, and impunity (United Nations General Assembly, 2016). The threat to CSOs' work is mainly pronounced under backsliding or authoritarian regimes (Baker et al., 2017). When faced with closing space as a result of backsliding or authoritarian regimes, civil CSOs adopt various strategies so as to remain operational, relevant, and be able to influence legal, policy, and institutional reforms. The closing of civil society space globally is something that was predicted in an influential article titled "The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad" (Zakarai, 2003).

The closing of civil society space as a result of authoritarianism comes in various forms and shapes. These include arbitrary arrests, violence, harassment, killings, repressive legislation, illegal surveillance, disproportionate fines, unjustified travel bans, unwarranted raids on offices and violent attacks, and other various forms of intimidation and threats (United Nations General Assembly, 2016). However, when faced with closing space, civil society organizations have adopted a number of strategies as a response. These strategies are largely influenced by the context and the circumstances under which they operate (Perinova, 2005).

Among the strategies that have been adopted by CSOs operating in authoritarian regimes are alliance and coalition building, cooperation, nonviolent resistance and protest, violent resistance and confrontation, and autonomy or engagement (Baker et al., 2017). These strategies and their advantages and disadvantages have been canvassed in CSO literature (Baker et al., 2017; Perinova, 2005). It is evident that a strategy that may work in one context may not work in another. In other words, there is no one size fits all. While there are a number of strategies that can and have been used by CSOs working under authoritarian regimes, the strategy that is of interest to this research paper is autonomy or engagement. As Baker et al. (2017) note:

> a major strategic theme in the literature, and one that is particularly unique to backsliding (as opposed to stable democratic) regimes is that success in maintaining civic space hinges on autonomy. Risks to autonomy and ultimately effectiveness can come from being too close to the government, too close to international actors, or too closely linked to the apposition. Autonomy is particularly important in the face of attempts by the state to co-opt and control, and numerous studies emphasise that the less autonomy from the state that groups have, the less effective they will be at carving out real spaces for participation and influence.

More often than not, when reference is made to the autonomy of CSOs in authoritarian regimes, the focus is on CSOs' autonomy from the state while not questioning the alignment of CSOs to the opposition and other actors, including foreign governments, donors, and International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs). This closeness to opposition politics and other international organizations is often used as a justification by authoritarian regimes for further diminution of civil society space (Helliker, 2014). But this definition of autonomy by Baker et al.

(2017) is broad in that it includes autonomy from the opposition, foreign donors, and international organizations.

This definition of autonomy is based on the understanding that CSOs are not an opposition party, despite their work on promoting participation and opening democratic space (Couto, 2001; Cox, Donogue, & Hayes, 2001). This definition entails that CSOs should be political but non-partisan and focused on issues and how these affect good governance, democracy, and development. It is nevertheless acknowledged that there is usually a thin line between being autonomous, engaged, and effective and the avoidance of repression. CSOs that are autonomous are usually labeled as anti-government and opposition allies (Perinova, 2005). Having reviewed literature on CSOs working under authoritarian regimes, I now turn my focus to Zimbabwe and the strategies that ZELA has used to engage and remain autonomous in promoting democracy, good governance, and sustainable development in the natural resources sector.

The Political Context

Since the turn of the millennium, Zimbabwe's political and economic contestations have made programming by CSOs very difficult. When Zimbabwe was declared a rogue state for violation of human rights in implementing its Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), the implications for CSO/Government relations were dire.[1] Most funding partners realigned their priorities to focus on CSOs that were working on civil and political rights as a way of addressing Zimbabwe's democratic deficit and ensure that it returned to the rule of law, democracy, and good governance. In response, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front- (ZANU-PF) led government viewed this approach by mainly Western governments with great suspicion and hostility. The

government regarded the support as undermining its authority, legitimacy, and sovereignty, ultimately with the objective of removing it from power. CSOs were thus perceived as regime-change agents (Kagoro, 2010). The ZANU-PF-led government alleged that Western governments were working in cohorts with the main opposition political party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and CSOs to achieve the regime change objective (Helliker, 2014). Consequently, suspicion, mistrust, and hostility grew to characterize government-CSO relations. Most of the programs and projects by CSOs were perceived as aiding and abetting the regime change agenda in one way or another. The biggest challenge that ZELA faced during this period was how to remain objective, autonomous, and focused on its work without making unnecessary compromises or dabbling in the vicious politics of the time.

ZELA's Response: Autonomy and Engagement

As with other CSOs, ZELA faced various dangers. The responses by the government of Zimbabwe were both subtle and blatant. In some instances, the government responded through arbitrary arrests, violence, harassment, killings, repressive legislation, illegal surveillance, unjustified travel bans, unwarranted raids on offices and violent attacks, and other various forms of intimidation and threats.[2]

Confronted with these real dangers, ZELA's strategy of maintaining autonomy while seeking practical platforms for engagement was influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, it has always been the objective of ZELA's work to influence laws, policies, and institutional frameworks so that these become responsive to the needs of natural resource-dependent communities and the citizenry for the sustenance of their livelihoods. Further ZELA desires to

ensure that natural resources exploitation contributes to economic and social development for the benefit of the country (Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association, 2001).

From the beginning, ZELA was very aware that unlike other CSOs working on civil and political rights, the success of its work was dependent mainly on its ability to be autonomous and to engage all stakeholders involved in natural resources governance. These include communities, CSOs, government and government departments and agencies at the national, provincial, and local levels, and Parliament. ZELA understood that while government is part of the problem in natural resources governance, it was also part of the solution, and to that extent, constructive dialogue or engagement had to be paramount instead of direct confrontational approaches.

Secondly, ZELA was also very clear that the negative impacts of business activities affected grassroots communities equally, irrespective of their political affiliations. This is because it is mainly political and economic elites across the political divide that benefit from the extraction of natural resources. Similarly, grassroots local communities feel the impacts, regardless of their political loyalties. For instance, the pollution of freshwater bodies affects all community members dependent on such water sources. The same is true of environmental degradation. For ZELA, what was needed was for grassroots communities to work together against a common challenge to ensure that the exploitation of natural resources in their communities does not result in negative impacts and that it also results in various benefits. The objective was to open space for them to participate in policy and decision-making processes, thereby enhancing institutional accountability and transparency.

Thirdly, ZELA was also very clear from the very beginning that its work on legal, policy, and institutional reforms on natural resources governance was only possible through working with politicians from across the political divide. Most of ZELA's work of influencing laws, policies,

and institutional frameworks is done through parliamentary portfolio committees, government ministries, and government agencies. Before the era of the Government of National Unity (GNU), government agencies and ministries were led by politicians from ZANU-PF, while during the tenure of the GNU, politicians from both MDC and ZANU-PF led them.[3] After the harmonized elections of 2013, the ZANU-PF-led government has been the major respondent. Since the formation of the MDC in 1999, the Parliament of Zimbabwe and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committees are made up of legislators from both ZANU-PF and MDC. This political reality makes it imperative for ZELA to work with all the political parties and their representatives in their programming to ensure that they become more effective in their representative, legislative, and oversight roles on natural resources governance.

In view of these factors, ZELA developed a number of strategies tailor made to achieve the desired objectives in its programming. The focus remained on issues rather than politics and personalities. So when ZELA chose a province and a district to program in, it was always based on the issues rather than personalities or politics. Using this approach, ZELA has been able to offer programming on diverse issues that have implications for natural resources governance that include transparency, participation, and accountability.

In its programming, ZELA works with all community members in the area as long as they are affected by and are interested in the issues it is working on. In the politically charged environment in Zimbabwe, it would have been easy for ZELA to discriminate and say that it wanted to work with communities that support either ZANU-PF or MDC. Because of the perceived oppressiveness of ZANU-PF, most interventions by CSOs are aimed at supporting community members that are aligned with the opposition, the MDC. This would have resulted in ZELA being accused of dabbling in partisan politics, and they would have faced a lot of pressure. This would

have compromised its autonomy and affected its ability to engage the two political parties, especially ZANU-PF.

Prominently, ZELA's philosophy is driven by the need to fully appreciate the utility of local institutions, such as local administrative authorities, Members of Parliament in constituencies, and traditional leadership systems. At the peak of the bitter and toxic political contestations in Zimbabwe, it was very easy for CSOs to be caught up in the politics of the day on one side or the other. Such an approach would have meant that ZELA would not be able to work with these local institutions because they were aligned with a political actor or interest.

In contrast, ZELA's preferred criteria for deciding whether to work with administrative and political institutions was based on the potential of such actors to enhance or advance ZELA's natural resource governance portfolio. With this approach, ZELA was able to work with diverse politicians from different political parties without advancing the interests of that political party in any way. Due to its focus on issues, there was absolutely no contradiction in its work with Members of Parliament, local authorities, and communities with different political affiliations. By working with this approach, ZELA continued to remain in the spaces of these constituencies even when the politicians and councilors that they were working with lost power. Natural resource governance issues outlive and outlast the temporal tenure of political actors.

A remarkable case study of this approach is in relation to ZELA's work with Parliament. Making laws, policies, and institutional frameworks that are responsive to the needs of natural resources-dependent communities and the general citizenry entails working with legislators through training, capacity-building, and advocacy so as to reform laws and policies.[4] The work with legislators allows them to be more effective in their representative, oversight, and legislative roles (Zimbabwe Constitution, 2013).

ZELA has undertaken a number of programs and projects with Parliamentary Portfolio Committees on Mines and Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Management, Public Accounts Committee, and Indigenization and Economic Empowerment. The composition of these committees reflects the political terrain that has been in existence since 1999 when the reality of multi-party politics dawned in Zimbabwe. For ZELA's work with these committees to be effective, it entailed working with all their members without discriminating them based on their political affiliations. To date, in order to avoid being caught in politics, whenever ZELA desires to undertake activities with these committees, the invitations are sent through the Clerk of Parliament with an emphasis that there should be equal representation from all the political parties. Using this approach, ZELA has been able to work with various members of Parliament to advance its work from the two main political parties. In turn, Parliament and these various committees have accepted the credibility of ZELA as a legitimate non-partisan civil society organization in Zimbabwe.

Another example relates to government ministries and departments and for ZELA, these include the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Mines and Mining Development, Local Government and National Housing and Youth, and Indigenization and Economic Empowerment. During the Government of National Unity (2009–13), it would have been very easy for ZELA to be selective in its engagement by deliberately engaging those ministries and government departments headed by the MDC or ZANU PF in its work. However, ZELA stayed clear of this trap by being conscious that all government ministries and departments were included regardless of political affiliation.

Successes

ZELA's focus on issues rather than politics based on its strategies of autonomy and engagement has achieved a number of significant results. Firstly, in the areas that ZELA is working in, communities are beginning to view natural resources governance with a non-partisan lens. Communities are uniting across the political divide to address natural resources governance issues that affect them as a united force rather than divided along political party lines. ZELA has registered CBOs that exist as legal entities in the form of trusts. More often than not, communities are marginalized from natural resources governance by the state and businesses on the basis that they do not exist as legal entities. Through registration as legal entities, communities are now able to engage the state and businesses in natural resources governance.

Communities are mobilizing and organizing across the political divide. They are also able to conduct research on how the exploitation of natural resources violates their Environmental, Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (EESCR) through the Community Human Rights Monitoring Programme (CHMP). Operating at the local level helps in the promotion of democracy, good governance, and sustainable development, as it is difficult for authoritarian states to effectively monitor and control. Apart from research and monitoring, communities are also able to advocate on natural resources governance at the local, national, regional, and international levels. The feeling is that ZELA has succeeded in depoliticizing natural resources governance issues in a manner that promotes sustainable development, transparency, accountability, and participation and community improvements.

Secondly, legislators have begun to ignore political differences and to unite in advocating for reforms on natural resources governance. Through ZELA's various capacity-building initiatives and projects with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committees, legislators' awareness has

improved. This was very evident through the work of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Mines and Energy and the reports that it produced on natural resources governance. Related to this, because of ZELA's non-partisan approach to issues, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Mines and Energy now regards ZELA as a key source of information and legal and policy expertise on the mining sector. Indeed, ZELA's engagement approaches were key factors leading to the signing of a memorandum of understanding between it and the Parliament of Zimbabwe.[5]

Thirdly, despite the suspicions and mistrust the government of Zimbabwe used to harbor about the work of CSOs in general, including ZELA, it has been very receptive to some of ZELA's initiatives.[6] Since 2010, ZELA has been advocating for the adoption of the World Bank's Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). In 2011, the government of Zimbabwe responded to these advocacy initiatives by adopting the Zimbabwe Mining Revenue Transparency Initiative (ZMRTI) to promote transparency and accountability in the mining sector. ZELA was invited to participate in the inaugural meeting and to present a paper on how government, CSOs, and mining companies can work together to promote the implementation of the ZMRTI. Furthermore, ZELA was tasked by the office of the then Deputy Prime Minister, who was overseeing the implementation of the ZMRTI, to coordinate the participation of CSOs in its implementation. The Government of Zimbabwe is currently in the process of exploring ways to join the EITI. This interest was reflected in its attendance of the 8th EITI Global Conference in June 2018 and the reinforcement of the commitment by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development at the closing plenary. ZELA is leading the efforts to have the Government of Zimbabwe to adopt the EITI and both the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and Ministry of Mines and Mining Development have both approached ZELA for advice and guidance.

A fourth cause for celebration was ZELA's work with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. ZELA had always advocated for the extension of the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) principles to the mining sector.[7] It can be argued that the incorporation of Community Share Ownership Trusts and Schemes under the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act is a form of response to these advocacy initiatives by ZELA.[8] Until the introduction of CSOTs, all that communities were receiving were the costs of mining and not the benefits.

A fifth success story relates to ZELA's involvement in mainstream economic, environmental, and social issues. On several occasions, ZELA has been invited by various ministries to participate in their events. Thus ZELA participated in the development of the Ministry of Mines' 2011–2015 and 2016–2020 strategic plans, stakeholder's workshop on the development of the Diamond Policy, and public consultation meetings on the development of the draft of the Mineral Policy and Zimbabwe's first and second Diamond Conference held in 2012 and 2014, respectively. Similarly the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development has, on invitation, made presentations at ZELA-organized events. This shows that ZELA's strategies of engaging the government have resulted in a working relationship. ZELA is also involved in the reforms of the mining sector through the Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill.

Challenges

ZELA's engagement with stakeholders like the government in a politically poisoned environment faced a number of challenges internally and externally. ZELA's strategy started at a time when engagement and autonomy were regarded as taboo by many donors and CSOs. With a ZANU-PF

government accused of gross human rights violations as a result of the FTLRP and the disputed outcomes of the 2008 elections, engaging the government was widely regarded as legitimizing it.

Some of our funding partners openly frowned on ZELA's policies of engaging government structures at the national, provincial, and local level that were associated with ZANU-PF. The argument was that some of the persons and institutions engaged by ZELA were on the sanctions list and working with them would be a violation of these measures. This approach was not helped by other civil society organizations that were trying to influence donor perceptions of our work by insinuating ZELA's political affiliations. To deal with these various misconceptions, ZELA engaged its donors and explained the rationale and philosophy behind its strategies, discussed above.

After this drive, a number of ZELA's donors understood and appreciated the strategies and became very supportive. However, there is no doubt that our strategies of engaging government and political parties also resulted in ZELA losing some funding from those donors that did not believe in engagement and autonomy at that time and those that may have reached their conclusions about ZELA's political affiliation based on what they had heard from those that did not agree with our strategies.

Another source of attack came from some legislators and government officials. ZANU-PF legislators accused us of being pro-MDC, while MDC legislators accused us of being pro-ZANU-PF despite the fact that we were working with all of them in our programs and projects without discrimination. When ZELA gave them evidence of its work with all the parties, not everyone was convinced. To them, it was not possible to be autonomous and engage all the political parties. This thinking and view has changed with time, however. Through dialogue and engagement, most of the members have since commended ZELA's work for being non-partisan and objective, and this

is how we have been able to continue to engage with the various Parliamentary Portfolio Committees that are relevant to our work and were able to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Parliament of Zimbabwe and other government departments.

Within the organization, there were also some challenges. While the organization's principle was to be non-partisan by policy, this did not apply to staff and management who had political affiliations with the various political parties. The challenge was to maintain that sense of professionalism irrespective of one's political affiliations when programming on behalf of ZELA. Because of the known political affiliations of some staff members and management, some of our stakeholders ended up wrongly concluding that ZELA was politically affiliated and partisan.

Conclusion

ZELA's work and its successes in influencing laws, policies, and institutional reforms shows the utility of dialogue, autonomy, and engagement of stakeholders in the natural resources governance sector in countries under authoritarian regimes. While the process has been fraught with difficulties, autonomy and engagement helps to open spaces and promote participation and accountability. What is most important is for each CSO to identify strategies that are best suited to its work. Based on its strategy of autonomy and engagement that has enabled it to influence legal, policy, and institutional reforms in natural resources governance in Zimbabwe, ZELA is of the view that this is a strategy that can be adopted and used by other CSOs and CBOs working on natural resources governance with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the continent at large.

Notes

[1] The European Union's Restrictive and Appropriate Measures through the European Union Council Common Position (2002/148/EC) of February 18, 2002 and the United States' Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) of 2001 is evidence of this declaration. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme began in 2000. The government of Zimbabwe argues that this was necessary to correct historical injustices where the great majority of the black population was dispossessed of their land at the onset of colonialism.

[2] Examples of repressive legislation include the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Public Order and Security Act.

[3] The Government of National Unity was formed in 2009 after the 2008 harmonized elections. It last for five years and ended in 2013. Its objective was to address Zimbabwe's political, economic, and social problems.

[4] Some of the laws that the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association has targeted for reform in its long history of working with Parliament include the constitutional reform process, which resulted in a new constitution that was adopted in 2013, the proposed amendments to the Mines and Minerals Act, the proposed Diamond Act, and the development of the Diamond Policy and the Minerals Policy.

[5] This memorandum of understanding was signed on the 18th of May 2015.

[6] The adoption of the Zimbabwe Mining Revenue Transparency Initiative as a domestic version of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative is a good example.

[7] CAMPFIRE is a program under which communities that live with wildlife resources like elephants and buffaloes derive economic benefits from their exploitation to compensate for the inconvenience that they cause to their livelihoods by causing death, injuries, and crop destruction. ZELA argued that this should be extended to communities that are rich in mineral resources, as their exploitation causes similar if not worse inconveniences to them like those caused by wildlife.

[8] Section 14 B of the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment (General) Amendment Regulations, Statutory Instrument 116 of 2010.

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SECTION FOUR

Internal and External Change Management

9

Localizing Large-Scale International Nongovernmental Organization Change Processes at the County Level: Reflections from a Practitioner in Ghana

Ahmed Hamza Tijani

Abstract

This paper describes the localizing of Oxfam's corporate-wide change process in Ghana, West Africa. It draws on my experiences as someone who led the change process that resulted in the merger of country programs of the three Oxfam affiliates operating in Ghana into one organization. This extended analysis is important because there is a limited number of personal reflections and systematic studies by NGO leaders on country-level change processes and its implications for the INGO sector.

Introduction

International nongovernmental organizations (INGOs); have, over the last 10 years, been changing and growing.[1] This growth has also been reflected in the development of new organizational forms and international structures intended to enable these international NGOs to scale up, gain global spread, and enhance interconnectivity (Hailey, 2006). Major INGOs, like World Vision and ActionAid, have opted to develop a global federal model; others like Oxfam and Save the Children have developed "innovative confederal models" (Hailey, 2016). Some other INGOs have come together to form networks across various issues or common interests, like, for example, the Caritas Network for Catholic INGOs called the ACT Alliance of churches and church-related organizations. These changes within INGOs are occurring, among other reasons, to improve

performance and impact, deepen legitimacy and accountability, and respond to demands from the field countries and donors for more streamlined, efficient, and effective ways of working.

The needs for these changes are confirmed by Hailey (2006), that international NGOs have no option but to pursue constant big changes, as the drivers are too many and too compelling to be ignored. These drivers, according to Hailey, include contextual factors, strategic drivers, the opportunities that information communication technology can bring, shifting profiles of poverty, access to funding, criticism, and concerns. Crowley and Ryan (2017) and Ontrac (2010) also state that calls for evidence of impact, effectiveness, and accountability of INGO programs are also some of the drivers of change. Thus, the structural changes that some of these International NGOs embarked on confirms what Sackmann, Eggenhofer-Rehart, and Friesl (2015) point to, as all organizations need to respond to changing situations by being proactive in implementing major changes and transformative initiatives. Since in the absence of being proactive in implementing changes, those organizations will not survive (Carnall, 2007; Hayes, 2014; Slocum & Hellriegel, 2007).

The focus of the chapter is about organizational change that was implemented in Oxfam, one of the world's largest and best-known INGOs, founded in 1942. Today Oxfam is comprised of 20 national Oxfam affiliates that are confederated as Oxfam International and work in over 90 countries worldwide. According to Oxfam America (2014), the change process for the whole confederation was agreed by all the executive directors to make Oxfam more effective in their influencing work, more globally balanced, simplified, and streamlined ways of working.

