



## NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE

### THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS- A CASE FOR ZIMBABWE.

BY

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A Project Paper presented to University of Nairobi in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters in International Studies Degree Programme.

Sponsor SDS: Major General E.N. Njeru

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**DECLARATION**

I, Group Captain Ivan G. Dumba, certify that this project paper is my original work and that it has not been presented for a National Defense College Certificate in any other Defense College.


Signed:  .....

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This project paper has been submitted with the approval of my sponsor SDS.

Name: Major General E.N. Njeru

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Date: 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 2005 .....

## ACKNOWLEDGENTS

Many people contributed to the successful completion of writing this project paper. I am particularly indebted to my supervisor Professor Peter Wanyande for his invaluable guidance, the many lecturers of the University of Nairobi who spent a lot of their time in giving guidance on the writing of a project paper.

I am indebted to the Commandant National Defense College, the Senior Directing Staff, NDC and the entire National Defense College faculty, whose wisdom and inspiration greatly contributed to the completion of this work.

My gratitude goes particularly to the leadership of the Defense Forces of Zimbabwe and the Embassy of The Republic of Zimbabwe Kenya whose material and moral support made my studies possible.

I am grateful to the many participants of Course 8 who in many ways shared with me the joy and challenge of the course for the entire academic year.

My gratitude and indebtedness goes to my mother Joyce and late father Jairo's Hamuzofi from whom I inherited the spirit of hard work, determination and the moral courage to succeed.

Finally, I am indebted to my wife Vidah and our children Michelle, Robin, Lindsay and Megan for the utmost understanding, encouragement and support demonstrated over the entire period I was away from home for the studies. May the good Lord grant you his blessings and abundant love.

## **DEDICATION**

To my late father Jairos Hamuzofi whose guidance and example is still a source of inspiration for my entire family.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

UN:	United Nations
NGOs:	Non Governmental Organisations
CBOs:	Community Based Organisations
INGO:	International Non Governmental Organisation
WTO:	World Trade Organisation
SAP:	Structural Adjustment Program
PRSP:	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
IMF:	International Monetary fund
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
NEPAD:	New Partnership for Africa's Development
APRM:	African Peer Review Mechanism
MDG:	Millennium Development Goals
MNC:	Multinational Corporation
ESAP:	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
UDI:	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
IRCS:	International Red Cross Society
WCC:	World Council of Churches

MYWO:	Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation
CCK:	Christian Council of Kenya
EEC:	European Economic Community
USAID:	United States Aid
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
OCCZIM:	Organization of Collective Co-operation of Zimbabwe
ZERO:	Zimbabwe Environmental Research Organisation
ENDA:	Environmental Development Activities
NANGO:	National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
LWF:	Lutheran World Federation
PPRLF:	Pump-Prime Revolving Loan Fund
GMB:	Grain Marketing Board
ZACH:	Zimbabwe Association of Church Related Hospitals
FACT:	Family AIDs Caring Trust
SIDA:	Swedish Development Authority
VSO:	Volunteer Service Organisation
UNICEF:	United Nations Children and Education Fund
ORAP:	Organisation of Rural Association for Progress
CAMPFIRE:	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources

VIDCO: Village Development Committee

AGRITEX: Agricultural and Technical Extension Services

SHDF: Self Help Development Foundation

ZECLOF: Zimbabwe Ecumenical Church Loan Fund

IGP: Income Generating Projects

OECD: Organization for European Cooperation and Development

NORAD: Norwegian Development Agency

NACC: National AIDS Control Council

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## ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe has had a long history dating back to the thirteenth century when the Munhumutapa Empire was established centered on the current Great Zimbabwe monument. The empire had a thriving civilization characterized by cultivation of subsistence crops, trade and iron smiting. Control over the vast empire was achieved through a centralized system of chiefs who reported to the Munhumutapa. The huge mineral endowment and rich soils were the major source of power for the rulers. Coincidentally the endowment with rich natural resources provided a strong attraction to the British imperialists who subsequently colonized the country.