I have based this chapter on my experiences in leading the One Oxfam change process in Ghana as part of the Oxfam confederation-wide change process called "Oxfam 2020." It points to the unique, constant, and recurring processes of change that shape many international

nongovernmental organizations. It will focus on the dimensions and effects of these change processes at the country or field offices where most of the INGOs "decentralize INGO management" (Ontract, 2010). The Oxfam 2020 process was implemented across 90 countries with 17 head offices and 54 regional offices. Thus, this chapter is not an assessment or evaluation of the entire "Oxfam 2020" process.[2] It is rather, a reflection of the change process I led in Ghana to create a "One Oxfam" out of the work and presence of three Oxfam affiliates (Oxfam America, Oxfam Great Britain, and Oxfam Denmark).[3]

Most studies of organizational change focus on the private sector. This chapter traces the implementation of this Oxfam-wide change process to the field office in Ghana and provides recommendations to INGOs, field offices, local partner organizations of NGOs, and scholars within the field. This paper will add to the limited number of personal reflections and systematic studies by NGO leaders on country-level change processes.

I begin with a summary of theories of change management and then describe the process of change that Oxfam went through as a confederation. The chapter continues with Ghana as a case study and concludes with lessons learned and recommendations for managing change for international NGOs and local partners of INGOs. It is important to share these reflections, as the change process had different effects at the country level, especially in terms of major changes in organizational structure, systems, thematic focus, external relations, people, and indeed the overall sector in each country.

Theories of Change Management

Hiatt and Creasy (2012) state that one of the underlying principles of change management is to ensure that the desired results are achieved. Change management has also been seen as a

major tool for organizational survival (Carnall, 2007; Franklin, 2014; Hayes, 2014; Holbeche, 2006; Slocum & Hellriegel, 2007).

Nongovernment Organizations and the Drivers and Need for Change

INGOs have an almost unavoidable need to change and adapt to an environment that is practically in continuous transformation. Change must be a part of their culture as they work to serve as well as transform society. Their ability to listen to the constituents and evolve accordingly is key. This ability to change means commitment to what they stand for in terms of their values should motivate them well to integrate a culture of change and innovation in their everyday lives, "as new ideas and ways of doing things are the main ingredients in sustained business success" (Adair, 2009, p. 1).

The reasons why INGOs need to be "change ready" organizations are many, these reasons include:

- the changing aid architecture (Crowley & Ryan, 2017),

- the need for local ownership of development programming (Crowley & Ryan, 2017; Ontract, 2010),

- the opportunities and power of information communication technology (Crowley & Ryan, 2017; Ontract, 2010),

- latent concern and critique as to the impact, effectiveness, accountability, and value of social development aid (Crowley & Ryan, 2016; Ontract, 2010),

- questioning their legitimacy as representing the people, or a group of people, that comprise their constituencies (Tujan, 2012),

- criticisms that NGOs have become "highly alienating hierarchies" and have become too sophisticated (Participatory Research in Asia, 2012, p. 11),

- because of their "loud silence" or inability to join the voices of frustrations and anger of citizen's movements and groups around the world (Banks & Hulme, 2012; PRIA, 2012, pp. 9–11).

Effective Approaches to Change

Although there is overwhelming evidence that change is an unavoidable part of organizational life (Holbeche, 2006), different approaches and prescriptions to change management have been advanced. In this section I highlight some of the most commonly used frameworks. Franklin (2014), for example, discusses the choice between benefits-led change and requirements-led change and recommends benefits-led change because it creates a clear link between improvements needed by the organization and what is needed in the change process, unlike the latter, which focuses more on those impacted by the change to make suggestions. To Hiatt and Creasy (2012) the most effective change process consists of preparing for change, managing the change, and reinforcing the change. Lewin's three-step model of freezing, unfreezing, and movement is also worthy of note, as well as Bridges's (2004) ending, beginning, and neutral zone. Lipsett et al. (1958) developed a seven-phase model of planned change based on an expansion on Lewin's three-stage model into the need for clarification or diagnosis of the client's problem, examination of alternative routes, and establishment of goals, moving from intentions into planned change pursuits, as all part of the prescriptive and complementary guidance on the approaches to organizational change for leaders to choose from.

Since organizational change is constant in most INGOs, irrespective of the prescriptions above and the drivers of any change, there are three important elements that should be overarching in the change endeavor, as proposed by Crowley and Ryan (2017). The first is content: the desired outcome and the vision for the change. The second is context: the reality of the environment wherein the change is undertaken. The third is approach: the process taken to get to the desired destination. I particularly like these three elements because they emphasize one of the theses of this article, which is how to reconcile the content of any change with the context, thereby using it to fashion the approach to use.

Oxfam

Oxfam's work includes emergency humanitarian relief, long-term development programs, and policy research and advocacy. Oxfam (2013) describes the scope of its work in terms of six key issues: active citizenship, gender justice, inequality and essential services, natural resources, saving lives and sustainable food.

In 2013 Oxfam embarked on Oxfam 2020, an effort to move from a system in which multiple, autonomous Oxfam affiliates could work in any given country to a new structure called the single management structure (SMS) in each country. This Oxfam 2020 process involved aligning its structure and operations, as well as its culture, mind-sets, and ways of working, relating and behaving under the banner of "One Oxfam" (Oxfam, 2017). According to Accenture (2016) this "One Oxfam" was critical as Oxfam needed to reexamine its management structures at the country, regional, and global levels, unifying its multiple global programs and campaigns under a single, integrated operating structure" (p. 2).

Oxfam (2015) states that the objective of the "One Oxfam" model was to create a much stronger and more effective Oxfam, where all staff in a country are reporting to one country director, who is reporting to the regional director, and regional directors report to one Oxfam program director. The change in vision was to:

➢ become more globally balanced and strengthen Oxfam's accountability, legitimacy, and relevance by becoming more rooted in the countries where Oxfam works,

➢ strengthen Oxfam's ability to influence—global, regional and national change and run better quality programs at all levels.

➢ Increase Oxfam's knowledge to build cost-effective, cross-affiliate, global knowledge-sharing platforms, which allows users to rapidly obtain information, support, and advice,

➢ simplify and streamline Oxfam's ways of working, especially in a country program, to be more effective and efficient, through greater integration and collaboration, and further reducing cost and complexity in country management structures, and

➢ become financially more sustainable.

The table below shows the distinguishing features of Oxfam change ambition at different levels of the organization.

Table 1: Key features of Oxfam change at different levels.

Country level	Regional Level	Headquarters of affiliates' relationship to countries
One single country strategy	One single Oxfam regional strategy	Affiliates engage in new ways to countries and regions, as partner affiliates and some as executing affiliates.
One single Oxfam team	One single lean regional platform to provide strategic leadership built on the core principles: 1) contributes to country empowerment, 2) generates significant program management costs savings, and 3) aligns with the One Oxfam principles of global balance, knowledge, and simplicity, etc.	As partner affiliates: add value in coordinating their relationships across the globe with a range of country directors, regional directors, partners, and stakeholders, as well as in providing funding (restricted and unrestricted), influencing capacity, and unique thematic or functional expertise and also act as focal points in representing Oxfam to their governments or institutions in their home country, partner affiliates are to maximize institutional and public funding for the whole of the confederation through building country, regional, and global programs, have representation in the Country Governance Group (CGG). They can also engage with countries as a strategic funding partner/specialization partner/ad hoc partner
One single budget	One single budget	As executing affiliates, they will be the Oxfam affiliate member organization that has been identified and agreed to be responsible for operational support in each country, under the oversight of Oxfam's country director. The executing affiliate will supply the country with the necessary financial tools and systems to ensure proper budgeting, tracking, and good financial management.
One Country Director	One regional director reporting to the Oxfam	Global programme director who has overall responsibility for programming in the organization and all that happens in the countries.

reporting to 1 regional director	international programme director	
Country Governance Group	Regional governance group	
One Executing affiliate	One executing affiliate	
Partner affiliate(s)	Several partner affiliates	

From the table above, one can see that this change process was corporate-wide and affected countries, regions, and headquarters, resulting in major alterations in how the organization was pursuing its strategic goals: both external and operational. This change process could also be described as "corporate transformation" (Dunphy & Stace, 1993), since it involved revisions of the "interaction patterns and altered power and status" (Todnem, 2005). This system-wide approach according to Jayawickrama (2018b) sought to "replace the prior model at the country level with a single team, single country strategy and single country operating model, with affiliates in executing affiliate (EA) and partner affiliate (PA) roles, complemented by Oxfam International regional platforms and an OI global programme team" (p. 1). This model of the "One Oxfam" also involved a "complex, multi-pronged, multi-year change process covering every country and region in which Oxfam works" (Jayawickrama, 2018a, p. 1). Finally, Oxfam's change process had what Kotter (2009) calls a "strong guiding coalition," as the change program for the whole confederation was being agreed to "by all the executive directors to influence more effectively, be more globally balanced and simplify and streamline ways of working" (Oxfam America, 2014) .

Case Study: Ghana Context

Three Oxfam affiliates (Oxfam Great Britain, Oxfam America, and Oxfam Denmark) had been operating separately in the past in Ghana. Ghana, a country of western Africa situated on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea, although relatively small in area and population, is one of the leading countries of Africa, partly because of its considerable natural wealth and partly because it was the first black African country south of the Sahara to achieve independence from colonial rule. Ghana is often portrayed as a development success story in Africa. As a beacon of stability and democracy for over 20 years, it halved the proportion of people living in poverty in the 1990s and has held peaceful and internationally recognized elections, the most recent one in December 2016 (DFID, 2018).

Ghana today is a functioning democracy that has made remarkable strides across several human development indicators, such as education (SEND, Oxfam, & Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition, 2018). However, despite the positive economic growth and significant poverty reduction initiatives in Ghana, income inequality has been growing steadily for several years, which is a serious threat to poverty reduction efforts and must be tackled (Osei-Assibey, 2014). Inequality is a major barrier to overcoming poverty and exclusion and to building prosperous, cohesive societies. Nearly 300,000 more men, women, and children could have been lifted out of poverty in Ghana between 2006 and 2013, had inequality not increased during this period (SEND et al., 2018). The World Bank (2018) puts Ghana's Human Capital Index at 44%. This index measures access and quality of education, health, nutrition, and social protection. Therefore, the key development challenges in Ghana currently include (1) how to address this issue of inequality to ensure that the poorest people in Ghana are not left behind as the country grows, (2) how to secure a government that is more accountable and transparent to its citizens and reduce corruption, (3)

create employment for the teaming unemployed youth, and (4) develop the private sector in a way that benefits more women and men throughout Ghana. The current focus of government and some key partners (INGOs and donors) is on helping Ghana to shift its reliance on aid to becoming a strong trading partner for many of its current donors, especially Western donors. The president of Ghana has called for a "Ghana Beyond Aid" where Ghana will decrease the dependence on development aid with a push for increased domestic revenue mobilization and trade relations with major bilateral and multilateral donors.
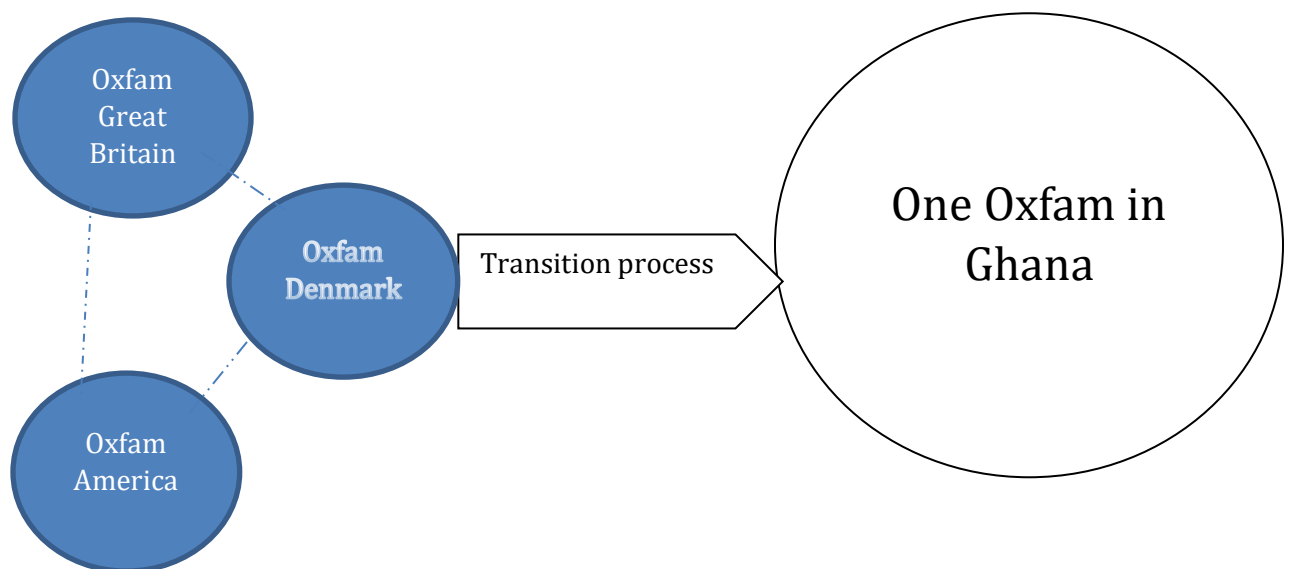
Oxfam in Ghana Change Process

Of the three affiliates, Oxfam Great Britain was the first to start work in Ghana in 1986, focusing on long-term development programming in water and sanitation, livelihoods, and education, with gender and advocacy added on later as transversal themes. Oxfam Denmark began operating in Ghana in 2000, intervening in the areas of public participation in local governance, organizational development of civil society organizations, and later expanding its portfolio to include education support with a strong focus on influencing education policy, financing education and youth empowerment, and the extractive industry work around tax and fiscal justice. Oxfam America was a leading INGO in the extractive sector, working with national NGOs in Ghana's extractive industry since 2002, initially supporting organizations working on issues related to gold mining in Ghana. From 2008, Oxfam America engaged on oil sector issues in Ghana, playing a leadership role with Ghanaian CSOs on oil, gas, and mining sector issues with significant expertise and a record of research on extractive industry revenue and expenditure. Thus, all these three affiliates were working to address some of the development challenges of Ghana described above.

At the country level, like most of the field offices within Oxfam, the vision for the change process was for Oxfam in Ghana to:

1. create a one-country strategy, with one team, one budget, and one business system, replacing multiple presences by multiple affiliates in each country,

2. replace the multiple affiliate country directors with the country director, employed by Oxfam International, who leads and manages the country,

3. and ensure that all country directors report to a regional director.

The diagram below represents how the three affiliates existed prior to One Oxfam.

Figure 1. Oxfam affiliates in Ghana before and after the organizational change.

The Main Deliverables of the Change Process for Oxfam in Ghana

As part of the implementation of the change process, all Oxfam country programs had to undertake a series of processes related to the transition. The following are deliverables and outputs that took place in Ghana related to the transition.

The first was an Oxfam country strategy (OCS), which outlines the areas of focus and the approach that Oxfam takes in each country and is aligned to the confederation-wide Oxfam Strategic Plan. The OCS in Ghana was a product of a deep, reflective, and consultative process involving all key stakeholders. The process included a review of and learning from the previous joint country analysis and strategy, updated context analysis to profile current socioeconomic and political issues and trends, consultation and strategy development workshop with partners and stakeholders as a basis to inform the direction, choices, and options made in the strategy. The writing team was made up of mix of staff from each of the affiliates. The output was a very good country strategy in synchrony with the challenges of Ghana, Oxfam strategic priorities, and the government of Ghana priorities.

After the OCS, there was a need for a country operational model (COM). The COM is a document that guides countries to identify and describe how they would organize the resources, functions, services, and ways of working at the country level so that the OCS would be most effectively delivered (Oxfam Guidance Notes n.d.). Thus, the COM described how change will be implemented and resourced through joint action and accountability and within a multi-affiliate framework in Oxfam. The COM in Ghana was the product of a co-creation by the three affiliates. The process began with the establishment of a multi-affiliate working group called the country management team (CMT) that was comprised primarily of the senior management staff of all three affiliates operating in Ghana. The team also established a country change team (CCT) comprised of the affiliate country directors/representatives and the finance and administration managers of the Oxfam affiliates in Ghana. The CCT had a role in strategic oversight of the CMT. Terms of references were developed for both the CMT and CCT, spelling out their mandates, guiding principles, and ways of working. A follow-up meeting was convened and task forces were formed

for working on various sections of the COM. The CCT worked concurrently to address issues relating to budget, staffing, legal issues, and management questions. This process was marked by an exceptionally high level of coordination and collaboration among all the affiliates in Ghana.

To guide the country program during the implementation of One Oxfam there was a need to design a country transition plan (CTP). The CTP identified central tasks, processes, and milestones that needed to happen. These were put in a timeline and agreement was reached on the resources and responsibilities needed for implementation. Therefore, it was the CTP that was the basis for the initiation of the process for the transition. This process involved all staff in the organization, as each had a crucial role to play related to the transition of the department in which the person worked. This inclusion of all staff was an important leadership choice we made to secure an incremental addition of all staff in the organization change process.

A human resources transition plan (HRTP) for the human resources (HR) aspects of the transition process was also developed based on a HR consultation paper, a document used to consult staff on the HR aspects of the change process. This HR consultation paper reflected the thinking by Oxfam that issues around job security and how HR issues were handled should be transparent, as a way of instilling confidence in the entire process. The process for the elaboration of the HRTP was supported by an external HR practitioner and lawyers. The CCT also set up a liaison group made up of representatives of staff from all affiliates as well as the CCT. The process was quite elaborate, consultative, and consistent with people-led approaches (Holbeche, 2006). For most staff in the country program, this HRTP was key, as it had important responsibilities related to transitioning staff, job description, job assessment, slotting and the interviewing process, recruitment, selection procedure, reward, and redundancy.

Finally, there was a "Go live" event, a name given to the official expression that "One Oxfam" in Ghana had come to stay. Going live meant that the preconditions required by Oxfam for a country program to transition to One Oxfam had been met. In Ghana, this meant that we covered aspects of the "pre-preparation," like writing the Oxfam county strategy; established a change team and the country governance group; "preparation items" like designing the COM, HR, and legal questionnaire; and that "planning items," like the CTP, HR plan, staffing plan, and assets transfer list, etc., were in place. The country program organized external and internal "go- live" events. The internal event included a retreat for all staff, bringing in staff across six different field offices who convened for the first time in one place. This retreat focused on team-building activities to foster a sense of togetherness to reinforce our new shared identity and to bridge gaps in communication. The external "go-live" event was aimed at engaging with all stakeholders to communicate the changes in strategy, structure, and relationships with them. The publicity around the external go live event was also important for the public to understand Oxfam's new direction.

Successful Change Management

There are diverse opinions on what constitutes successful change (Holbeche, 2006). Some writers have indicated that the best way of assessing successful change is by tracking the process against time and achievement, thus tracking the full implementation of the change (Franklin, 2014; Hiatt, 2014). Some have suggested a focus on the benefits to staff and key stakeholders to the point that individuals are willing to change their behavior, implement the change, and reinforcement in place to sustain it through commitment to the organization (Franklin, 2014; Hiatt, 2016; Holbeche, 2006; Slocum & Hierregel, 2016). Franklin (2014) has suggested identifying what proportion of the old ways of working has been dismantled. The balance score card by Kaplan and Norton (1996) has

also been used to measure past performance in an organizational change process in financial terms, with measures of the drivers of future performance. This score card measures four categories: financial, customer, internal business process, and innovation and learning. Carnall (2007) proposes three indicators for effective change: (1) awareness (stakeholders are aware and buy into the vision), (2) capability (stakeholders believe they can develop the necessary skills), and (3) inclusion (stakeholders involved feel that they value their new jobs, and opportunities, etc.).

For the reflection on how successful the Oxfam process was, I have chosen to measure success by tracking the implementation of the transition timeline, benefits to staff and stakeholders, financial performance, internal business process, and learning and dismantling old ways of working, as stated above. Overall, by the time Oxfam in Ghana went live in September 2017, two years after the process began, it had accomplished all the tasks related to the timeline, making the organization third among 12 countries in West Africa to have achieved this feat. Oxfam in Ghana also became one of the INGOs with the most diverse of portfolios (economic justice issues, active citizenship, extractive industry governance issues, and enhancing the financing of essential social services) in Ghana. In addition, the country program also now has a good mix of partnerships, working with trades unions, farmer groups, social movements, think tanks, academia, women's rights organizations, the private sector, multilateral agencies, and traditional institutes, among others. Oxfam in Ghana also had an increased financial turnover of $6,000,000 annually, one of the highest within the INGO sector in Ghana. Furthermore, it is important to state that, regarding benefits to staff, overall there was a feeling that staff are now part of a big organization, with people having wider responsibilities and a good opportunity to learn as part of a new confederated organization.

It is important to state, however, that entire process has not ended, so the benefits of the reorganization cannot be entirely gauged, also staff still raise concerns about the terms and conditions of work and ways of working for the new Oxfam in Ghana, which is being considered. Regarding "learning and dismantling old ways of working," based on the prescriptive nature of some of the change protocols, for example using the systems of the executive affiliates, overall this is being complied with, meaning that some old ways of working are being discarded, though sometimes reluctantly by some colleagues.

Why We Were Successful

Strategies for creating Oxfam in Ghana are very consistent with the literature on successful change management, as it confirmed the need for a change support team, resourcing the process, the role of effective communication, and giving the process the time it requires. The first contributing factor to the success of the process in Ghana was the change support network. Oxfam Great Britain, one of the key Oxfam affiliates, established the change support network (CSN) to offer support to the change process through leadership team coaching and offering a "Being an Oxfam Team" (BAOT) workshop to support the "One Oxfam" process. This support also included an Oxfam West Africa Regional human resources business partner working with the country teams on many of the practicalities and anxieties of the transition process, especially those related to the human resources transition plan. This CSN was instrumental in preparing the country teams regarding the rudiments of the change process. They also offered coaching to country directors to support their leadership challenges. In the case of Ghana, I applied and got support for two such visits, one on BAOT and another on leadership team coaching. These support systems opened opportunities for

staff and the CLT to build trust and empowered all to take ownership in building the team we all desired.

Preparation of the teams for the change was also another success factor. In early 2015, even before the One Oxfam process was launched in Ghana, Oxfam GB and Oxfam Denmark independently used their annual retreats to engage consultants to take staff through organizational change and change management training. Having an opportunity to discuss change was quite good, as it enabled and excited people to look at change from a perspective of a constant and a need to prepare for it. This also helped to prepare people for the psychological as well as inner reorientation and self-redefinition needed to incorporate future changes in their lives. For example, Oxfam Denmark contracted local financial advisors to prepare staff on how to manage their finances after receiving their end of service benefits. A constant refrain that leadership also used was the "co-creation" of a new organization, which I think had an impact on how people felt about the change and also affected positively their commitment response and contributions.

Another successful factor was the country governance group (CGG). In the transition process, a CGG was set up in each country as a governing body to oversee the transition process and endorse decisions and approve documents by the change team. For Ghana, the CGG had external representatives from all three Oxfam affiliates in Ghana and Oxfam regional platform in West Africa who were all very experienced. Their role was quite significant, as they served as the link between the country and the individual affiliates on a host of issues, they also served as the informal pressure valve for grievances from staff. Their role was also significant in terms of how they interacted with Ghana through the country director and their level of objectivity, as well as having responsibility for the big picture change in mind. The members of the CGG were also in

decision-making positions, making it easy for the country program to spar with and seek approval for key documents like the COM and CTP, among others, easily.

The development of a new country leadership team (CLT) also supported the process greatly in Ghana. I saw the need to reform a CLT for the new "One Oxfam" because we did not want to continue using the transitional change management team as the new CLT. I believed the leadership team for the change process should be different from that for the new organization, as the mandates were different. So, I approached CSN for support and an organization development consultant with CSN was contracted to support Ghana. Following conversations with staff and leaders, a three-day retreat about the formation of the CLT was held and staff were invited to take a Myers Briggs-type personality assessment. These results led to some deeper work around trust and identity, self-awareness, and offering challenges and support for the kind of collective leadership needed for the future. The retreat culminated in a team charter that committed us to values and behaviors that we would hold ourselves accountable for in our everyday practice. The entire process resulted in a strong CLT, based on our collective responsibility and leadership philosophy, which made the group very supportive of the change and transformational agenda. I generally think that there was a high sense of dedication and commitment from the leadership teams related to the process: from the transitional team (CMT, CCT) to the current CLT. Everyone's commitment to collective leadership was, for me, crucial.

On a personal level, my academic and professional interest in leading organizational change was also a significant factor in the process. Based on my reflections of the INGO environment 10 years ago, I decided that leading change was one of the major competencies required for the sector, so I took a leading innovation and change Master of Arts course at York University between 2011 and 2012. The course I took and the knowledge I gained prepared me

adequately for the role I played, since I understood the complexity of leading change, especially dealing with resistance and focusing on the people side of things, among others. This prior exposure helped me to not be surprised by some of the challenges I was confronted with during the change process in Oxfam in Ghana, especially related to securing buy-in and commitment from some staff from the beginning.

The role of effective communication was also a major boost to the process. The period around planning and managing the change was very anxious overall, with a high level of cynicism from some staff, which was based on prior experiences of change process of which they were part. The CMT decided to communicate with all staff immediately after every meeting related to the change process. A two-person communication team from two different affiliates were tasked with the role of communicating with the staff, which allowed them to ask questions that would be answered at our next meeting. This regular communication was quite helpful, as it provided all the needed information, but also secured transparency in the process.

Finally, giving the change process the time it requires is key. Sometimes the challenge with the timeline in a change process is the tendency to be too mechanical. One thing that we used to our benefit was to be realistic with our time during implementation. This flexibility was important, as we had to respond to contextual issues and sometimes restart a process based on complaints from some stakeholders. So being flexible with the process was quite important, as it also built confidence in the entire team. For example, Ghana changed its "go live" timeline three times during the process, and the outcome was more enduring than it would have been if we had pushed for implementation without taking other issues into consideration.

What Could Have Been Better?

The process could have been enriched if we had use local consultants who were related to the organization development process. One of the requirements of the transition was for country directors to hire local consultants or a specific change manager to support work at the country level, if found pertinent. For some reason this was overlooked, thus apart from a local HR consultant, we did not think of hiring a local change manager or consultant in Ghana to support us. I think we missed an opportunity to enrich the process by using a Ghanaian change or organization development (OD) consultant who would have brought some appreciation of cultural issues at play. As Ovadge (2015) opines, to support successful change in Africa, there is a need for deep understanding of the sociocultural context. This need for local consultants in the OD process is confirmed by Sulamoyo (2012), that the complexities of culture within organizations and countries may not always be understood based on OD frameworks and models only. According to Sulamoyo (2012), this is because the dependency on frameworks and models alone can impede the successful applications by change consultants. As with any culture, some aspects could undermine or reenforce particular management models. To overcome this, Lewis (2004) suggests an anthropological perspective to assist in overcoming cultural resistance, especially when dealing with change.

In addition, I think as country director, I could have worked with other peer country directors proactively. In retrospect, Ghana should have consulted with peers within the country or even CDs within Oxfam in the process, especially since the Oxfam process encouraged and enjoined countries to link and talk with one another.[4] This also could have allowed peer INGO CDs in Ghana to share their perspectives leading change from the top.

Furthermore, the absence of a theory of change at the country level was also a challenge. Even though Oxfam as a confederation had a theory of change for the process, with an emphasis on a stronger and more effective organization to enable it to become a vehicle for a worldwide influencing network, there was a strong need for a theory at the country level in Ghana too, even though we were implementing a vision from the Oxfam confederation. Thus, Oxfam in Ghana, as a part of the process, needed what Franklin (2014) calls "the prototype," that is the physical manifestation of change. As suggested by Hayes (2014) this supports organizations' focus on the likely impact of the change to identify what the future will look like.

Also, managing the implications of a large-scale change in the organization at the country level was not easy, as it involved "corporate transformations," or different changes happening in the organization at the same time, and with expectations that countries would continue to run regular programming as usual. It is fair to state that the organization had an emergent approach to change management, where they were learning as they went, but the establishment of the CSN was quite helpful. But generally, especially in West Africa, where the change affected over 10 affiliates, three regional offices, and presences in over 12 countries, sometimes staff were uncertain, which means that requests for support from some countries were left unanswered. This is because staff were either on their way out of Oxfam, just joining, or not sure of their future within the organization. These uncertainties affected responses from the countries related to key deliverables during the transition process.

Lessons Learned from Oxfam in Ghana on Change Theories and Cultural Relativity

Based on the experiences above, I have also reflected on how to reconcile some of my theoretical knowledge and practical experiences in leading change management with issues of cultural

relativity. This concern is crucial because literature on management is most often from the West and includes a lot of assumptions about people responding to change without examining the potential of culture, as individual and group motivation will vary according to cultural preferences and a country's level of economic development.

This need to reconcile cultural relativity to change management is confirmed by Hofstede (1980), especially the influence of values and culture on some of aspects of organization management. For example, in prescriptions for how change is managed, there is a high expectation of participation as a means of getting staff to take ownership of the change process (Jackson, 2004). There is a need reconcile this with Blunt and Jones's (1992) and Kigundu's (1988) findings that African cultural groups are "high in uncertainty avoidance and high in power distance. This high uncertainty avoidance and power distance culture may have implications for the outcome of a typical change process because change has high uncertainty and so asking people to participate in change management can only increase their anxiety and uncertainty" (Jackson, 2004).

My experience also raises questions about the choice of leadership required in an African setting to manage change. There is an over-emphasis on the need for transformational leadership during a change process, based on a claim that these kinds of leaders put more emphasis on very high-change competency rather than on authentic, charismatic, and transitional leadership models (Slocum & Hieregel, 2008). Also, many claim that transformational leaders provide inspirational motivation, create intellectual stimulation, and foster idealized influence (Slocum & Hieregel, 2008). However, because there is a danger that staff may develop a cynical attitude toward change based on their experiences, the models best suited are authentic leadership because authentic leaders create hope, reflect trust, show positive emotions, and stimulate follower identification.

The key lesson in the literature is that though one can use transformative leadership to manage transitional change, such as its ability to facilitate organizational change (Ovadje & Aryee, 2018). Misati and Walumba (2018) state that authentic leadership is most needed, since authentic leaders are "more sensitive to the needs of employees, they build credibility and trust and are willing to learn." These attributes are important for change implementation, especially in Africa, because of uncertainty avoidance culture and its related sense of insecurity during change processed because of a mistrust of African leadership. Authentic leaders appear more suitable in the African context for change processes since they communicate with employees, empower them, and facilitate a favorable organizational culture and climate. This point was confirmed during the transition process in Ghana, as after very thorough and effective communication and participatory processes, one recurrent theme during the team consultation process with an external consultant was the need to deal with people's mistrust. Thus, the sort of leadership required and expected must offer a greater degree of assurance and security than the "thrusting, demanding, change driven person of the western world" (Blunt & Jones, 1997). To conclude, I am not implying that an authentic leadership style is the only solution in dealing with change, but it is important to explore some of its traits and apply them as needed.

Recommendations

In the section below, I am offering three types of recommendations—one for INGOs, another for country offices of INGOs, especially in Africa, and finally to local CSOs in Africa—on how to be ready for ongoing change.

On International NGOs Managing Change across an Organization

There is the need for large-scale INGOs to secure a culture of change readiness in the organization as part of its induction of staff because an organization's ability to respond quickly and efficiently to changing circumstances is fundamental to its current and future success. This assures that the organization becomes "change-able" (Holbeche, 2006). International NGOs should, therefore, consider change management as part of their induction and on-boarding program or training, especially for leaders. This is based on my experience that change is constant in most INGOs, as strategic leadership is always in anticipatory mode, but sometimes this culture of being change-ready could have been stronger.

Even though most big changes from INGOs are initiated and led from the head offices, I suggest that the emphasis on indigenizing change support within country offices should be compelling rather than persuasive. The need to embed expertise from the countries who could make the process more contextually relevant is also based on literature on organizational management. This also takes into consideration the potential of culture; as a local consultant will understand cultural nuances better in the application and support of any change process.

INGOs should support southern country offices to articulate a theory of change. Large-scale INGOs normally have their own theory of change, as with Oxfam. Even though Oxfam globally had a theory of change, there is a need for country offices implementing change processes to also design their own theory of change. As country offices' role in implementing visions are most often derived from their headquarters, it is important that country programs consider envisioning the likely impact of the change for their part of the organization. Thus, country directors or leadership teams as change managers should consider very early on developing a new vision of what they and others think the organization should look like (Hayes, 2014). This could take the form of a joint and consultative process of what the likely impact of the change for their

part of the organization will be and especially if the vision offers sufficient promise to make the effort worthwhile (Schein, 1996).

During the process of the implementation of the change process, Oxfam commissioned real-time evaluations of the organizational change process based on experiences from other sections of the confederation. This real-time evaluation was helpful, as it was used subsequently to alter the process and some of the approaches related to the organizational change process.[5] There is a need to provide resources for the change process, as has been highlighted by several authors such as Kotter (1996) and Carnall (2007), which was confirmed during my experience, as we were generally well-resourced. For that matter, a lack of financial resources was never a key deterrent in some of the initiatives and processes we took on during the change process.

Recommendations for Country Offices of International NGOs in Africa Leading Organization Change

African leaders can use transformative leadership to manage transitional change, but authentic leadership is preferred because it is more beneficial in areas where the mistrust of leaders is high, such as in Africa. This is especially important while organizations are undergoing change, when there is a high level of insecurity, which is a reflection of Africa's uncertainty avoidance nature. Thus, authentic leaders are more suitable in the African context during change processes because they communicate with employees, empower them, and facilitate a favorable organizational culture and climate. So, leaders of INGOs should consider enhancing their authentic leadership styles as part of their on-going professional development.

As collective leadership is key in leading organizations effectively, each of member of the leadership team in an organization should make a personal commitment to what that person will do to manage and lead any fall out from change or any change initiative. This personal commitment

is important, as change management is the role of all employees in positions of leadership in the organization. Follow-up should also be part of performance goal-setting in the organization.

Most major change processes take more time than anticipated. It is, therefore, very important to be realistic during the planning stage, especially when it comes to reconciling the time, effort, and resources needed for mainly internal stakeholders (staff) to undertake these changes while still maintaining their "core production." Organizational leaders also need to be a little more realistic in understanding that the changes are long-term, which will help with anxiety. Realism is key, especially in discussions with external stakeholders (CSO partners and donors) so that their expectations will be reasonable. My experience leading a major change process is that it affects key deliverables of external strategic pursuits and is sometimes very stressful for all staff due to a level of anxiety.

Anxiety during a change process is also a concern for external stakeholders, such as government agencies, CSO allies, partners, and donors. It is, therefore, important that organizations hold "initiative conversations" (Ovadje & Aryee, 2018) to introduce stakeholders to the change process by briefing them on the triggers and planning, conduct joint risk analyses, and agree on contingency plans, among other things. Leadership of INGOs should welcome the perspective of all their stakeholders. In addition to establishing a regular communication system, face-to-face meetings should be held with key stakeholders to keep them abreast on the process. Finally, as most international NGOs work with local CSOs and NGOs, with some focus on capacity-building, serious consideration should be given to supporting these local partner organizations to help them cope with change, navigate change, and even broadly to deal with uncertainty.

Recommendations for Local Partners (CSOs) Working with INGOs That Are Always Changing

As most INGOs are in a constant state of flux and sometimes focus more on their internal organizational processes, the following are suggestions for local CSO partners to support their change readiness. Local partner organizations should understand the processes in which international NGOs are involved to secure their role in the process, by sharing their experiences as well as their anxieties. It is commonplace for such INGO changes to focus too much on their internal organizations. However, most of these changes do affect the partner organizations gravely, through changes in the themes of operations, approaches to work, or even the geographic focus of interventions. Some changes by INGOs have resulted in the partial closing of local organizations. Therefore, there is a need for CSOs to anticipate and plan for change and uncertainty and reflect on the implications this could have on their relationship with INGOs and to create a change readiness protocol. This is not to say that organizations should be in a constant state of flux. I agree with Abrahamson (2000), that to change successfully, organizations need to also have periods of stasis.

Because INGOs are always leading one form of organizational change or another, coupled with the fact that the rate of change in most parts of Africa is accelerating and becoming increasingly turbulent in many ways, especially for organizations (Zoogah & Nkomo, 2013), leaders, therefore, have a responsibility to "anticipate, initiate, monitor, interpret, and manage change" well (Ovadje & Aryee, 2018). This need to anticipate and manage change requires that leadership and, indeed, all staff should be taken through an orientation and appreciation of principles, challenges, and responses to organizational change. For local CSO leaders, it is critical to recognize that their key role is to deal with uncertainty. This is emphasized by several scholars (e.g., Carnall, 2007; Kotter, 1996) and confirmed by Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, and Liu, (2008), that leadership is one of the most significant factors influencing change in organizations.

A major reflection after leading the change process resulting in the One Oxfam model in Ghana is whether CSOs in Africa should consider mergers or strategic partnerships based on complimentary competencies as a result of diminishing aid and the need to be lean and efficient. For example, local service delivery organizations should consider a merger or strategic partnerships with think tanks or research-based organizations. This could help CSOs to maximize their size and utilize complementary competencies as well their resources intelligently, especially as most CSOs have challenges with high overhead.

Finally, the dependency of local CSOs on INGOs for major funding makes them vulnerable to the implications of change. Inasmuch as some of these changes have resulted in the abrupt conclusion of funding for some of these organizations, I suggest that African CSOs should try to look for increased opportunities for domestic voluntarism and resources to sustain their organizational pursuits to insulate themselves from the vagaries of over-dependency on INGOs. Since some of the countries are assuming middle-income statuses with changes in the way bilateral and multi-donors work, NGOs will have to examine diversifying their funding base and look for potential within the local philanthropic landscape.

Notes

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[1] Organizations that are generally international in scope, primarily have their headquarters in Western countries with country offices or outposts in several other countries and deal with specific issues across many countries.

[2] Oxfam 2020 is the name of the Oxfam change program for the confederation, with the year 2020 as the deadline for creating the new Oxfam.

[3] One Oxfam was the product of moving from a system where different or multiple affiliates would work in each country to a single management structure with one country director, one office, and one strategy.

[4] It would have been helpful to speak with lCDs of other international Organizations like Care International, WaterAid and World Vision.

[5] Finding a way to deal with legacy projects was one of the processes that changed as a result of the real-time evaluation.

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10

Social Capital, Civil Society, and Social Change: The CLP Model Community Life Project, Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper presents a model of grassroots civil society engagement, simply known as the Community Life Project (CLP) Model. The model demonstrates how the social capital embedded in the rich associational life of grassroots communities is an important resource for promoting social change. It also highlights two very salient realities: one, the existence of a popular civil society distinct from a clichéd civil society; two, grassroots civil society is largely excluded from the sphere of power and influence not only by the political and business classes, but also by a narrow conceptualization of what constitutes civil society. The CLP model provides answers to key questions in actualizing popular participation: What is civil society in the African setting? How does Africa include the excluded populations? And how can long-term, inclusive, civil society engagement in the pursuit of democracy and social justice be sustained?

Introduction

Since the 1990s, there has been a proliferation of donor-funded, formal civil society organizations (CSOs) in Africa. Many such organizations are actively engaged in promoting development, democracy, transparency, and accountability in Nigeria. However, a large section of grassroots

civil society has been marginalized by this process. How does one devise an effective mechanism for grassroots civil society engagement in the political space, scale up successful initiatives, and build and sustain inclusive, resilient, citizen movements that continue to face daunting challenges?

This paper presents a model of grassroots civil society engagement that has been remarkably successful in sustaining inclusive civic participation. It engages non-conventional sections of civil society from a social capital paradigm. The model has been tried and tested for over 25 years. The model was subjected to a formal independent evaluation in 2007 before it was taken to a national scale. It has also been the subject of an externally commissioned case study on the scaling up of successful development interventions. It embodies some of the best principles of participatory community engagement. It is simple and adaptable. It provides a social framework for addressing just about any development and governance issue. This paper describes the CLP model and discusses its critical success factors: why it works and why it has withstood the test of time. The hope is that the CLP model will contribute to solutions on how to actualize participatory democracy and achieve social justice in the African context.

Literature Review

The concept of participatory development received serious attention in the 1990s in the international community (Rahman, 1995, p. 26). Beginning in the 1980s, several international human rights documents emerged expressing people's right to participate. The United Nations General Assembly (1986) declared that "the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development." In 1990, under the auspices of the

United Nations, representatives of African governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) adopted the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation in Arusha (Meyer, 2018, pp. 259–260). Participation, defined as "access to decision making and power" (UNDP, 1993, p. 21), became intertwined with the notion of empowerment. Development practitioners and governments began to focus on approaches and strategies to advance community participation and empowerment (Craig & Mayo, 1995, p.1).