The colonization of Zimbabwe was characteristically preceded by missionaries who established posts initially in the Eastern and Southern parts of the country. Their mission as with the rest of Africa was to spread Christianity. It was not long after some communities adopted Christianity its central tenet of non-violence that columns of settlers began infiltrating the country from the South using brutal force to suppress any resistance to their occupation. By 1896, the country had fallen into the hands of a settler regime.

The colonial state in Zimbabwe was built on the premise of a dual society with whites running an oppressive government system which marginalized the blacks. Indigenous systems were destroyed as they were considered to be backward and replaced by a colonial model which perpetuated the dependency of blacks. Whilst the exploitative system matured, the levels of poverty among blacks deepened. Private voluntary organizations with the majority being missionary societies emerged to assist especially

the handicapped and orphaned blacks. Their activities were restricted and closely monitored to ensure that they did not promote black unrest. To this extent assistance was only in the form of food, clothing and to a lesser extent medicine. The development of rural areas in which the majority of blacks lived lagged behind markedly with access to basic needs of education, health, clean water and sanitation being severely curtailed.

The advent of independence in 1980 brought hope among rural communities that their development needs were going to be satisfied. The period thereafter witnessed a flood of NGOs into the country. Their involvement was initially in relief work where focus was on assisting refugees returning home, responding to disasters which were drought inflicted and supporting small women's clubs involved in sewing, baking and soap-making.

The focus of NGO activities soon changed to development initiatives in late 1980s. At this time the government was starting to show signs of financial stress. The Economic Structural Programs embarked on thereafter worsened the plight of rural communities as the government withdrew most of its support to Community Based Organizations which had become the major form of community development initiatives. International Non-Governmental Organizations registered their presence by filling the gap left by government. Their main contribution was financial in nature to other NGOs. Projects that were supported included the building of schools, hospitals and the sponsorship of research and extension. Some recognizable development was achieved in the rural communities.

NGO community development work virtually came to a standstill after 2000. This period was characterized by the rapid deterioration in relations between Zimbabwe and Western countries. The major source of disagreement is the land reform program. Although NGOs are independent entities their effectiveness relies overwhelmingly on the willingness of donors to avail funds. These donors also have their interests to satisfy which becomes the yardstick for availing funds. In the case of Western donors, aid is withheld once the conditions for private capital participation are not conducive. The failure of NGOs to develop the communities in they are involved is therefore a direct result of the free marketing model's preoccupation with self interest.



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Background.

Most of Africa was colonized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by mostly European nations. The process of colonization followed the vigorous pursuit of religious agendas by missionaries who considered Africa as a “dark continent.” Their mission was of spreading Christianity and civilization among the “barbaric” societies in Africa. It turned out however that these missionaries had the task of “softening the target” ahead of the imperialists who subsequently colonized the continent. The process of decolonization was a lengthy and bloody one with international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) playing a pivotal role. As Firoze Maji argues, “The initial spark for most people was provided by the desire to claim rights to food, shelter, water, land, education, health care, and other human rights. Such developments were informed at the grassroots level.”<sup>1</sup>

Developments in Europe in the nineteenth century had a direct bearing on the stampede for colonies. Europe evolved from a feudal system of governance to what came to be described as liberal democracy in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. In the feudal system, politics and economics were dominated by feudal lords who derived their power from ownership of large swathes of land. To compliment the labor force required on the expansive farms and plantations, cheap labour was sourced in the form of slaves, the majority of whom came from Africa, Latin America and to a small extent Asia as supported by Walter Rodney (1998) that: “The shipments of slaves were all by Europeans

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<sup>1</sup> Firze Manji, The depoliticisation of poverty, in, Deborah Eade, Development and Rights. A Development in Practice Reader. Oxfam GB, Oxford, 2004, p14.

to markets controlled by Europeans, and this was in the interest of European capitalism.”<sup>2</sup>

The slaves were the able bodied men and women from their communities.

Their capture and subsequent enslavement left a void which contributed to the reduced pace in African development.