A number of development NGOs recorded remarkable growth on the continent over the same period, due to two major factors. Irked by the perceived poor performance of African governments, the World Bank, donors, and Western countries began to shift international aid from governments to NGOs (Chege, 1999, p. 6). NGOs were seen as "filling the gap" (Ulleberg, 2009, p. 9), providing services in various sectors. Secondly, the return to civil rule and multi-party politics in many African countries opened the space for civic engagement (Adar, Finizio, & Meyer, 2018). The idea of building civil society actors to hold government accountable and promote good governance increasingly became a "policy prescription" (Willems, 2014, p. 47) in international aid circles. The concept of civil society in Africa became narrowly construed as "formal," "NGO-style organizations." Many such civil society organizations (CSOs) were supported by international development agencies to become actively engaged in promoting development, democracy, transparency, and accountability in various African countries. The consequence is a dominant tendency to ignore the existence of other forms of civil society (Willems, 2014; Nkwachukwu, 2009) and the exclusion of traditional African grassroots civil society (Mamattah, 2014; Tar, 2014) from mainstream civic engagement. This, in turn, reinforced inequality in civic engagement and popular participation between grassroots civil society and their more elitist counterparts.

The question of who constitutes civil society in Africa is critical to achieving popular participation. The non-inclusion of grassroots actors has created major gaps between rhetoric and reality. As a result, participatory development remains largely elusive both at the national and regional levels in Africa. Admittedly, NGO-type CSOs have made significant contributions to advancing development and democratization, but their efforts are yet to garner the scale required to tip the balance in favor of the disadvantaged majority. One of the causes is a poor representation of grassroots voices in national and regional policy structures due to the urban and elitist bias of "influential" CSOs (Ikome & Kode, 2018, p. 252). Scholars have pointed out the need to acknowledge and include Africa's rich heritage of associational life in both the conceptualization and engagement of civil society. As Nkwachukwu (2009) points out, "it is important to broaden the concept to include traditional African organizations, such as communal, religious and occupational groups; such groups played an important role in the anti-colonial political movements. Including them in the definition of civil society will give a better insight into civil society's role in advancing democracy and governance in Africa" (p. 82).

Tocqueville was the first theorist to draw attention to the link between associational life and democratic culture. Tocqueville's all-embracing list of associations states: "Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types—religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute" (as cited in Putnam, 1993, p. 89). In fact, several studies support the strong connection between associational life and democracy, development and social change. Apart from Putnam's (1993) survey of civic life in Italy, a survey of five countries by Almond and Verba found that members of associations displayed more political astuteness and participation (p. 90).

Furthermore, a case study of developing countries, by Esman and Uphoff concludes that "a vigorous network of membership organizations is essential to any serious attempt to overcome mass poverty.... we cannot visualize any strategy of rural development combining growth in productivity with broad distribution of benefits in which participatory local organizations are not prominent" (as cited in Putman, 1993, p. 90).

Networks of membership organizations are strongly associated with social capital, which embody the dynamics of the relationships and social ties through which people access resources for their personal and collective interests and advancement. However, there is no consensus among scholars on how to define or measure social capital. Schneider (2016) highlights three schools of thought from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, led by Bourdieu in the field of philosophy and anthropology, Coleman in sociology, and Putnam in political science. Putman (1993) views social capital as "social networks, norms of reciprocity, mutual assistance and trustworthiness" (p. 211). Bourdieu considers it a "capital of social connections, honorability and respectability" (as cited in Adam & Rončević, 2003, p. 159). Two major blocks emerge from these schools. While Putman examines the role and implications of social capital in civic engagement, Coleman and Bourdieu focus more on the impact of social capital in regard to social justice issues. From a nonprofit perspective, Schneider (2016) defines social capital as "Relationships based in patterns of reciprocal, enforceable trust that enable people and institutions to gain access to resources like social services, volunteers, or funding" (p. 210). Social capital can also be understood through its various features such as trust and norms, which can be experienced as "bonding," "bridging," and "linking capital" (Schneider, 2016, p. 217). Bonding capital describes ties among people with a common cultural affinity, and bridging social capital describes relationships nurtured across groups over time, whereas linking social capital describes ties that connect people "across power

relations" in a hierarchical relationship. The breath of applications of social capital is such that, as Adam and Rončević (2003) put it, "In fact one may approach practically any social entity or situation through the conceptual framework of social capital" (p. 157).

This paper addresses the role of social capital, networks, and associational life in the CLP Model of grassroots civil society engagement for promoting social change in Nigeria. The concept of social change adopted here is the one described by Wagner (2017) as the change that "addresses the root causes of problems," which "implies that in addition to attending to the community's immediate needs, the root causes of those needs must be understood and addressed" (p. 237).

The concept of civil society used in this essay include the groups Nkwachukwu (2009) has described as "traditional African Organizations" (p. 82). This broader conceptualization of civil society is becoming popular in social development circles. As stated by the World Economic Forum (2013):

> Civil society is recognized as encompassing far more than a mere "sector" dominated by the NGO community: Civil Society today includes an ever wider and more vibrant range of organized and un-organized groups, as new society actors blur the boundaries between sectors and experiment with new organizational forms, both online and off. (p. 5)

The CLP Model of Inclusive, Grassroots Civil Society Participation

The CLP Model was developed by Community Life Project (CLP), one of Nigeria's leading NGOs working with grassroots civil society to promote development and social change. Founded in 1992, CLP has a vast network of grassroots partners in 234 of Nigeria's 774 Local Government Areas

across the nation's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). CLP's core partnerships have been sustained for over 25 years and new groups are being added. Its grassroots partners include networks of informal sector occupational groups and mutual-benefit associations such as artisans (carpenters, tailors, mechanics, welders), youth and women's groups, cultural groups, primordial groups, faith-based organizations, community development associations, and the community development departments of government at the federal, state and local government levels.

Right from its inception, CLP benefitted from some of the best practices in social action, community mobilization, and participatory development. At the time of establishing CLP, I was a freelance consultant for international bodies. Before that, I was an activist for social justice and had played leading roles in the youth and students' movement, cofounded and led the foremost feminist organization in the country, as well as two other Women's Health and Rights organizations. I learned about some best and worst practices in social action, and these shaped my work at CLP. I shared the CLP vision with my assistant at the time, Chuks Ojidoh, who is now CLP's Deputy Executive Director. Together, we fine-tuned the CLP idea and commenced activities in December 1992. Like many NGOs, I used my home and personal resources in CLP's start-up phase. The following year, CLP received a seed grant from the International Women's Health Coalition to open an office. The CLP Model was subsequently developed with funding from the MacArthur Foundation, then replicated and scaled nationwide with funding from the Ford Foundation.

CLP, described by Jude Ilo, the Country Director of the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) as "the powerhouse of grassroots mobilization" in Nigeria, has made tremendous success in mobilizing marginalized and disadvantaged citizens for civic engagement (CLP, 2018). Its work contributed significantly to improving the credibility of elections in the country (Bailard

& Livingston, 2014; CLP, 2015). CLP also has a highly impressive record of pioneering innovative use of IT tools for popular participation (Kamau, 2011; Scialom & Banks, 2011; Bailard & Livingston, 2014). CLP's success lies in the fact that it is achieving popular participation and mobilizing grassroots associations to engage the political leadership and governance processes. These populations have been on the margins of development and governance decision-making. A formal independent evaluation of CLP, commissioned by one of its funders in 2007, concludes that "CLP's Model of working with community organizations and social structures has proven effective in reaching marginalized populations and is unique. To the best of our knowledge, there is no other model able to reach these segments of the population" in Nigeria (Independent Evaluation Report, 2007, p. iv).

Another strength of the CLP Model is its ability to gather divergent interest groups with contentious relationships in society to work on a common platform and a shared agenda. These include groups across ethnic, religious, and partisan political divides. The participation of the sections of civil society that CLP is engaging are considered critical to achieving the transformative change that has eluded Africa since colonial rule. For this reason, it is important to reflect on the evolution and sustenance of this engagement.

Origin and Evolution of the CLP Model

CLP's original goal was to expand the scope of community ownership of population and development programs through a two-step approach:

1) To develop a replicable model of inclusive civil society participation in the development process.

2) To engage development practitioners, policy makers, and other stakeholders in a broad-scale replication of the model.

The project focused on creating a social framework, rooted in community life, through which the government and citizens could address critical development issues. The entry point for this "social experiment" was HIV/AIDS prevention and control at the community level. HIV/AIDS was chosen for two reasons. First, AIDS was the major development challenge facing Africa at the time. Wrong approaches and poor responses from both African political leaders and the international community were claiming millions of African lives. Secondly, there was a dominant view in the development sector that community participation would be easily achieved if the issue being addressed is perceived as a "felt need," like water and sanitation. CLP wanted to demonstrate that communities would commit themselves to any development issue if the right paradigm and approach was applied.

Environmental Context

When CLP began work in 1992, Nigeria was under the military rule of General Ibrahim Babangida, which began the transition to "civil" rule by organizing general elections in 1993. But, inexplicably, Babangida unilaterally aborted the process, resulting in public pressure that forced him to "step aside" in a palace coup. General Sani Abacha succeeded him as Head of State. From 1993 to 1998, Nigerians engaged in a bitter and bloody struggle to overthrow the military. The country returned to civil rule in 1999 following the sudden death of General Abacha.

In mainstream development work, marginalized and disadvantaged communities were largely seen as people to be helped, as "target groups" and "beneficiaries" of development

programs and services. Approaches to help them tended to be exclusionary, as their local leadership roles and agency were ignored. Lip service was sometimes paid to including them. Although the development community was agog with buzz words like "community participation," "bottom-up approach," and "community ownership," they rarely received any concrete expression. CLP, therefore, set out to demonstrate the inherent value in the existence of grassroots community associations as constituents of authentic civil society in Nigeria. Rather than problematize their existence, CLP engaged and acknowledged them as constituting a critical part of the solution to Nigeria's governance and development problems.

How CLP Engaged Grassroots Civil Society Groups

The CLP strategy is to harness social capital for building and sustaining partnerships with grassroots civil society on development issues. CLP started work in Isolo, the community where I lived and had strong social networks. It commenced work with the National Association of Automobile Technicians (NATA), beginning with my mechanic. I spoke to him about HIV/AIDS. He had never heard of it but was eager to know how to protect himself and his family from this new deadly disease without a cure. He introduced CLP to NATA Executives, who bought into the idea of having an AIDS Education Session with the association. Next, NATA invited CLP to its meeting to get its members' endorsement. The meeting, held in an open shed, constituted a committee to plan the AIDS Education Session.

This first activity created two major outcomes. First, NATA requested CLP to conduct other educational sessions on such HIV-related issues as sexually transmitted infections and drug abuse. Secondly, NATA members, through word-of-mouth, began to pass our message to their

various reference groups. Before long, CLP started receiving invitations to conduct AIDS education sessions in churches, mosques and similar establishments in Isolo. CLP became community driven. Each AIDS education session became an opportunity for enlightening associations in other areas of interest and introducing CLP to personal reference groups in the community. Within five years, CLP's network of partners included 16 grassroots civil society networks, 33 schools, several faith groups, 12 health facilities, and the local government. CLP was also running a youth program, a scholarship program for very disadvantaged children, and was working with couples to improve family relationships. Workshops took place in CLP partner locations: markets, churches, mosques, and schools. Through these partnerships, CLP pioneered some of the best practices in AIDS prevention and control, which were later scaled up across Nigeria by government and other development agencies and NGOs (Ashoka, 1996).

Scaling Up: Leveraging Innovative Internet Technologies and Mobilizing Grassroots Citizens for Free and Fair Elections

This section describes how CLP leveraged social capital, using innovative internet technologies, to amplify grassroots voices in promoting electoral integrity in Nigeria, thereby scaling up its activities nationwide. The social networks in Isolo, CLP's home base, were the driving force behind the successful scale-up of the project. From 1994, based on increasing demands by the community, with support from the MacArthur Foundation, CLP began expanding and adapting its HIV/AIDS educational modules to such other issues as reproductive health, life skills, sexuality education, family health, livelihood, and related community empowerment issues. Simultaneously, it steadily increased the type and number of partner organizations beyond artisans and occupational associations to faith-based organizations, schools, and health facilities.

In 1997, with support from the Ford Foundation, CLP expanded geographically from its base in Isolo to two neighboring communities—Mushin and Oshodi. Groups and networks in those communities had learned about CLP's work from their counterparts in Isolo and wanted to partner with CLP. In 2002, CLP scaled to a national level when, through a partnership with the Federal Community Development Department, it replicated its model in six pilot states across Nigeria's six geo-olitical zones. This partnership with a federal government agency was one of the outcomes of a public forum CLP had convened to engage policy makers and the development community in the broad replication of its model.

Finally, again with support from the Ford Foundation, CLP created what is arguably the most robust non-partisan, grassroots social movement in Nigeria. The 2011 presidential and other elections in Nigeria presented an opportunity for two very important steps in the life of CLP: one, to scale up nationally; two, to engage grassroots groups in promoting electoral integrity and social accountability. Work on elections is an area that had been the exclusive preserve of human rights advocacy civil society organizations; who focused on legal instruments, policies, and regulations; and rarely involved grassroots engagement. To scale up nationally and work on electoral integrity, CLP had to create a platform and identity for the social movement. The platform was christened ReclaimNaija, a slang for Reclaim Nigeria.

ReclaimNaija had online and off-line components. Off-line, ReclaimNaija included a vast network of partners all over the country who had been organized and mobilized to form a formidable social movement. Online, ReclaimNaija used Ushahidi technology, which CLP innovatively integrated into its platform at *reclaimnaija.net*. The platform allows citizens to report incidents of election fraud or irregularities by sending text messages or calling dedicated numbers in Nigeria's four major languages (Hausa, Igbo, Pidgin English, and Yoruba). It was also a one-

stop-shop on electoral information—from voting guidelines to the electoral act, to the list of polling units, and much more. After deploying the technology and creating a movement, CLP established a working partnership with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nigeria's election management body. This critical relationship with INEC enabled CLP to achieve its goal of improving the electoral process through popular participation. If citizens were going to take the trouble to send election incident reports, it was important to have an election management body that was willing to promptly act on those reports while elections were still ongoing. CLP knew it was embarking on something that would completely change the paradigm of election management in Nigeria. Through its growing grassroots partnership networks, CLP trained hundreds of voter educators drawn from the leadership of grassroots civil society networks and government agencies. They, in turn, organized voter education for members of their networks and other community leaders. For the 2011 elections, voter education was held in 193 local government areas. Twenty-four thousand community leaders across 36 states were trained to carry out voter awareness for their reference groups. That second layer of trainees received resources to further replicate voter education and crowd-sourced volunteer election observers from communities.

In striving to assist INEC to achieve the objective of producing an updated and reliable Voters' Register, the ReclaimNaija movement used Ushahidi technology to send INEC reports of the voter registration exercise. It was the first time that Ushahidi technology was deployed for pre-election work. CLP's grassroots partners across Nigeria sent over 12,000 reports on incidents relating to producing an authentic voters' register and improving the integrity of the electoral process. For example, based on CLP reports, INEC extended the deadline for voter registration by one week and another two days for the city of Lagos due to its large population. This helped to ensure that citizens were not disenfranchised. A few days before the election, INEC published, in

the media, the ReclaimNaija phone numbers for reporting election incidents by text messages. The release of phone numbers for reporting election incidents further increased citizens' confidence in INEC's political will to conduct credible elections. On election days, grassroots citizens observed activities at the polling units where they were registered to vote and, through text message or phone calls to the *reclaimnaija.net* election incident reporting platform, reported happenings. Those reports were sent to INEC in near real time. The reports were also collated and Google Maps was used so INEC could view the locations online in its situation room, making *reclaimnaija.net* INEC's virtual situation room!

ReclaimNaija completely transformed election observing into popular participation in election-day management. Before ReclaimNaija's transformative role, the practice of election observation was routine: specialized election observation groups, accredited by INEC, would witness the elections and make notes on the exercise according to a checklist. At the end of the election, they would release statements on their observations to the media and send reports to INEC. ReclaimNaija added popular participation and real-time incident reporting, empowering any citizen of voting age to observe and send election incident reports to INEC, which instantly acted on such reports while the elections were still occurring, resulting in improved election-day management.

Post-election, the ReclaimNaija movement has been working on social accountability, by enhancing the capacity of grassroots civil society leaders and local government officials to participate in making and administering budgets. It organizes town hall meetings where community leaders meet with government officials to identify issues for inclusion in local government budgets. It also actively participates in community monitoring of capital projects. (CLP, 2016).

Grassroots Engagement by CLP: Critical Lessons

The Paradigm of Engagement Is Critical to Success

A major lesson from CLP's work is that the paradigm of engagement is a critical factor in achieving inclusion and popular participation. Paradigm shapes the approach and methodology to adopt in engaging with marginalized communities. CLP's paradigm was informed by its philosophy of social change, from which it derived its vision and mission. CLP believes that most of the misery that people face in the world in different areas of human life are traceable to the way human beings view and relate to one another. Relationships are key to achieving well-being, peace, prosperity, and happiness, be it within families, communities, or between nations. Achieving that well-being depends on the quality of the relationships that people have and on whether the relationships are just, fair, and nurturing.

This outlook drives CLP's vision of "a society where there is respect for human dignity, social and environmental justice" and its mission to "radically reduce human misery by engaging the people as agents of positive change." The philosophy also informed CLP's concept and choice of the sections of civil society to engage. This includes the sections of society that are vulnerable to greater human misery, those on the margins of political power and influence, people who have to struggle the most for access to opportunities, resources, and services. CLP also needed to devise an approach for promoting inclusion and participation that is strategically hinged on human relationships. Social capital is central to CLP's strategy. Because of its commitment to reaching people who, at that time, were marginalized from mainstream communication channels, it had to adopt a social capital paradigm and to rely on the networks and personal connections within its community to promote inclusion and agency.

Using Social Capital to Facilitate and Sustain Partnership Building, Community Organizing, and Social Mobilization:

Another lesson from the success of the CLP Model is that the existence of dense social networks in the community facilitate partnership building, community organizing, and social mobilization on a vast scale. The grassroots associations CLP partners with are mostly network organizations. They have local units and branches at zonal, local government, state, and national levels. Community-level branches linked CLP to those at higher levels. Partnerships initiated with national-level branches oftentimes led to the integration of lower-level ones. Engaging as partners put the grassroots networks in a leadership role and on par with CLP at the decision-making table. The power of relationships was demonstrated in the fact that CLP appeared to have lost ownership to the community associations, right from the very first activity organized with NATA.

In no time, CLP moved from an NGO working on AIDS to one that was concerned with wider but related issues. It was no longer in control of deciding the general direction of the program. Apart from NATA, the only other groups CLP initiated partnerships with were sex workers, health facilities, and government agencies. The bulk of its work came mainly from referrals and invitations from community groups. Since the partners largely own and control the process and decide what they want to work on, CLP could only bring appropriate projects to them. That had its constraints in terms of relationships with funders. Consequently, because CLP was not donor-driven, it had to forego certain funding opportunities when donors' objectives did not fit the community agenda. That was not an easy position for CLP when it was struggling financially.

Furthermore, the leadership role played by grassroots civil society meant that activities were naturally tailored to fit the lifestyle of the partners and the larger community members. CLP

did not have a single "focus area" or "single target population," like many NGOs. Rather, it uniquely affirmed community life, making it easy for people to become and remain engaged and enduring. The name Community Life Project, vested in the dynamics of its activities, was coined one year after the project took off.

Trust and reciprocity also play vital roles in growing and sustaining the network of associations involved in building the ReclaimNaija movement. Accountability in the NGO sector usually involves donors, governments, and boards. But CLP, inspired by the partnership paradigm, is primarily accountable to its partners, like shareholders in a private corporation. CLP and its partner associations do not sign agreements, contracts, or memoranda of understanding, yet partners act as leaders and spokespersons of the ReclaimNaija movement at the state and local government levels. A culture of accountability and integrity pervades the affairs of the movement. Each party trusts that the other(s) will perform when activities, roles, and responsibilities are outlined at joint planning meetings.

This is akin to what Peter Eke (1975) says about the norms and values that govern the two publics in Nigeria: that the CLP model is operated in the realm of the other (primordial) public where there is integrity, accountability, and allegiance; in contrast to the norm in the political public that is corrupt. However, the fact that this allegiance is not to an entity promoting primordial gains contextually contradicts Eke's view.

The commitment exemplified in the CLP Model and ReclaimNaija aligns with a civic cause that transcends primordial interests and strongly underlines the harnessing of social capital in associational life as an effective strategy for nation-building. The CLP Model unites diverse groups with trust, represents a counter-force to the divisive manipulation of religion and ethnicity by politicians, and makes cultural values a potent resource for nation-building.

Yet another lesson of the CLP Model is that, beyond trust, shared hope and common faith endure in social networks in the Nigerian cultural context. Given chronic institutional inefficiencies, the ability of grassroots civil society networks to sustain civic engagement relies not only on trust, but also on the strength of the collective spiritual energy of the movement. A tradition of associational life at the grassroots level, where people have learned to lean on each other to survive, infuses a spirit of solidarity. Within each of the partner-networks, there already exist values such as compassion, belief in caring for one another as a duty and moral obligation, or as a fulfillment of one's religious obligations. In addition, CLP's civic education emphasizes a common humanity and allows participants to express their spirituality and philosophy when discussing participation in development and governance decision-making. When the CLP Model was scaled up nationally, by creating the ReclaimNaija grassroots social movement, it richly benefitted from these values by relying on the bonding and spirit of solidarity within its constituent networks.

Social capital encourages and motivates agency, and CLP finds these on the part of its partners. Unlike elitist civil society, the self-help, mutual-benefit associations that CLP works with do not waste time idealizing, conceptualizing, and debating. They are action-oriented. They make quick decisions and take action. The ties, connections, and support people derive from associational life spur them to action because they create avenues for access to resources for personal advancement. As Putnam (2000) cautions, social capital "can be directed toward malevolent, antisocial purposes." Networks of grassroots associations can be exploited to cause harm to society, be harnessed to enthrone corrupt public officers and bad governance, or engaged to fan the embers of ethno-religious sentiments and prejudices, which tend to heighten during

elections. Hence, it was important in the ReclaimNaija movement to apply social capital and promote social change within a value system and a clearly defined, positive spiritual framework.

Lastly, CLP finds, as Bourdieu (1986) points out, that social capital can be converted to other forms of capital. With the ReclaimNaija movement, CLP has converted social capital to political capital. The vast network of groups under the ReclaimNaija movement has conferred a position of power and influence on CLP and its grassroots civil society partners, who are thus able to engage with state institutions from a position of strength. Similarly, CLP's educational programs for leaders of grassroots civil society organizations have contributed to the development of human capital. Through the programs, it has produced tens of thousands of civic-minded grassroots leaders rooted in community life.

Conclusion

Through the CLP model, grassroots civil society in the CLP network has demonstrated resilience and commitment to engaging the state on governance issues. The concept of civil society needs to be broadened to include excluded traditional, grassroots civil society. The social capital inherent in the rich associational life in Nigeria is an asset that can be converted to political capital to drive positive social change. Social capital enables grassroots networks to exercise agency and give them a voice using opportunities and tools they are able to access. Despite their socioeconomic disadvantage, grassroots civil society organizations show courage and determination to improve well-being. Long-term donor funding and development programming is crucial to promoting inclusive civil society engagement. The most powerful lesson is that self-governing associations

and mutual-interest groups have the potential for transformative nation-building. Influencers in society need to invest in them.

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SECTION FIVE

Resources and Fundraising

11

A Better World Is Possible: Donor Relations and Philanthropy in Africa

Theresa U. Michael

Abstract

More often than not, the onus is on nonprofits to do the right thing, pursue appropriate projects, show due diligence, and demonstrate impact. A high level of accountability is demanded, and with it comes a great deal of pressure on nonprofits—pressure to be transparent, satisfy partners, yet remain true to their mandate and survive for the long haul. The technicalities of grantmaking guidelines and requirements often prove too sophisticated and costly for small- and medium-level nonprofits and community-based organizations, for which passion and commitment are their greatest assets. The fact is that technical prowess and complex requirements are often met only by large nonprofits and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs). Donor foundations and development partners can relate more adaptably with small- and medium-scale organizations and community groups to bring them up to speed and ensure funding for very good and exceptional initiatives. Their survival can be improved for the greater good of their communities where the poorest of the poor are found.

This paper takes a critical look at donor relations and the resilience of small-medium size nonprofits from the perspective of one who is an experienced insider, leader, and innovator in Africa. It aims to draw out essential lessons learned with regard to the value of accessibility of funds and the flexibility of grantmaking to small-medium-scale nonprofits, which are critical

organs in the well-being and functioning of philanthropy. It argues that although major grants are often made to INGOs and their equally large national counterparts, small- and medium-scale nonprofit organizations are the foot soldiers of philanthropy in the field; on whom rests the actualization of philanthropy in perpetuity.

Introduction

A recurrent theme in the trajectory of my work is the search for more humane policies and practices that translate goodwill into good deeds for the benefit of those who are most in need. Through that journey, I have gleaned great insights from vantage positions made possible by sitting at different sides of the table at different points in time, as a multi-time founder, CEO, donor advisor, board member of a number of organizations, and trainer of civil society actors for international agencies on whose commission I served as a Senior Development Consultant in various cultural and geographic settings in the African region. Thus, this chapter reflects insights gained on the pliability of donors and development partners in relation to small- and medium-level national organizations; and how the relationship can be improved to meet the overarching goals of philanthropy in African countries, with Nigeria as an example.

The chapter is divided into three sections. Section one deals with understanding cultural realities of nonprofits and donor relations. Section two focuses on good people doing good with examples of supportive development partners and their innovative practices, while section three discusses the need to revise the rules and requirements. This structure supports the logical flow of argument advanced in this chapter, moving from the cause and effect linkages to creating clarity for the problem-solution evidence embedded in the lessons learned.

Understanding Cultural Realities of Nonprofits

To better understand this chapter with Nigeria as a reference point, a brief introduction of the country is helpful. Nigeria is a country on the west coast of Africa, a canvas of cultures, climes, and creeds that is as diverse as its population and topography. From the valleys of the Niger and Benue rivers, through the mountainous highlands and savannah of the plateau and the north, to the coastal plains, hilltops, and rainforests of the south, added to the riverine areas of the Niger Delta, Nigeria sits on a land mass of 923,768 square kilometers with over 252 languages and 197.6 million people in 2018. (World population Review, 2018). Given the above description, it is safe to state that Nigeria teems with life in a tapestry of rich cultural heritage, multilingualism, and an even more intriguing assemblage of varied communal lifestyles, from the rustic to the urbane.

Given the diversity of Nigeria, approaching philanthropy from cultural perspectives is crucial to understanding how important it is to eschew presumption and rigidity in moving practice from one setting to another (Nzeadibe et al., 2009), and why philanthropy must be targeted more directly to reach the people for whom it is intended, toward the achievement of immediate and long-term goals. Before now, not much has been written in scholarly literature regarding philanthropy in Nigeria. That is not surprising since it is an emerging field of academic discourse in the country, as in many other parts of the world. Nonetheless, it is instructive to note right from the start that in Nigeria, nonprofit organizations are collectively and interchangeably referred to as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or civil society organizations (CSOs), in a wide-brim umbrella that envelopes Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), and other forms of civil society groups. Ukpong (1993) observed that "NGOs, as broadly conceived ordinarily, are a mixed pot of actors, institutions and capabilities. There is a phenomenal diversity in the orientations, focus of actions, institutional capacity, origin and pattern of evolution

within NGOs" (pp. 56–57). This opinion is also shared by other writers who make a clear distinction between local NGOs and foreign NGOs (Dada, 2013).

Dada (2013) opined that among local NGOs there is a further distinction between less organized community development associations (CDAs) and the few nascent bodies in the mold of INGOs (Ojua et al., 2014). Those distinctions have also been explained by other scholars such as Anheier, Simmons, and Winder (2007) and Ebrahim (2003). According to Anheier, Simmons, and Winder,

> In looking at other areas such as the global south… major differences in a number of critical aspects emerge that challenge conventional assumptions and models of philanthropy. There, frequently resource-poor and hybrid organizations are very different from the professional, large-scale foundation in the US or western Europe, but they are nonetheless philanthropic institutions that are more reflective of local needs and capacities, and often with greater innovative potential rather than some ready-made, imported legal form could offer. (p. 2)

Importance of Small- and Medium-Size Nonprofits:

Whatever their size and mandate, there is a general consensus that nonprofit organizations play a critical role in development and that, as a matter of fact, they have made and continue to make salient contributions to national development in Nigeria, (Agba & Akpanudoedehe, 2014). They are important actors in community development as in democracy (Omofonmwan & Odia, 2009). It has also been postulated that nonprofits have been greatly instrumental in giving voice to the

voiceless, helping to shape policy and political discourse about Nigeria in Nigeria and in the world (Eneh, 2016).

The remarkable ability and agility of small- and medium-scale nonprofits to reach the nooks and crannies of the vast expanse of the national polity make them very important agencies in a developing country like Nigeria. Because nonprofits are needed and are expected to fill the gaps created by the failure of government, including local government, they exist to meet the imperative of self-help organizing for community development priorities. The priorities differ from place to place, from one cultural milieu to another in a country as diverse as Nigeria. This point is important to note because cultural nuances may determine how a people perceive and benefit from a gift or intervention (Nzeadibe et al., 2009). In Nigeria, as in many parts of the world, the act of giving and receiving is seen as an act of kindness, a demonstration of responsibility, and a virtue actively encouraged in communal life. In *Trends, Innovations and Partnerships for Development in African Philanthropy*, Bhekinkosi Moyo (2013) stated the cultural attributes of philanthropy succinctly:

> Though not a common or even user-friendly concept in Africa, philanthropy is a phenomenon perhaps best captured by the notions of "solidarity and reciprocity" among Africans and some of the features that accompany relation-building. As a result, therefore, culture and relation-building are central attributes in defining what philanthropy in the African context looks like (p. 37).

This view was further expressed by Dwight Burlingame (1993) as follows, "giving and receiving implies a relationship: you cannot have a philanthropic act without a minimum of two parties. These parties can be individuals or institutions. The exchange can be money or time" (p. 76). The

key words are *relation-building, solidarity, and reciprocity*, which denote mutual understanding, mutual trust, and mutual support, a two-way system of building relationships in service.

Small-Medium-Size Nonprofits as Key to the Beauty of Philanthropy

The beauty of philanthropy is rooted in the array of its most fundamental instruments, small- and medium-size nonprofits who reach the remotest places with programs, products, and services. They usher in opportunities for sharing, for newness, renewal, and improved living standards for otherwise unprivileged and forgotten peoples. Proceeding from that, one can say that philanthropy in its fullest potential embraces the cultivation of the human character of donors and recipients alike, the character of sharing borne out of generosity. According to Gunderman (2005), "The ultimate goal of philanthropy is to promote sharing" (p. 24). Generosity enables sharing, and sharing turns receivers into givers. In that way the culture of philanthropy thrives and becomes more inclusive and extensive.

This view is akin to that expressed by Sara Konrath (2016) in *The Joy of Giving* when she stated that: "Fundraisers are Givers, Not Takers…. Without fundraisers, nonprofits could not follow their important missions. Donors and volunteers could not be as effective in actualizing their personal values" (p. 12). Dwight Burlingame (1993) further buttressed the position: "It is important to add that I see the roles in this relationship as very fluid. One moment one may be a receiver and the next moment one may be a donor" (p. 76). Given that ambit of givers, it follows that small and medium nonprofits are givers and partners in development with donors. Appropriately, such a partnership should not be stressful for either party, irrespective of size. Small and medium nonprofits assiduously gather in order to share in needy communities with far-

reaching effects. It is with such committed nonprofits in mind that Bill Somerville (2008), a renowned international grantmaker and author of *Grassroots Philanthropy*, wrote:

> I advocate that we look at philanthropy as a *vocation*, with those of us professionally engaged answering to a higher calling…. It might be a love of humanity, a devotion to God, or a conviction that justice must be served. The point remains: we need to lift foundation life out of the realm of everyday prosody, while injecting into our mission and daily activities a sense of urgency, passion, and poetry (p. 19).

Indeed, philanthropy is a vocation, a poetic exercise of sorts, beautifying lives and rejuvenating landscapes, eliciting thrills where once there were chills. The inspiration is drawn from a higher source, the divine, the ideal. But how can the poem flow if the writers of the poem are groaning and no one is paying attention? How can the vision of a better world unravel if the only thing supporters of philanthropy do is provide paper and pen to those who already have and are unwilling to write anything new, while those who are willing to write are left out? The poetic inspiration must meet the poetic aspiration in philanthropy, then there will be no difference between the imagined and reality.

Many other renowned speakers agree and have spoken in glowing terms of the beauty of philanthropy at the grassroots level, perhaps where it matters most, since problems addressed at the roots are solved at the top. Nathaniel Hawthorne (1851) named it "generosity the flower of justice," Thomas Gray (1909) called it "scattering plenty over a smiling land," and George Eliot (1886) referred to it as "blessed influence of one true, loving human soul on another! Not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty." In a similar vein, Diana Princess of Wales remarked "nothing brings me more happiness than trying to help the most

vulnerable people in society. It is a goal—a kind of destiny" (Khurana, 2019). Somerville (2008) continues the discussion with the following statement:

> For me, philanthropy is an emotional subject. And I think that our manner of speaking about philanthropic efforts should reflect our emotional depths. We should strive to project the excitement of philanthropy, inspiring other people…by showing how much satisfaction and (dare I say?) fun our work affords us. (p. 16)

To do so and maintain the beauty of philanthropy requires that small- and medium-scale nonprofit organizations are strengthened. They are the fundamental instruments for justice, freedom, well-being, and cohesion in hard-to-reach villages and communities of Nigeria and indeed of Africa and the world. They are the foot soldiers of philanthropy and should be properly equipped for the tasks at hand and those ahead.

How Are You Giving and to Whom?

Tell me how you give and to whom you give, and I will tell you who you are: a philanthropist or an egoist. Any *giving* that further widens the already existing dichotomy between the rich and the poor is unarguably one that has lost its essential attribute of philanthropy. Donor foundations and development partners that make a huge amount of funding available to a few wealthy INGOs and large organizations over and over again to the exclusion of viable and dedicated smaller organizations who work tirelessly for and directly with the poor are practicing the antithesis of philanthropy. They deepen the already existing dichotomy between the rich and the poor. Their actions lead to the extinction of vibrant nonprofits that could have been of great help to humanity at the basic level. It is in that light that Aristotle said: "to give away money is an easy matter and

in any man's power. But to decide to whom to give it and how large and when, and for what purpose and how, is neither in every man's power nor an easy matter." Small, medium, or large committed nonprofits do great work for the common good. A great job is a great job no matter the scope and size of the organization.

Yet size has become a major factor in access to funds, even though "no standardized scale for 'nonprofit size' exists" (Richard Hallman, 2014). Be that as it may, the National Center for Charitable Statistics uses IRS data to generate statistical tables based on total assets or revenue, broken into eight categories, with cutoff points at \$100K, \$250K, \$500K, \$1M, \$5M, \$10M, \$100M, and greater than \$100M. While this is a useful model for understanding the classification of nonprofits in Nigeria, a more useful yardstick would be the total number of employees per year and the total annual income over a period of three or five years, similar to the US Small Business Administration (SBA) model. Those with operating budgets below \$100K and with less than three staff members are regarded as small, while those with less than a \$500k operating budget and less than 10 staff are medium sized. Though there is a growing number of donors and development partners in the country, their giving has not translated into commensurate financial leverage for these groups of nonprofits. In the game of size and stature, they are neglected in favor of INGOs and their equally large national counterparts who are targeted in multi-million-dollar multiyear funding in Nigeria.

As the bias for larger organizations goes on, smaller nonprofits are starved to the point of extinction, despite their much-needed services to their communities. Those who survive do so out of the doggedness of their leaders and communities. As Willie Cheng (2009) noted in his book *Doing Good Well, What Does and Does Not Make Sense in the Nonprofit World*, "it seems that the well-off are not just generally favored in life but in the charity space as well. To be true to the

spirit of charity in providing for the poor and needy, we need to be vigilant of the gravitational forces that favor the well-off." For the same reason, the following questions remain pertinent: "Can NGOs prosper when they are financially reliant on donations and contributions from the deprived and poverty-stricken local communities they serve? Are the most effective NGOs the ones that survive? … These issues are vital for understanding the sustainability and effectiveness of development initiatives in African countries" (Burger & Owens, 2010).

As currently practiced, philanthropy has become increasingly complex, and in that complexity, it has alienated "unsophisticated" nonprofits. The trend lends credence to the description of "scientific philanthropy" (Gunderman, 2005), which tends to exclude and shut down small- and medium-scale organizations whose only strong arsenal is passion devoid of high *technicalism*, but infused with candid dedication to activism for positive social change aimed at improving the human condition. With that determination, many small organizations remain dogged and relevant in their communities. They trudge along, even as donor foundations and development partners bypass them in favor of their more affluent counterparts.

The bypass of small- and medium-scale national organizations is very apparent in the eligibility guidelines and accountability mechanisms required, which effectively eliminate them. By the very complex eligibility guidelines issued, only organizations with huge budgets and technocrats, whose chief raison d'etre is simply to maintain a high-level bureaucracy and technocracy can meet such requirements. Even in situations where the annual budget cut-off mark is lower, the technical paperwork required is a tall order beyond the capacity of many small national and community-based nonprofits.

Another method by which small nonprofits are excluded is through a worldwide call for proposals when only a handful of grants will be made. A call for proposals intended to fund just

five or ten organizations is thrown out to the entire globe for the submission of proposals. Organizations then find themselves responding to calls that are mere fantasy. After the effort, they receive a typical response: "thousands of excellent proposals were received but only a handful could be funded." A much more considerate practice would be to streamline the target group to a specific country or to a region or two within a specific country. Better still, they could request short letters of intent from the target groups and invite a few to submit full proposals. That would be more helpful and respectful and would certainly increase the chances of the applying organizations and at the same time save poor struggling organizations their much-needed time and effort, which could be applied to other useful duties.

Yet another method of exclusion is through restricted grants and one-off grants, which do not allow small- to medium-scale nonprofits the use of initiative or sufficient time to strengthen their programmatic response and institutional base. The strict restriction of grants, one-off grants, and the complete removal of overhead costs are arguably a hindrance to effectiveness, a limitation of the use of discretion, and a constriction of a reasonable latitude of time to deal appropriately with the demands of the tenuous terrains of intervention—socially, economically, and politically. Those constraints jeopardize their ability to deliver and sustain desired results. As Darren Walker (2019) explains "we must trust those we fund, and fund them adequately to do what they believe is best, not what we think is best. This means putting ourselves in the shoes of prospective grantees and communities, treating them like partners rather than contractors, and entrusting organizations with long-term general support funding and project grants that provide adequate overhead." Akin to the foregoing is the issue of power sharing.

Other writers agree that in the dynamics of donor-nonprofit relations, powerlessness is exacerbated for smaller organizations (Ukpong, 1993; Jordan, 2005; Jamela, 1990). The

explanations given by Walker (2019) are very useful: "This means interrogating our own unconscious biases, cultivating humility in ourselves and our organizations, and more clearly understanding how others experience the institutions of philanthropy—how remote we can be, how insular, how difficult to navigate." Very importantly, he says "it also means investing in research and initiatives that might make us uncomfortable, and that hold us accountable, so that our actions reflect our aspirations for a more just, more equal world." That is very well said and I couldn't agree more. Flexibility is the watchword and the use of discretion is always welcome! To that end, credibility checks for potential partners could be done in a variety of creative ways, as will be discussed in section two with some examples.

Good People Doing Good and Doing It Well:

To bridge the gap between big and small organizations, the just giver in search of social justice must constantly search out committed nonprofits, irrespective of size. Innovative ways of establishing trust and responsibility are essential for due diligence and are needed to ascertain the competence and compatibility of the applicant organization and its duty bearers. That credibility can be ascertained in a variety of creative ways.

In the words of Gene Takagi (2017), "due diligence isn't just about legal and financial compliance. More importantly, due diligence helps a grantmaker determine whether a nonprofit fits with the grantmaker's mission; sheds light on the grantseeker's standing in the community and the broader field." In agreement with this view, McLaughlin Thomas (2010) said, "While the aura of due diligence processes is that they are either financial or legal, important facts don't necessarily fit into either category. Things such as the culture of governance, a CEO's

personality, and the value of a particularly unique program could all be legitimate areas of inquiry."

To this end, the following steps in due diligence are considered more vital and helpful in relation to small and mid-sized nonprofits: selection of nonprofit partners with a like mission and values based on profiles and track records, constructive dialogue and communication, strategic collaboration and goodwill for an informative experience, and the attraction and retention of nonprofits for a minimum of three to five years, so that it is worthy of the term "partnership." And lastly, as Takagi (2017) rightly pointed out, it is also very important to constantly "target, through strategy, the structural issues that limit opportunities for people in underserved communities, and bolster the capacity of grassroots organizations that serve those communities." These are more meaningful and effective on the whole than ab initio asking a small nonprofit for an expensive audited account or technical report as it struggles to maintain its rent, staff salaries, and basic services.

Giving for positive social change and social justice requires a conscientious effort to reach those most in need and to work more directly with those who live and work among those most in need. That means "placing meaningful resources in the hands of those closest to the problems, backing their visionary efforts over time, listening and learning at every step of the journey—this is the philanthropy we need today" (Walker, 2019). Not only that, it would also help "to fully and honestly address the problem of inequality and the ways it is embedded in philanthropy, there is even more we must do" (Walker, 2019). Writing about corporate donors, Reynold Levy (1999) postulates that "temperament matters," which is true of all donors, corporate or not (p. 19).