The practice of agriculture on a large scale basis in Europe yielded huge tradable surpluses for landlords. Proceeds from disposal of such surpluses were used to start industries which processed products from agricultural enterprises and other activities such as mining. Landlords eventually moved to supervise and manage the thriving industrial concerns which emerged thereafter. The emergent capitalists then realized the need to secure cheaper sources of raw materials leading to the acquisition of colonies. A long relationship with Europe based on exploitation of Africa’s labour and economic resources had begun. The modernization of Europe really depended on maintaining a firm grip on and developing a long term exploitative relationship with the colonies.

During the colonial period, indigenous communities which traditionally had depended on agriculture for a living were driven into unproductive land from which they produced food crops only sufficient for subsistence. The education system introduced had a bias in favor of the European settlers. To this extent, a bottle neck system was developed which restricted the number of Africans who could acquire levels of literacy appropriate for gainful employment and entrepreneurship. The impact of the disablement of the indigenous communities was the creation of a dependency on the economic institutions of

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<sup>2</sup> Rodney Walter, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, East African Educational Publishers, Dar es Salaam, 1998, p103.

European settlers such as industries and commercial farms. Women and children left to take charge of affairs in the rural areas were involved in routine unproductive chores such as fuel gathering and subsistence farming. Rural areas therefore came to be associated with poverty, disease and hunger. Charitable organizations administered by missionary societies were set up to minimize the adverse impacts of colonial exploitation on rural and urban poor communities. These organizations were the precursor of the Non Governmental Organization (NGO) enterprise in post-independence Africa. The link between the NGOs and missionary work is supported by many scholars including Firoze Manji who maintains that: “The role of NGOs in development represents a continuity of the work of their precursors, the missionaries and voluntary organizations that cooperated in Europe’s colonization and control of Africa. Today their work contributes marginally to the relief of poverty, but significantly to undermining the struggle of African people to emancipate themselves from economic, social and political oppression.”<sup>3</sup>

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All the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa won their independence and inherited economies crafted to serve the interests of their former colonial masters. The task at hand was of establishing infrastructure in previously marginalized sectors of the community where the majority of Africans live. This task has not been easy as the former colonizers still strive to derive benefits from their former “milk cows.” To a large extent the argument that Europe has a moral obligation to contribute towards Africa’s economic rehabilitation is valid. Activities of NGOs in the sub-region assumed greater vigour and vitality following the granting of independence. In the 1980s the African economic crisis resulted in the

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<sup>3</sup> Manji Firoze, The Missionary Position: NGOs and Development in Africa. p56, available at <http://www.fahamu.org/downloads/missionaryposition.pdf>.

prescription of Structural Adjustment Programs which created space for more NGO activities. The NGOs became active in areas where the governments had failed to provide services.

### **The Research Problem.**

The research problem concerns the failure of development initiatives by NGOs at community level. NGOs which are the subject of this thesis set out to contribute to development in the sectors of agriculture, health, research, environmental conservation and income generation. Zimbabwe's poor rural communities were targeted. Although they have been in operation for more than twenty years, the fact is that NGOs have not been able to bring about any meaningful development in the sectors they operate in. This thesis seeks to explain the failure by NGOs to bring about development in Zimbabwe and make recommendations on how development can be achieved. For the purpose of this study, activities of NGOs constitute the independent variable while community development is the dependent variable.

The free market argument prescribed as the solution for Africa's development has not produced the desired results. Instead, the economic crisis which begun in the early 1980s is deepening. Withdrawal of active government participation in the economic sector has had adverse impacts on rural communities particularly in the areas of health, education and income generation. Coincidentally NGOs have increased their presence by purporting to fill the gap left by government. Unfortunately economic development in rural communities continues to decline as reflected in per capita incomes. These have fallen to below US one dollar per day. Firoze Manji reinforces this point by arguing

that: “The social gains of independence from colonial rule have been eroded, as economies collapse under the combined weight of debt and structural programmes.”<sup>4</sup>

This situation brings into focus the question of whether NGOs are genuine development partners, and if so, why they have failed in the development agenda. The controversy surrounding NGO activities is illustrated by T.G. Weiss and L. Gordenker who observed that: “The important puzzle is what specific roles NGOs may play in transnational networks as intermediary organizations that provide links between state and market, between local and global levels.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Research Objectives.**

The objectives of the research are:

1. To establish factors contributing to the failure of NGO development initiatives.
2. To recommend how NGOs can be effective community development agents.