Going further Levy (1999) noted that: "Funders are means to ends …. They do so by extending grants to people and organisations much closer operationally to concrete problems in a

given field than are their corporate colleagues. This basic view of a donor is laden with operational meaning. It calls for humility" (pp. 19–20). Bill Somerville (2008) expressed a similar thought: "Let's face the truth. If you choose not to make grants to artists, and ad hoc groups of mothers offering after-school recreation, or fledgling organizations that have yet to obtain nonprofit status, this decision is your own—not one imposed by the IRS" (p. 121).

The Example of Ashoka and Mastercard Foundation: Supportive Partners and Innovative Practices

The Ashoka Innovators for the Public and Mastercard Foundation partnership is an example of supportive practices through its exemplary work in Africa, as experienced in the Model Mission of Assistance in Africa, Momi Africa. "Ashoka identifies and supports the world's leading social entrepreneurs, learns from the patterns in their innovations, and mobilizes a global community that embraces these new frameworks to build an "everyone is a changemaker world" (Ashoka, 2019). Ashoka Nigeria has selected over 80 fellows and covers Nigeria, Cameroon, and Ghana. The Ashoka fellowship election is a thorough process that includes scouting, identifying, and assessing potential fellows, who are subject to panel reviews and board approval, all done in an empowering and educative learning and improvement process. It tasks fellows to self-scrutiny with regard to purpose and actions for the greater good, with a clear vision and sense of purpose. Through its fellowship program, Ashoka supports social change actors and entrepreneurs, builds infrastructure for system change, and fosters peer learning, while opening up to fellows the benefits of exposure to further opportunities for partnerships, scaling, and internationalization.

So it was that Ashoka Fellows were invited to apply for a collaboration fund under the auspices of the Mastercard Foundation, a fund expressly designed to encourage fellows' organizations to collaborate. As a member of the Ashoka Fellows' network, here is my account of the Mastercard Collaboration Fund. In my capacity as the Founder and Global Development Coordinator of Momi Africa, I applied for the fund on behalf of Momi Africa and its collaborating partner, Reconstructed Living Lab (Rlabs) in South Africa. After the application, I did not give much thought to it and did not think Mastercard Foundation would seriously consider an organization they had not known well before, aside from the Ashoka platform. How wrong that was. The foundation selected our proposal to move forward. We moved to the next stage and completed the management requirements. Yes, the grant did come, which was important because we were at a point where we needed to take the supported program to scale. It helped Momi Africa and its collaborating partner to do so. It was our most unexpected grant. It made a great difference in the organization and the effectiveness of our work. It was a game changer to say the least. Yes, the foundation trusted us because they trusted Ashoka, whose fellows were target beneficiaries and on whose platform the collaboration fund was offered. Even then Mastercard Foundation was thorough in its assessment; no undue burden.

Here is what we see as really big strengths in the Ashoka Fellows Collaboration Fund approach by Mastercard Foundation. They trusted Momi Africa because of an existing connection to Ashoka, which is trustworthy, and Ashoka is itself an organization that goes to great lengths to scout and select outstanding changemakers in diverse fields. They saw our competence through our proposal and understood its value. They saw that the mission statement of Mastercard Foundation was well aligned with that of Momi Africa. They verified our organizational profile and track record. They were innovative in targeting credible organizations through existing strong

networks, and by so doing, they broke new ground and extended a rare opportunity to our organization. Therefore, trust and a clear sense of purpose informed their decision. They were thoughtful and fair, since we were not the only Ashoka Fellows that applied for the grant. They wisely invested in us, which meant they were able to identify strong candidates whose mission and interests were well aligned to their mission and the strategic purpose of the designated fund. Momi Africa is a good fit for their purposes.

It is also important to note here that the fund was not just directed to project activities; it made provision for relevant overhead costs. The laborers in the field, our staff, and young volunteers were energized and grateful for it. Thus, the project strengthened its systems of operation. It extended the limits of its activities to other institutions, thus winning us more partners. It expanded the borders and efficacy of its services. About 8,400 were directly served and over 10 million youth were reached indirectly by the project in Nigeria and South Africa, with 85% success relevant to the set objectives of youth employment and productivity.

The huge success of the project in the two countries is also attributed to the smooth and seamless relations with staff at the foundation. Supportive philanthropic organizations are manned by supportive staff, and as experienced at Momi Africa, Mastercard Foundation has dedicated, competent, interculturally sound, and social justice–savvy program managers who get the job done. They listen, they understand, they are efficient, and respectful of their partners. They help when needed and they look at issues objectively. Proceeding from these statements, one can say that the foundation lives up to its values stated on its website:

We share a common vision of a world where everyone has the opportunity to learn and prosper. We value our differences and our similarities. We respect, trust, and support each other. We strive to be humble and empathetic and to always act ethically. We ask questions,

we listen, and we are heard. We encourage healthy debate and creative thinking. We make mistakes, we reflect and grow. We are continuously developing our skills and expanding our knowledge. We have much to learn from our clients, peers, and partners. We are ambitious and driven. We laugh at ourselves and with each other. We are a team. Our journey together makes our impact even more meaningful. (Mastercard Foundation, n.d.)

Those values came alive in its admirable grantmaking strategies and management.

This experience validates the field notes of Bill Somerville (2008), an expert in innovative grantmaking and effective operations: "Without good people, great ideas rate merely as words. Management plans, organizational charts, even bulging bank accounts—none of these things guarantee success. People run programs, for good or ill, and the quality of their skills and commitment inexorably shape the results" (p. 11).

The Global Fund for Women: Example of Value of Unrestricted Grants and Cultural Understanding

In many cultural milieus and in a country as diverse as Nigeria, there are deep-seated cultural traditions, manned by traditional office holders such as the Ezes, Obis, Obas, Alafins, Emirs, and Sultans, etc. Development programs aimed at changing or modifying traditional norms may necessarily need the enlistment of the custodians of those norms. Therefore, a simple project that stipulates a townhall meeting for youth may inadvertently require, first, a courtesy call on the traditional ruler of the community. That is an activity that may demand some overhead costs such as a staff visit to his palace and buying a gift for the ruler, since in most traditions one does not go to the traditional chief with empty hands. This kind of additional activity, if well done, can make

the proposed program permissible and more acceptable to the people. Yet the same activity may pose a big challenge for projects with restricted funds. It is for these reasons and circumstances, too numerous to explore in this chapter, that foundations and development partners who give unrestricted support should show better understanding, which makes a great difference.

The Global Fund for Women (GFW) is one such grantmaker. Established in Palo Alto, California, in 1987, GFW is dedicated to the human rights of women and girls. It uses its "powerful networks to find, fund, and amplify the courageous work of women who are building social movements and challenging the status quo" (Global Fund for Women, 2018). GFW ensures that women's organizations at national levels and in remote villages of Africa have the resources they need to do their work. First, as a grantee and then as an international advisor to GFW for many years in the Africa Portfolio, it was clear to me that the growth of thriving women's grassroots organizations in Africa are attributable to GFW's unrestricted support. GFW's unrestricted grants permit the initiative to do what is best based on local challenges on the ground. To achieve its aims, GFW engages the services of national level advisors, who are well known activists and live in focal countries. As such, advisors are able to visit potential grantee organizations and project sites, or simply call them up for a discussion to verify their existence, structures, leadership, priorities, and approaches, as the case may be. Advisors follow up with a well-informed endorsement, or otherwise, to GFW program staff. Thus, GFW is able to reach remote regions with cost-effective, time-efficient unrestricted grantmaking, which enables programmatic and institutional development. Also, attached to that is the added advantage of cultural literacy and understanding.

What's Next? Revising Rules, Reshaping Requirements: Adaptability Over Rigidity:

What works in one cultural setting may not work in another. Guidelines in the West may not work in the Global South. It is important that national and community nonprofit leaders are seen as people who have actual knowledge of the environments in which they live and work, year in and year out. Certainly, years of lived experience should account for something. There is wisdom in adapting previous knowledge to the issues on ground, not a wholesale imposition of previous knowledge and requirements. If those requirements are not necessary, then they are not necessary and should be modified or dumped. Such adjustments may include timelines, approaches, or requirements. What is important at any point is the agreed goal and the best route to that goal. Anything else is secondary and should be adjusted as deemed fit.

Flexibility is the watchword. Suppleness is needed for testing and applying preconceived guidelines in cultural settings other than those from which they originated. In this regard, Jordan (2005) noted that "lack of flexibility within donor agencies and the need to keep the resources flowing, results in the NGO prioritizing donor needs over its own. Even further down the chain is the community." NGOs should not neglect their own needs or those of the community because philanthropy is service; and service is provisions rendered based on need and should be done in a way that is enabling and dignifying to redress the injustice that the nonprofit is out to achieve. Supple development partners engage in dialogue and offer support that is mutually appreciated. Their guidelines are adaptable and responsive to local conditions and challenges, enabling nonprofits to be accountable to the communities they serve.

Intercultural Literacy and Understanding

There is no doubt that cultural literacy enhances understanding of the nuanced ways of people and creates clarity about strategies for pro-action, rather than reaction alone. It is also an acknowledged fact that "Lack of cultural intimacy with the problems being addressed can lead to inappropriate project design or 'overly ethnocentric Western approaches'" (Sommer, 1977).

For instance, an organization working in harmful traditional practices, political education, policy review, or violent conflict would find the support of traditional office holders very relevant and helpful. In modern Nigeria, most incumbents of traditional offices are educated, and they often show understanding of social enterprise objectives. Invariably, their enlistment may serve as a catalyst and propeller of change when their support is fully deployed. The challenge, however, is how to reduce the prejudice of development partners, navigate the challenge of indirect costs in strictly restricted grants, and integrate discretion and open-mindedness in grantmaking and programming. That underscores the need for intercultural literacy to reduce tension and foster common understanding on the part of foundations, development partners, and the nonprofits they support.

Anything Worth Doing Is Worth Doing Well: Institutional Grants or Endowments for the Long Term

Impact comes with sustained action. Social change, behavioral change, or cultural change, as it were, does not happen because of one advocacy event, one discussion, or any one intervention was carried out in one year. It requires sustained action over a period of time. It is mere fallacy and a waste of everybody's time to support a good idea and leave it forlorn and expect a significant

enduring change. Immediate outcomes, yes, but system or social change, that takes a while. It is analogous to clearing farmland and leaving it untended. Of course, weeds will overrun it in no time.

The challenge of sustainability is a constant one facing nonprofit organizations: sustainability of programs, of the institution, of funding levels, etc. The problem posed by sustainability issues was made clear to me at the early stages of my career as an employee of the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO). I recall that the President, on a number of occasions, had to pay staff salaries with personal funds from his law firm. At such critical moments, nonprofit organizations become the burden of their legal holders and trustees.

To deal with the challenge, nonprofits spend a huge amount of time on fundraising. Fundraising is serious work and is a full-time job. Yet it is one that nonprofit leaders readily take on, as additional work to ensure the survival of their organizations. The job description of a chief executive officer (CEO) at that level is sometimes nondescript and open-ended. The reason is not far-fetched: one-off grants, inadequate staffing, and a lack of resources to hire and retain competent fundraising staff. In all, performance may not be top notch and the request for excellent reports becomes anomalous. Hence Allen Grossman (1999), a professor of management practice at Harvard Business School expressed the following concern:

> It is the absolute amount of capital, the stages at which it is available during organizational development and the conditions of its acquisition that all work together to create a powerful influence on management behavior and organizational culture and, ultimately, on attaining high performance…. The conversation must begin with an analysis of how and why the philanthropic capital markets, for the most part, fail to encourage high performance in nonprofit organizations. (p. 2)

Proceeding further he stated:

> Ironically, nonprofit executive directors, in numerous interviews, consistently reported that excellent performance of a nonprofit organization is rarely systematically rewarded with an increased flow of philanthropic capital. In fact, an opposite situation prevails. As programs were proven effective and the nonprofit organizations developed plans to grow, foundations (even those currently funding their organizations) were less receptive to their requests for funding. (pp. 2–3)

Fundraising challenges account for the closure of a good number of promising nonprofits in Nigeria. Of the 50 viable nonprofits listed in a baseline checklist in 2004, only 20% were still in active operation in 2009, 55% had closed, and 25% were limiting their operations (Woped, 2005). Some of the major reasons advanced were lack of funds for organizational development and lack of dedicated staff to pursue fundraising. Other writers shared similar views. According to Hager, Galaskiewicz, Bielefeld, and Pins (1996), "smaller organizations have more difficulty attracting resources and performing administrative requirements for some funding streams." It goes without saying that there is a great need to reverse current trends by reducing the excessive technocracy involved in fundraising. The survival of small and growing nonprofits depends on it.

Program Staff and Partners' Feedback

As stated in section two, grantmaking program staff is the face of the development partners and donor agencies they represent. Staff matter greatly, since they interpret the tenets and missions of their organizations. They judge who comes in and who gets out. Therefore, staff competence and disposition to social justice and fairness, and their level of understanding of the challenges in the

countries or regions they oversee, matter greatly. Where program staff is well suited, by dint of attributes such as empathy, passion, discipline, and integrity, the result is beautiful to behold. In such instances, the mandate of development partners is well applied and justice is served to nonprofits regardless of size. In such instances, philanthropy is a delight, it lives up to its billings by dint of their personal integrity, passion, mastery of the subject matter, and sense of responsibility. For this reason, program staff should be carefully selected to portray the true image and priorities of donor foundations in the field. To do that will require flipping the coin for self-scrutiny from time to time by opening avenues to nonprofits to channel their observations for the attention of others in the echelons of authority. That would enable feedback, not just from beneficiaries but also from applicants in a way that enriches and renews the grantmaking process for greater effectiveness.

Conclusion

There is a great need to refocus funding priorities in developing countries like Nigeria, with small- and medium-sized national organizations as special vehicles of change to reach the people more directly. It is good practice to work with trusted strong networks to reach dedicated national or community groups that are often forgotten. Such networks can act as a credibility bridge for small organizations without required paperwork or technical qualification.

As already enunciated in section one of this paper, varied development perspectives require that newness be infused into systems and targets of operation from time to time to ensure that new actors and innovative ideas are given a fair chance. To bridge the inequality divide in Nigeria's nonprofit field, there is a need to extend funding opportunities to small and mid-sized nonprofits

in focal countries. There is a need to do away with the practice of sticking with a few INGOs and large national organizations endlessly because they are able to get past the technical and bureaucratic hurdles. The practice is counterproductive and tends to build elite cliques and caucuses tantamount to deepening existing inequalities.

Finally, irrespective of size or level of operation, adequate funding should be made accessible and available to all credible organizations in Nigeria, and other countries of Africa, wherever the need exists for human development, social cohesion, and cultivation of the character of giving. Infusion of essential funds to keep the services of small- and medium-scale organizations afloat compels urgent attention to modify the concentration of "big funding" for "big organizations." Until that is done, change will remain imaginary in philanthropy and development assistance, as has been the case in Nigeria and other parts of Africa, where presumed effectiveness is more on paper than in actual fact. To move forward, it is imperative that development partners and donors begin to prioritize small- and medium-scale national nonprofit organizations more precisely.

Recommendations

Arising from the given examples and lessons drawn from the works of other researchers and organizations cited in this paper, the following recommendations are made:

- ✓ Build trust
- ✓ Streamline grantmaking to specific communities, states, or regions
- ✓ Work with existing networks
- ✓ Fund different groups to infuse newness in an organization's development perspective

✓ Diffuse clique and caucus formation in grantmaking

✓ Employ culturally aware and responsive staff

✓ Program staff matters: reward diligent and efficient staff

✓ Enlist local advisors where necessary

✓ Make big grants accessible to nonprofit organizations irrespective of size

✓ Prioritize small- and medium-scale organizations

✓ Award unrestricted grants for institutional and program efficiency and effectiveness

✓ Make funding guidelines and requirements flexible and adaptable

✓ Get into the field and discover hidden talents and gems in small unexpected places

✓ Make every small or big nonprofit a changemaker through innovative practices.

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12

Nonprofit Resilience, Diversification, and Organizational Sustainability in Africa: Case Study of CEDSI Nigeria
Mina Ogbanga

Abstract

In the nonprofit space, case statements remain a core challenge for old and new nonprofits, who oftentimes face stiff competition in seeking funds, thereby making brand understanding a tough choice for donors. To stand out in the nonprofit sector in developing societies, resilient strategies and nonprofit diversification through flexible mission statements are central to nonprofit sustainability. This paper reflects on my organization's evolution through case statements and resource mobilization in a bid to be resilient and sustainable. The paper argues that viable organizational case statements will strengthen nonprofits and enhance resilience and diversification, especially in developing societies where resource constraints exist, and the culture of philanthropy is still evolving. One key research question has been whether Africa has a framework that can enable a nonprofit to be flexible with case statements. Using donor motivation theory, the paper makes an original contribution that could enable emerging nonprofits to have readily available case statement lessons. One such lesson is that nonprofit diversification through varying case statements should be consistent with the overall mission so as to retain a niche for easy identification and donor support. It will also help policy makers interested in the promotion of the nonprofit sector to identify early warning signs of problems that could hinder the growth of the nonprofit eco-space and need for enabling policies to avert a breakdown of the civic space.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore the linkages among case statements, nonprofit resilience, and diversification. The paper provides an analysis of the Centre for Development Support Initiatives (CEDSI Nigeria) to provide broader elucidation of some of the theoretical and conceptual issues regarding both nonprofit resilience and diversification with emphasis on the Niger Delta. CEDSI is a nonprofit organization that started in 1999 and registered in 2000. Its effort at the community level has perhaps enhanced community environmental knowledge through advocacy and building of community capacity. CEDSI has collaborated with multiple partners to promote social inclusion, environmental justice, and community development among over six hundred communities in the Niger Delta.

CEDSI's mission is closely tied to its geographical location, the Niger Delta. The delta of the Niger River, the Niger Delta sits directly in the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. The region is oil bearing, and it is among the richest in natural resources. Abosede (2013) observed that the Niger Delta has extensive forests, abundant fish resources, and the largest mangrove forests in Africa. Nigeria, in general, accounts for the largest oil and gas reserves and was the 6th largest oil producer in the world in 2017. However, these resources appear to be the Achilles heels of the region as ecological degradation arising from oil resource extraction has been on the rise "The creek receives fecal matters [sic], domestic wastes and industrial effluents on [a] regular basis" from surrounding industries and companies (Makinde, Edun, & Akinrotimi 2015, p. 127).

This persistent environmental degradation, briefly highlighted above, and continuous oppression, marginalization, and increased vulnerability triggered my venture into the nonprofit sector. The thesis of this paper is that nonprofits in volatile environments such as the Niger Delta need to be resilient and, in particular, diversify appropriately in order to open themselves to a wide

range of intervention opportunities. Nonprofit resilience in organizational contexts, as Witmer and Mellinger (2016) suggest, refers to the ability to respond productively to significant disruptive change and transform challenges into opportunities.

For its part, nonprofit diversification has various threads, notably intervention diversification, revenue diversification, and policy diversification, etc. The common consensus from our experience is that diversification strengthens the sustainability of nonprofits, especially where that diversification supports the overall core statement of the organization. Froehlich (1999) argued that revenue diversification is essential for nonprofits, pointing out that "non-profit organizations must rely on a variety of activities and resource providers to support their mission-related work" (p. 247). This paper is more interested in diversification as a tool for nonprofit resilience and revisits the particular experience of CEDSI Nigeria to explore and identify some of the salient issues involved in nonprofit resilience and diversification and how similar nonprofits could draw lessons from such experience.

In particular, the paper pays attention to linkages among case statements and nonprofit resilience and diversification. The paper examines the case analysis of CEDSI Nigeria to provide a coherent argument that points out that nonprofit challenges often arise when an organization is not flexible with case statements and diversification, making it difficult for donor alignment and support. Proponents of nonprofit diversification uphold that diversity in nonprofit practice matters (Jung, 2015; Aulgur, 2015; Weisinger, 2016). The aim is to open nonprofits to a wide range of interventions that could impact the people and equally justify the existence of the nonprofit.

This paper makes a strategic contribution to knowledge as it attempts to remedy the deficiencies associated with drift in case statements resulting in non-resilience of nonprofits, particularly in developing societies. In the alternative, it provides some insights on how nonprofits

could be focused, resilient, and sustained with a critical evaluation of the experiences of CEDSI Nigeria. The paper puts forward a nonprofit resilience and diversification debate where nonprofits in developing societies could draw to pursue their programs. The rest of the paper is structured as follows: theoretical framework, methodology, literature review, building organizational resilience and diversification experience from CEDSI Nigeria, and conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

CEDSI Nigeria emerged when social movements arose and adopted a series of strategies to confront environmental degradation from oil multinationals, as many social advocates saw the responses of multinationals who pollute the environment as repressive. There was evidence of significant weakening of state capacity in the vital areas of service delivery, as there was poor state response. Basically, "the negative consequences of oil production led to the upsurge of Non-Governmental Organizations" (Victor, 2013). According to Victor (2013), this injustice through environmental pollution brought with it a number of negative economic, social, and environmental consequences, making social movements like CEDSI predicate their advocacy on the deleterious effects of oil activities. These challenges also contributed to CEDSI's additional focus and diversification from human capital development as a priority to the protection of environmental rights of our target communities.

My first encounter with fighting environmental injustice was in Ekerekana community in the Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The encounter was in 1999 when community women sought to have their voices heard following the massive environmental degradation in their community due to oil exploration and exploitation activities. Their concerns included the destruction of their farmlands through acid rain, increasingly high infant and maternal

mortality rates, and destruction of livelihoods. According to Makinde, Edun, and Akinrotimi (2015), "It is one of the effluent receiving sites in the Okrika arm (Ekerekana creek) of the Bonny River estuary and the Buguma creek, all in the Rivers State. Ekerekana is spatially located between the latitude 04^0 and 50^0N and longitude 07^0 and 10^0E. About 95% of the total area is wetland" (p. 127). The call by the women desiring my support to push their case for better environmental practices against the multinationals came after my inaugural service, in which the state director of USAID-AFRICARE in 1997–1998 saw me working in the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) project. The OVC project opened my eyes to the pains of being motherless and fatherless under circumstances such as HIV/AIDS or related reproductive health ailments. It was therefore painful to see that environmental pollution was forcefully causing additional terminal illnesses like cancer, maternal mortality, and leaving even more children motherless, a situation that called for urgent action.

The adverse effects of the environmental problems became critical affecting even one's source of livelihood, such as water, as observed by Mbaneme, Okoli, and Ekweghi (2003), "the water aquifers in the Okrika Mainland are susceptible to possible contamination with carcinogenic aliphatic hydrocarbons originating from the improper treated effluent discharges of the nearby Port Harcourt Refining Company Limited (PHRCL) production lines" (p. 255). This contamination and its effects on the already vulnerable rural women triggered the initial involvement of CEDSI in community environmental intervention. At this period with limited funding there was a strong test regarding CEDSI's resilience and ability to overcome these challenges and eventually retain its core mission in spite of a diverse search for resources, which serves as a key lesson in this paper.

In order to engage the question of case statements, nonprofit resilience, and diversification, I turn to donor motivation theory to examine what informs the choices of donors to fund nonprofits.

The basis of such a theory and its suitability for our work is that donor motivation theory suggests that good case statements motivate donor funding, which in turn strengthens nonprofit resilience and diversification. Donor motivation theory suggests that there is a need to understand what donors fund and why (Grace,2006; Schervish, Havens, & O'Herlihy, 2006; Barber, 2016). The Center on Philanthropy (2009) identifies aspects of motivation, which include "providing for people's basic needs and helping the poor help themselves as clearly stated in the organization's mission statement." The clarity of case statements aid donor understanding and in turn supports funding once in line with donor priorities. According to Sargeant and Woodliffe (2007), it is important to understand various motivations for giving, as such understanding could result in strategic fundraising that is efficient at targeting and retaining donors. Donor motivation theory contributes to the overall understanding of the basis for this paper, which includes linkages between case statements and nonprofit resilience and diversification.

In order to answer the main research question, the theoretical framework will be discussed in tandem with issues raised by case statements and nonprofit resilience and diversification. The linkages between case statements, resilience, and diversification suggest that they are reinforcing, as case statements should be examined as a constitutive element of nonprofits since they provide strategic communications that could attract donors. While resilience underscores the persistence of nonprofits in trying times, diversification points out the need for them to broaden their horizons and extend to a wide range of foci or interventions. The understanding of this theoretical underpinning helps to grasp the complexity of non-profits. Borzaga and Tortia (2006) argued that motivation helps close the gap between the giver and the receiver, the poor and the rich. These theoretical explorations will enrich the arguments advanced in this paper. Against the background

of this theoretical framework, this paper adopts a methodological approach to study case statements, nonprofit resilience and diversification.

Methodology

The paper adopted a qualitative approach, which builds on seminal existing data that corroborate the on-ground experience of CEDSI Nigeria. The data was analyzed descriptively, as they draw from multiple sources on themes related to case statements and nonprofit resilience and diversification. Relevant authoritative institutional and comparative data were deployed to provide in-depth understanding and analysis of the overall focus of the paper. The study of the Niger Delta is informed by a number of factors. For instance, since the discovery of oil in commercial quantities in 1956 there have been repeated incidences of environmental degradation and ecological breakdown (Amadi, Ogbanga, & Agena, 2015). The activities of nonprofits is not well-known in this regard. This does not only make this study an original contribution, but it equally strengthens the role of rural nonprofits in an environmentally degraded society. The trends were explored within the period of 1999 to 2017. This period is important as it marks the return to democracy in Nigeria and the spread of nonprofits. This analytical method is significant in several regards, in particular, it will add understanding to the innovative forms and practice of nonprofits in the Niger Delta. It will also highlight the connections between our qualitative data and the particular experience of CEDSI Nigeria, providing seminal scholarship and on-ground evidence for the advancement of nonprofit resilience and diversification.

Literature Review

Case statements have become common across several spheres of nonprofit practice and research. Jerold Panas (2003) provides a seminal guide to writing case statements, suggesting a consensus in the literature that a case statement is linked to nonprofit fundraising. Kerri Burrows (2009) writes that a "good case statement is the starting point for any conversation with potential donors." Similarly, Lees (2010), writing on accelerating the success of nonprofits reemphasized the need for clear and comprehensive case statements.

There is rich practitioner literature that offers important understanding of nonprofit fundraising and case statements. For instance, sociologists study nonprofit organizations as social and economic institutions. This informs the basis of highly strategic case statements. Michael Worth (2009) states, "This reality requires that an organization bases its fundraising on identified needs related to achievement of mission and related to achievement of its mission and rooted in a plan for its future growth and improvement" (p. 3). All geared toward an organization's social mission. The basis of case statements are still a challenge to most nonprofits, who still grapple with multiple identification crises. Worth reaffirms that every organization must develop a case for support or a rationale for giving that goes beyond its own needs and links its growth to broader social and human purposes. The case for support is the reason for an organization to have a persuasive and clear case statement.

There are studies that suggest the importance of case statements to fundraising. According to C. Neal Davis (2002), "fundraising is a synergetic system: …. The best fundraiser has not yet been born; the most successful campaign has not yet begun; the wisdom is still being assembled" (p. 393). However, as an organization, we did not relent in seeking continued funding to address growing environmental challenges. Mary Tshirhart and Wolfang Bielefeld (2012) suggest that "the

most important element of a non-profit plan is its mission and vision." Such strategic missions and

visions strengthen the direction of case statements in the context of fundraising (Tshirhart &

Bielefeld, 2012). Robert Fogal (2010) stated that "fundraising generates essential income for

charitable organizations." It measures the degree to which organizational purpose is affirmed.

Donor support for any particular organization reflects their perception of that entity as an effective

vehicle in meeting a community or human need. Donor support through fundraising is a strategic

guide. Importantly, Fogal says that "to succeed in the long-term development of philanthropic

support, non-profit leaders must be able to articulate the case for support." Thus, an effective case

statement is perhaps the foundation on which to build philanthropic support.

Branding has been an integral component of nonprofit fundraising. Shirley Sagawa (2001)

observed that to have a strong brand, a social sector organization must have:

(1) A strong reputation,

(2) Supporters,

(3) Be natural in their scope,

(4) Be charismatic, and

(5) Offer something of new value.

Hankinson (2001) echoes that "a charity that fails to behave consistently with its stated brand

values will lack credibility and ultimately to…. the donors' charitable donation." Similar concern

was further elaborated by Kirsten Bullock (2011), who provides the understanding of a case

statement as a document that provides basic information about an organization, program, or

ministry. Beyond such basic information, case statement identifies and analyses unmet needs of

an organization and proffers solutions. Bullock identified some of the uses of a case statements as

consensus building, source materials, feasibility study instruments, and a tool to convey organizational credibility and inspiration.

According to Tim Jones and Rakhi Kasat (2009), there are scholars who see case statements as both strategic and reinvigorating in the branding of a nonprofit, others have argued that most nonprofit practitioners barely deploy appropriate case statements, which undermines their growth and sustainability. Case statements have equally reemerged as integral to nonprofits' transformation in strategic succession. Both scholars and practitioners posit that case statements have been the focus of nonprofit succession plans, through which non-results-based NGOs could redirect their strategic focus, including marketing niche and branding. Jones and Kasat identify case statements as concise documents with explicit explanations of the need an organization seeks to meet and how it plans to do so. The point is that case statements must be explicit and precise to meet donor expectations.

Studies linking case statements to nonprofit resilience and diversification have also provided some understanding of their relevance (Carroll & Stater, 2008; Bonilla, 2015). Such literature relates case statements to the survival of the nonprofit in volatile environments, such as the Niger Delta. This survival strategy is reinforced with debates on nonprofit diversification (Chang & Tuckman,1994; Carroll & Stater, 2009). Walter J. Mayer, Hui-Chen Wang, Jared F. Egginton, and Hannah S. Flint (2012), using modern portfolio theory, suggest that more diversification reduces the volatility of a nonprofit. In a related account, Mary Foster and Agnes Meinhard (2000) reinforce the strategic relevance of diversification, arguing that it could be instrumental for strengthening nonprofits. However, a number of factors must be considered, notably the size of the organization, its management, how long it has been in existence, its track

record, and the narrowness or broadness of the organization's mandate. Proponents of nonprofit resilience argue that it is more centrally linked to adaptability (Ottenhoff, 2011).

My twenty years of experience provides me with an understanding of the Niger Delta, suggesting the basis for diversification. Nonprofit diversification appears a less-employed term in nonprofit studies. The concept, in particular, engages with how to expose CSOs to a wide range of opportunities, and to which ones, to improve their chances of survival and relevance. This is in line with my field experience in nonprofits in Nigeria, where several practitioners implicitly lost a sense of direction and focus, as they were not only institutionally incapacitated in terms of environmental and ecological constraints, but also lacked the capacity to diversify or align with changing trends in the nonprofit sector. Against the background of the previously reviewed literature, we examine trends on case statements and nonprofit resilience and diversification with experience from CEDSI Nigeria.

Case Statements and Nonprofit Resilience and Diversification: Experience from CEDSI Nigeria

In this section, the paper will briefly explore the various steps taken in setting up CEDSI as a nonprofit organization in order to address environmental injustice and human capital development. The sub-section will discuss resilient strategies deployed in an increasingly challenging terrain, namely the Niger Delta, and suggest the need for nonprofit diversification.

Taking the First Steps: Registration of the Organization

In order to be strategically positioned to champion the cause of nonprofit environmental intervention, it became imperative for CEDSI to get officially registered as a nonprofit

organization. The registration helped to define the focus of CEDSI and the direction of our case statements, although it was not easy to get CEDSI registered, as it has been for any corporate organization in Nigeria. Generally, in Nigeria, the process of registration is herculean and, in fact, the cost is seemingly insurmountable for various reasons, including the fact that the board members' names must be published in the national and local daily newspapers (CAC, 2018). Given the cost, it becomes imperative to have everything in place before beginning the process of registration, given the amount of time required.

Considering that I had not undertaken advocacy on such a large scale before, I had to enhance my skills in the various spheres required to set up a nonprofit organization and, most importantly, I had to seek the right partners with whom to work. I needed to be able to advocate for the women or any community within the framework of my organization. Registering an organization to give its advocacy credibility and legitimacy became inevitable. So, to achieve setting up the nonprofit organization, I consulted with key friends and partners on the vision, mission, and goals of what came to be later known as the Center for Development Support Initiatives (CEDSI).

Personal and Organizational Development

After the formal registration of CEDSI Nigeria, to ensure that the organization had the right qualifications and mandate to provide needed nonprofit intervention and to be resilient, capacity-building became imperative. Personal and organizational development were captured in the registration of the organization with the Center for Management & Development (CMD, 2018) and the organization's participation in several training sessions to increase CEDSI's institutional and management capacity. I then worked to master the requisite skills needed to steer an

organization of that magnitude. In addition to being CMD certified, I furthered my studies at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, with a post-graduate certificate in cross-sector partnership. The program was to designed to help graduates succeed in their work with partners from diverse industries and improve the success of initiatives in rural communities. I worked further to earn my doctorate of philosophy in Development Studies, which I reasoned would be the peak of my achievements, to be able to effectively deliver on my promise of steering the activities of a nonprofit organization.

Following my education and flair for nonprofits, I commenced consulting on community work, which provided me with an opportunity to implement cross-disciplinary projects. I specifically played strategic roles that impacted rural communities and shaped policies, programs, and partnerships at the governmental level. The skills and knowledge gained during the first ten years of serving the organization enabled us to set the pace of knowledge transfer and the institutional development of our organization and other nonprofits. This increasingly stimulated resilience and diversification, in particular my personal educational development helped in building my capacity, which translated into strategic case statements that strengthened CEDSI in the context of organizational resilience and diversification.

Setting up Board Membership

To be able to effectively integrate women and youth into community transformation, the creation of the CEDSI board became imperative. In 1999, during the formative phase of the organization, it was imperative to select board members strategically, including family members who would consistently stand up for the organization as opposed to their continuous ability to donate, raise funds, etc., for the organization.

Committed board membership was central in meeting our case statements. Thus, the creation of the board membership was more about who will stick with you and not run away, supporting a growing organization to the level of its sustainability. To fill the board positions, five members were identified. As a member of several boards, I had the opportunity to learn strategic lessons about directing a board. To support this, I attended the Board Source (2018) "Train the Trainer" session, which "inspires and supports excellence in non-profit governance, board and staff leadership." The training afforded me an opportunity to understand board development and training, although expanding our board to further enhance support was near impossible legally, as the Company and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) included several steps that needed to be followed, which some nonprofits found difficult. The experience from the trainings facilitated the dynamics of our case statements, as well as the resilience and diversification of CEDSI.

Analyzing Market Requirement

A resilient nonprofit must understand current trends that require intervention. When I look back at my experiences over the years, a reoccurring certainty is the fact that no matter the form of resource mobilization, it is paramount to keep the development of a defined strategy and organizational mission at the center of our thinking. As an organization evolving in the late 1990s, we set out to first be a center of excellence in nonprofit and community development, training to address the huge knowledge gap existing then. However, exploring the market showed an urgent and immediate need for intervention in the environmental and infrastructure sector. Specifically environmental pollution and the provision of basic amenities like water boreholes and markets, etc., were prioritized. This discovery did not entirely change our strategic plan, but reshaped CEDSI to accommodate fundraising for environmental remediation, biodiversity, and

environmental education, which was equally a lesson in diversification. While that expanded our funding base, it was the beginning of new reflection on what exactly we stood for: were we a training institution or an environmental advocacy nonprofit or perhaps a broad-based community development institution? While these growing environmental challenges formed the basis of our drive for diversification, to meet complex needs of the people we remained flexible with other nonprofit interventions.

Strengthening the Mission Statement

For CEDSI to emerge strong, we needed to focus on a core case statement that could distinguish us among other nonprofits. While it is key to create and execute a good set of plans, maintaining a comparative advantage takes more than great timing and any one single solution. A mission has to be as multifaceted as the target audience or fundraising need could ever be. To actualize a nonprofit comparative advantage requires a well-designed, well-executed, and well-sustained strategy that constitutes part of the strategic focus of our desire to strengthen our mission statement.

The organization became primarily dedicated to promoting good governance and sustainable development in rural communities. Good governance and sustainable rural development thus formed part of our case statement. As an organization, one of the roles we needed to play at the time was the capacity-building of women and youth so they could play active roles in their own development process, which would then lead to community transformation. This case statement gave rise to a governance partnership with African Radio Drama Association (ARDA) in 2001 and, with support from the United States Information Service (USIS), a project known as Women Advocate for Development in Environment (WADE-IN) was born as a voice to highlight and present the concerns of rural women in Ekerekana, in particular, and other communities in

Rivers State, in general. Collaboration with ARDA eased the internalization of the environmental crises in the Niger Delta region. The project was a huge success, with the women's voices heard and their environmental needs acted on.

Several positive responses were received by rural women from the community, as policy makers and government intervened to address their most pressing needs through the provision of infrastructure and reviewed policies. While these needs were met, the organizational mission had grown broader and "community development" became our priority, a term also used by major donors at the time to reflect what they intended to do for communities. This, however, led us away from our specific intervention area—human capital development.

Building Strategic Partnerships

CEDSI built strategic partnerships with various groups and CSOs. Victor (2008) notes that the region, prior to the chaos, has been home to many oil multinationals for over four decades with little infrastructure. The resurgence in ecological breakdowns resulted in the emergence of CSO collaborations and partnerships among human and environmental rights groups. CEDSI is an environmental group but our common goal remained the same, which is to alleviate the suffering of the local people, as no proper development can take place in an environmentally degraded society experiencing continued aggression, conflict, pollution, and pain. More important for CEDSI was our collaboration with the local people which perhaps strengthened our resilience. As an organization, CEDSI actively collaborated with local people to provide dialogue with multinationals and to eschew violence or the threat of violence as a major means of changing oil company policies in the region. CEDSI has collaborated with multiple partners to promote social

inclusion and community development within over six hundred communities, which has strengthened our diversification.

Fundraising and Continuous Auditing

In trying to stimulate nonprofit resilience and diversification, fundraising and auditing became imperative at an organizational level to understand the factors that have encouraged "giving" across the board, be it corporate, government, or private donors, etc. Corporate, government, and donor responses are often comparatively different internationally, but the idea was to get CEDSI prepared or favorably disposed to receive funding from partners. The efforts toward fundraising resulted in deploying real time and practical strategies that are pro-poor, pro-ecology and pro-development. Through the set-up of The Enterprise Hub and Port Harcourt Credit Society, we diversified our income streams and ameliorated the negative effect of the waning support of any one single donor.

Continuous auditing of our fundraising process to define next steps easily became a tool that guided our diversification strategy, as we earmarked certain funds to various interventions. Steps to maintain a balance between mainstreaming a new idea and sustaining our original plan were taken. We maintained continuous auditing to help guide, amend, evaluate our activities, and direct our next steps. The continuous auditing strategy added value to our efforts to build resilience and diversify, as we identified gaps both in our resource strength and financial projection and proffered alternative modalities to fill the identified gaps.

Team-Building

To strengthen our case statement, foster resilience, and promote sustainability, CEDSI built a highly motivated and enthusiastic team with critical knowledge in the sector to adapt quickly we do not spread ourselves too thin or project uncertainty in our branding. Speedy identification of a strong core team was noted and built to address the four key sectors CEDSI represents, namely social inclusion, environmental justice, community development and women's empowerment.

Conclusion

The discussion thus far has noted that case statements and nonprofit resilience and diversification are the original theoretical contribution this study seeks to make with the case experience of CEDSI Nigeria. The aim is for both old and emerging nonprofits in developing societies to adopt related strategic case statements and resilient and diversification approaches. In this context, such strategies would strengthen the core thrust of nonprofits. Case statements inevitably constitute a viable tool for communicating organizational resilience and diversification. Our analysis within diversification theory provides insights and answers to fundamental questions on nonprofit resilience and diversification with an emphasis on the case experience of CEDSI Nigeria. We have perhaps successfully learned from our previous experiences the need for a complete positive reevaluation and willingness to make adjustments to improve the efficiency of our case statement for both resilience and diversification, particularly in a difficult environment like the Niger Delta. Case statements should make constructive adjustments, which could heighten value creation, expectations, and result in greater and more perceptible manner for nonprofits.

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Inward Push: Trajectory to Sustainability in the Nonprofit Sector
Kelechukwu Okezie

Abstract

Most NGOs and developmental initiatives in Africa are externally driven, creating eternal dependency. Donor support and dependency takes away indigenous initiatives and values, hence, projects lack sustainability despite the millions of dollars of funds in foreign aid. This paper argues that what is needed for project sustainability is inward-looking, building local capacities, identifying and supporting indigenous knowledge in an integrative manner, and working as partners in a mutually beneficial relationship. NGOs stand the chance of galvanizing regional integration and development if they demand institutional building and value development, rather than being mere service providers. Through sustainable programming, regional integration becomes possible because every player has something to bring to the table. Sustainable projects are those that are integrative, holistic, and inclusive, where no one is looked down on and no one is left behind.

Introduction

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) are nonprofit, independent organizations that are set up with the aim of stepping in to close the gaps created by the incapacitation of the government in social service delivery, especially among poor, rural, and vulnerable individuals and communities. They aim at creating social values by providing solutions to social problems. NGOs, especially grassroots NGOs, are viewed by the public, agencies, and recipients as the voice of the voiceless,

change agents that are driven by passion and empathy. Most grassroots NGOs are formed by either an individual or groups of persons coming together to identify and solve a developmental issue. It could be poverty, education, human rights abuse, or environmental pollution. Whatever the motive, the overriding impulse is passion and social service, and it involves collective action.

African-based nonprofit sectors, formed by the indigenous people, expectedly brings in the traditional African principles of communal values, reciprocity, and interdependence in project implementation. Most often, their approaches include an mix of the organizations' inherent values and those of their funders/benefactors. The African value of kinship is such that people come together to solve a problem and no one receives a greater wage or takes advantage of the other. No doubt there are many challenges facing most African societies, such as a lack of access to water, health care, and education, as well as poverty, to mention but a few. Positioning itself within the context of modernization and globalization, there is emerging a highly professionalized urbanized NGO sector that is creating models of development based on the principles and values of the donor. The modern NGO is expected to have "capacity" in the sense of established governance structures, policies, and audits and the ability to show competency in managing donor funds.

In a competitive world, definitely the better equipped takes all and what is left goes to the upstart, who may have the values and integrity but has none of the mastery of the requirements to suit emerging global trends. This has left behind community-based organizations that still retain African values but are overshadowed by urbane, professionalized NGOs that understand donors' language, biases, and preferences and play according to the dictates of funders. With the metamorphosis, changes in focus, concept, and medium of delivery and the professionalized NGO becomes structured, rigid, and dominant. Their interventions become flash-pan solutions that lack scalability, sustainability, and the inclusion of the people they earlier set out to serve. With over

$300 billion of aid having gone to Africa since 1970 (Buntin 2009), there is the need to devise a new strategy of engagement and a framework to ensure the sustainability and growth of African communities.

Designing programs that capture indigenous knowledge and inputs, supporting interventions on research and funding indigenous knowledge in health care, environmental management, and governance structure, among many others, will promote sustainability and growth of the African continent. Carriers of indigenous knowledge could be brought into a knowledge hub in which their ideas, talents, and creativity are discovered, nurtured, and promoted. This will help regional integration, since every nation in Africa has something peculiar that other nations could leverage as a value proposition. This is a new paradigm that modern African nongovernmental organizations should promote.

Formation and Changes

Duncan Green (2016), in his book *How Change Happens*, opined that changes are inspired as a result of inequality and the unjust system in the world. The theory of change shows how interventions result. In its simplest form, it is about doing and achieving a result. A theory of change carefully articulates what the intended activity is and the expected change it will bring. "Every action we take, from the overall goal of the project to every single activity, has a theory of change behind it. The theory of change, then, is a tool that can be used to explain and articulate the logical connection between a lower level result and a higher-level result. Thus, it can be used to design, monitor and evaluate social change initiatives" (Care, 2012, p. 3).

When in 1999 Neighbourhood Environment Watch (NEW) was formed, it was purely out of the sense and need to create values and help shape society within an inclusive developmental

model, in which people would be inspired to own their environment and interact with it in a mutually beneficial relationship. The aim was and still remains to address environmental challenges resulting from a lack of concordance between the people and their environment, resulting in environmental pollution of various forms and proportions.

Neighbourhood Environment Watch Foundation started as a voluntary membership organization in 1999, with volunteers who met every month to do community clean-up exercises, plant trees, and organize public lectures to create awareness and take action against environmental pollution. By self-definition, NEW Foundation has as its mission to advocate for environmental justice, transparent natural resources governance, and respect for human rights, especially within the extractive sector. Using a participatory approach and working with community volunteers, the organization documents critical problems of environmental degradation resulting from poor agricultural practices, artisanal mining (Kolapo, 2018), and building the capacity of mining-impacted communities on human rights violations. NEW Foundation also uses ecological and ethnographical models in its research, data collection, and analysis. One of its programs, the "Green Communities reforestation Project," aims at raising and planting an average of 100,000 tree seedlings every year, and through this initiative, local community members participate in managing nurseries that contain varieties of local tree species. The organization also creates linkages of mutual ecosystems, strengthens institutional capacities of other NGO/CBOs, and provides services that alleviate some social problems identified within the community.

In 2011, NEWF received its first grant from UNDP to implement a sixteen-month project on reforestation and livelihood. This was followed with a grant from USAID for a 36-month project on behavioral change and communication to reduce burdens of sickness in the environment. These projects, among many others, have been promoted as success stories that

showcase the power of communities, collaboratively identifying and finding solutions to common challenges and fostering peace and sustainability.

However, the widening gulf of social inequality and the rising poverty of many rural communities demands that more social interventions are carried out, but limited financial support and a nonviable resource base create pressure such that donor support is a first-line preference, despite the fact that the national government has the capacity and resources to address the people's needs. But like many African governments, self-centeredness, corruption, and a lack of policies to benefit future generations continue to impoverish communities, leaving legacies of poverty in perpetuity.

Worse still, the government oftentimes does not see NGOs as veritable partners, rather the government works to shrink civil society space and mute the voice of the people. Non-state actors are perceived as competitors, busybodies, and witch hunters. Worse still, the private sector finds it difficult to engage CSOs and work through them in the exercise of their corporate social responsibility. Such gaps and poor perceptions deny CSOs resources to carry out their activities. Many CSOs also do not have fundraising initiatives that they can leverage to implement their programs. Therefore, those who started with a passion to drive changes and improve the lives of their people drop along the way due to a lack of support and sustainable projects.

A new set of professionalized, cartel-like, NGOs has emerged within the CSO landscape. They are domineering, live flamboyant lives, and are arrogant and smart. They understand the donor language and work not actually to improve the social well-being of the people they earlier set to serve, but rather to improve themselves, their immediate families, and their "slavish" friends. Therefore, donor dependence created a lull in NGOs' creative ability, eroded their value, and made them predatory service providers. Their impunity and lord-like demeanor are likened to what

Frederick Laloux (2014) termed "conformist-amber organisations," manifesting the red organizational paradigms that brooch no competitor.

The dependence of NGOs on donors has created "aid dependency" and the "professionalization" of a sector that should be altruistic and passionate. There exists today a "patron-client relationship that has weakened the NGO sector." The professionalized NGO is expected to possess "technical and managerial capabilities" and should operate approved monitoring and control systems, thereby making them function more like the technical agencies of government or the private sector (Korten, 1991).

Because of the self-serving interests of some NGOs, regional collaboration becomes even more difficult because their vision is colored and they do not see and serve humanity from the empathic prism. Their interventions are more of mere service providers and not as catalysts for social change or for sustainable development of the African region. Many NGOs promote their self-interests against the community's, and this has corroborated the "self-interest theory" propagated by Hirschman (1970). Self-interest theory categorizes three elements that drive human consumerism: exit, voice, and loyalty. AbouAssi (2013) applied the consumer concept within the NGO sector and believes that many NGOs now operate within the self-interest model, to which he added a fourth mode: adjustment mode. Whereas some NGOs may quit a relationship based on their ethics, others may voice their opinions and then quit, but a greater number may prefer to remain loyal and swallow whatever pill is forced down their throat. Adjustment occurs when an NGO willingly and voluntarily decides to adjust their activities in order to meet changes in donor funding priorities (AbouAssi, 2013). Such adjustments could be minor or substantial, leading the NGO to lose touch with their mission and become dependent solely on their donors

Talking about corruption in the private sector, there also emerged sensible infiltration into the civil society space by the government, which set up its own NGOs and used their cronies in such organizations to promote their own interests. These new developments created a gulf and conflict of trust among the NGO sector, NGOs and the government, and NGOs and the communities. Most interventions in communities are without support because communities believe NGOs have money and should compensate the people for coming to provide social services to them.

Aware that dependence on foreign grants provides personal sustainability without communal sustainability, most NGOs in Africa are apprehensive of collaboration and/or knowledge sharing; unable to promote friendship even among themselves. Scrambling for donors' attention and favor soon results in bickering, grandstanding, and corruption, such that today, most NGOs are objects of ridicule and are classified at the same level as the corrupt public institutions they are expected to monitor as watchdogs. Aware also that donor support is hinged on accepting and doing what the donor demands, most NGOs become lapdogs, accepting and doing whatever the donor demands, even if it turns against their ethical values as an organization.

Our Stories and Challenges

My over 18 years of leadership experience in the NGO sector has exposed the writer to the many challenges confronting NGOs and their leadership. Working in the environmental sector especially, is challenging, both in terms of technical skills and guaranteed funding. In most of the communities we work with, the lands are degraded as a result of poor management, use of chemicals to enhance crop yields, and deforestation. In other areas, artisanal miners degrade the landscape, excavating the subsoil to extract lead, zinc, granite, and limestone that are sold to Asian

buyers. In Ebonyi State is the Umuogharu granite crushing industrial site. Women and children provide cheap labor, eking out a living, and the abandoned mine sites take its yearly toll on human and animal lives, as women and children go to fetch water from the contaminated lakes at the abandoned mines. In areas where there are corporate mines, the communities are impoverished and lack basic social facilities, skills, or a voice to negotiate and ensure that their demands are met as a matter of social justice.

Poverty is a crisis of environmental degradation. Therefore for sustainable development to occur, an intervention has to be integral and holistic. Oftentimes, it is the NGOs working within the environmental sector that promote holistic and practical interventions that cut across many social needs of the people. Sadly though, support for environmental causes in most African communities is limited and hard to access. NEW Foundation faces the challenge of financial autonomy and when funds are secured, they are irregular and unsecured, such that the ability to develop an indigenous framework and customized approach is often impossible.

Another challenge facing many grassroots NGOs is a lack of access to donor grants. Many CBOs have no internet access, electricity that is unavailable or erratic, and no knowledge of new communication equipment and technology to harvest information and link themselves to the wider world. When a donor comes to the state to seek partners, it is only those that have such links or are recommended by the government that are selected. And when there is a call for proposals advertised in the national newspapers, the process is often rigorous and demanding. The NGO may need to score high in an organizational capacity assessment and show evidence of financial audit reports and other legally binding instruments. It is true that NGOs labor under various constraints in order to meet their social obligations (DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990). Moreover, the over 100 years of intense colonization destroyed, devalued, and made African society dependent on Western

technology, devaluing indigenous knowledge and skills. Most communities have become impoverished and believe that their survival is possible solely through dependence on foreign aid.

Professionalization of the NGO

Professionalization in this context is akin to redesigning an NGOs' operations and values to conform to Western or donor-imposed administrative preferences. It means taking away an NGOs' indigenous identity and imposing different norms and values that oftentimes impede ethical social changes. It should be understood ab initio that the driving force for establishing NGOs is maximum impact at minimal cost. In Africa, traditional societies come together to identify and meet a need. Everyone is rewarded within the context of communal work and not a separate group that has a dependency on external bodies. Making an NGO work and operate in a similar manner as public service takes away resources that could go to direct projects costs that would be of greater value to service administrative costs. This also brings up the question of how a nongovernmental organization could function as an extension of the government without losing its independence and driving force. How can dependency ensure that NGOs do not lose their voice and live in a self-constricting space?

Again, since this "professionalization" is externally driven, it means more funding for organizations with "technical" skills, such that there are now "big" NGOs with a steady stream of funding and "small" NGOs who are rural and do not have access to funding. The segregation of the sector means that a new culture is emerging with new value propositions with priority shifts. What is often sacrificed is integrity, altruistic behaviors, inclusiveness, and the voice of the people at the ground level. The voice of big NGOs becomes the voice of the people and projects emphasizing sustainability values are sacrificed. This aligns with what Heiss and Kelly (2018)

said, that the "urbane, professionalized NGOs can drop valued but underfunded objectives in favor of issues and preferences that align with the available donor(s) bias and preferences." Henderson (2002) believes that this creates a "patron-client" relationship that supplants strong, grassroots civil society. By conditioning funding on evidence of the administrative structure of an NGO, donors have incentivized NGOs to reshape their programs and showcase activity rather than productivity that has no sustainable outcomes.

Reinforcing the argument against the aid-dependence and professionalization of the NGO sector, Bush (2015) states that dependence subjugates NGOs in developing countries. Donor dependence often restructures social ties at the grassroots level, inadvertently distorts communal and social behavior by fostering competition, which may undermine development, and creates dysfunctional habits. Donor demands for measurability and logic models, which are components of professionalization, have led many NGOs to shift their core programming activities. The implication is that they must quantify their inputs, outputs, and outcomes and provide statistical evaluation for donors' satisfaction (Bush, 2015). Again this has led to a dual personality with an overwhelming pull to do that which would satisfy the individual and not that which promotes sustainability at the community level.

Drawing from the conceptual framework of "self theory," Hirschmans (1970) posited that, in the face of shifting demands and the desire to survive, individual self-interest comes to play. NGOs who find themselves in a dependency trap from the need for financial resources to survive (AbouAssi, 2012) innovate for self-survival. As implementing partners and receivers of funds, many NGOs alter their interests, culture, and ethics to align with those of the donor and in so doing lose much of their identity and confidence with their constituents. Furthermore, with the emergence of capitalist-based grant frameworks dictated by foreign donors, NGO leaders, if they

are to remain afloat, must understand the tunes and dance steps of the grant provider. Many urbane and cosmopolitan NGOs have shed the vestige of passion for service delivery to compete for foreign grants and the erosion of their organizational ethics and values. Today, despite enormous funds invested into service delivery in the form of grants, many projects die or are abandoned as soon as the fund cycle ceases.

Inward Push: Trajectory to Project Sustainability and Regional Integration in Africa

It is true that despite what gains the donor intends to achieve by funding projects in communities, the essence is lost because the development model is based on Western ideas and concepts. Such imposition creates a "them and us" relationship where the beneficiary is subservient and the donor is the messiah who is giving to "poor and impoverished communities." This relationship has not promoted interdependency and as such cannot be sustainable.

In project conception and development, the donor does not feel that the community has anything to contribute apart from perhaps cheap labor and land. The project does not take the problem within its context; rather projects are implemented on an ad-hoc basis to address the immediate problem. Also, the donor does not invest in institutional support or build on indigenous values or knowledge that would enhance sustainability. Therefore one is tempted to believe that the donor is not truly concerned about the sustainable development of the African region, rather its posturing is to make sure that Africa remains beggarly and dependent.

For regional integration, there is a need to increase indigenous capacity and value development, such that indigenous knowledge becomes an integral component of service/project intervention in Africa. Again, there is the need to delink from the West. By this I mean intellectual delinking and inward discovery. We should understand that within communities lies the

knowledge and capacity to meet their everyday challenges and social inequalities. Donors working through African leaders need to identify each region's value proposition as a product for regional integration. By this, I mean that within each region should be an element of social value that other African nations can tap into to meet their social and economic needs. Each nation could create centers where indigenous knowledge is researched and developed as an article of trade and regional collaboration. Above all, the African NGO, instead of channeling their efforts into interventions as predatory service agents (Carman, 2010), should innovate and develop a new paradigm that is truly indigenous and could form a platform for regional integration.

ARNOVA/AROCSA should identify credible NGOs in Africa, assist them to link up with donors with developmental models rooted in the rediscovery of indigenous talents, and make them catalysts of change that can birth a culture of sustainable development in African societies. Creating a database of such NGOs and supporting them both technically and financially will make ARNOVA-AROCSA, a truly developmental platform on which African development hinges. By creating a resource base and galvanizing the diaspora to invest in African NGOs, donor dependence will become minimal and impact more sustainable.

Research has shown that NGOs that are donor-dependent tend to lose their voice and independence. Damisa Moyo (2009), in her book *Dead Aid*, states that aid, in whatever form, continues to bring unmitigated political, economic, and humanitarian disasters, despite the over trillion dollars in aid to African states. Moyo recounts how aid continues to fuel corruption and discourage intellectual efforts to solving social inequalities. She went further to offer four alternatives or models for African growth: foreign direct investments, genuine free trade, accessing international bond markets, and, finally, financial intermediation.

Inasmuch as I am not against foreign aid, I am of the opinion that foreign aid should be tied to projects that promote social capital growth through the study, documentation, and promotion of indigenous knowledge and technology. NGOs should be driven by leaders with inspiration and a mission to improve their communities through rich intellectual capital, driving innovations, trade, and skills needed for sustainable growth and development, rather than dependency that continues to fuel poverty, social crisis, and under-development in Africa.

Sustainability should grow and be driven by the community, whose capacity has been increased so they can move from dependence to independence and finally to interdependence. Communities are a rich resource for promoting sustainability, and by consulting with local communities, access to community-based knowledge for addressing challenges is assured. Local communities should not be seen as having nothing to offer. The intimacy of the relationship established between the community and the implementing organization should ensure a continuous flow and interplay of ideas (see Figure 1).

Fig1. Flow of ideas for sustainable projects
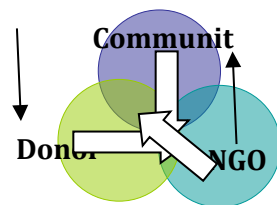
Sustainability matrix

If a problem is collectively identified and a solution commonly harnessed, this guarantees success. Also, when problems are collectively addressed it builds rapport and/or trust. Trust is not

built overnight; rather it is a continuous process where each partner believes in the integrity and capacity of the other and works collectively for social change. There is no doubt that when trust is built, the voice of the donor and the community blends and emerges as authentic. It creates a safe environment in which even the voices of the marginalized are captured and included.

For project sustainability, there thorough research should be undertaken on what the people need and a holistic and integrated approach should be used toward solving problems. I tend to believe that there is a fundamental disconnect between what is given and what is needed. The right approach is to promote communal values through the research and funding of indigenous knowledge and technology. The people should not be fed continually, rather their capacity to become independent should be ignited and every segment of intervention should have an approach to address interrelated challenges. The days of stand-alone programs by NGOs should be over and done with. NGOs with local content should be identified and empowered to research African knowledge and technology and position it in the context of globalization. This, to my mind, is one sure way of addressing African developmental problems and ensuring sustainability.

Conclusion

For sustainable development and project impact, the top-bottom approach often put forward by the donor should be reversed, such that indigenous knowledge is captured in project design. It is wrong to conceptualize the recipient as a helpless receiver. Rooted in every culture and clime are the ingredients for social and economic growth. The donor should, besides its support for services, fund research and knowledge capture by members of the community. Inclusiveness and local communities' participation are the required ingredients for sustainable projects and programming. A notion where the donor/NGO are seen as a doer and passive beneficiaries should be done away

with except in areas of emergency. The donor and the NGO should focus more on transforming the social institutions and values that solve the problem rather than merely addressing the manifestation.

I share the opinion that sustainable development and impact programming in impacted communities would provide the needed deliverables when the African NGO leaders learn to tap the resources around him/her and not rely on foreign donations alone. There is the need to research African philanthropy and incentivize the emerging African millionaires and philanthropists to donate for a cause that has greater good and to which they are emotionally attached. There is the need to build a relationship between the private sector and civil society organizations as partners for social benefits; while one reaps from the capital and social incentives by way of tax rebates, recognitions, and legacies, the other provides quality services that have an eye for value and integrity that lasts and does not take away the non-state actor's voice and independence.

Again, civil society should begin to think outside the box and create smart solutions to African problems. The concept of civil society as a mere service provider relying on grants from the West should be supplanted with local funds and resources. Satisfying the community needs of today and not solving their wants of tomorrow is not sustainable. Every program should be integrative, solving the problem from the root. To achieve this, the rural partnering communities should have their capacities built and given a skill around projects that have turn-around values.

Self-funding is what is required to ensure project sustainability. NGOs should create avenues for getting funds for their programs. This could come from setting up businesses and providing and charging for consultancy services. It is not in doubt that many NGO leaders, following from the many years of training from funders, have rich knowledge and resources they could market. They should charge for such services and plough it back into their organizations.

Also, technology should be properly utilized. There are online fund solicitations that have no attachments or conditions attached except that the recipient shows accountability and results. Online crowd funding, donations, and solicitations should be tapped into and utilized. House-to-house canvassing, street fundraising, and public relations agencies are innovations that could be explored further to generate income for NGOs.

Predatory service provisions in the form of free charity benumbs and creates mutative reliance and servitude. Again, the infiltration of the sector by those in active public service should be discouraged and sanctioned. This could be achieved by establishing and enforcing a set of guidelines and ethics of the profession as articulated by the non-state actors themselves. Modern information superhighways and social media are veritable tools that emerging NGO leaders should harvest and use for pushing out their creative innovations and reaching out to wider contacts rather than relying on responses from donor grants that are compromised at conception.

I am of the conviction, therefore, that African NGOs have the capacity to influence changes. I am convinced that the myriad problems facing Africa is traced to disconnection between what is needed and what is provided. It should be stated that by studying, researching, and integrating indigenous knowledge and technology within the program frameworks being implemented in the various societies would produce a better result. This could be done through research on traditional skills, science, and technology. There is also the need to recognize, reach out, and support the grassroots-based NGOs who are directly impacting lives so they can continue their work and not cut them off from funding due to technicalities and/or a lack of "donor" skills.

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