### **Justification and Purpose of Study.**

Most third world countries were subjected to foreign domination and control in one form or another. Their colonization was initially justified by “the need to spread Christianity and bring development to uncivilized parts of the world.” Early missionary work was soon followed by the acquisition of territories for economic gain. This close relationship

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<sup>4</sup> Manji Firoze, The depoliticization of poverty, in, Development and Rights. A Development in Practice Reader, Deborah Eade, Ed, Oxfam GB, Oxford, 2004, p12.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas G. Weiss and Leon Gordenker, NGOs, The UN and Global Governance. Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1996, p20

is used by some scholars such as Hilde Anstan (1997) to explain the colonization of Africa. He maintains that: "Although the missionaries' task was to make people accept the Bible and its teachings, Christianity was turned into an ideology which could be used to convince people not to resist white domination. Regardless of claims that the missionaries regarded themselves as opposed to the colonial ideology, they were part of the colonial structure and brought with them religious beliefs and practices which were alien to the area."<sup>6</sup>

The current configuration and operations of NGOs can be traced to the era when missionaries established small charitable organizations to assist disadvantaged communities. These organizations had close links with colonial administrations. With the advent of independence of African states, the first world had significant stakes to lose as sources of raw materials were no longer guaranteed. Markets and sources of cheap labour were still required to sustain capitalist enterprises whose survival could no longer be guaranteed. It can be argued therefore, that first world countries were compelled to develop institutions to maintain the status quo in the third world. Alluding to the first "Scramble for Africa," Fowler (1991) maintains that: "The irony is, that one hundred years on there are signs that Africa is again the subject of "scrambles"...first is the scramble of non-government development organizations to be involved in the continent's

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<sup>6</sup> Antsen Hilde The Battle of the Mind: International New Media Elements of the New Religious Political Right in Zimbabwe.: University of Oslo, Oslo, 1997, page 49.

development, second is the scramble of official aid agencies to find, finance and work with and through Non Governmental Development Organizations.”<sup>7</sup>

Current development theories enshrine minimal government participation in economic activities. Instead, the free entry by private firms and individuals into domestic markets should be encouraged for economic growth and social development. The void left by government is supposed to be filled by private participants including the civil society. NGOs however are now used to channel the bulk of development assistance to the third world countries faced with economic crises. Development however remains elusive hence a study of NGO activities is important in an attempt to unravel the mystery that they contribute to economic development. Lack of development is indeed a social ill whose extent in third world countries has now reached devastating proportions. Even the then World Bank President Robert McNamara(1973) acknowledged that: “Absolute poverty is a condition of life so degraded by disease, illiteracy, malnutrition, and squalor as to deny its victims basic human necessities...a condition of life so limited as to prevent realization of the potential of the genes with which one is born....the problem is most severe in the countryside...”<sup>8</sup> The current levels of rural underdevelopment, where the majority of people reside, necessitate a study of the roles of development agents, including NGOs.

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<sup>7</sup> Fowler, in, Julie Hearn, “The “NGO-isation of Kenyan Society: USAID and the Resucturing of Health Care. Review of African Political Economy.” No. 75, ROAPE Publications, 1998, p89.

<sup>8</sup> Robert McNamara, in, Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p34.

To demonstrate the critical nature of development discourse in Africa, Okechukwu Ukaga and Osita Afoaku (2005) argue that: "It is development, which will enable Africa to deal with the seething problems of its enormous human population, including the attendant dehumanization of its humanity."<sup>9</sup> Foreign aid has traditionally been considered as a means to achieve development in third world countries. Such aid is currently channeled mostly through NGOs. To support this trend, US Vice President Al Gore committed his government to increasing foreign aid channeled through NGOs from 25% to 50% by the year 2000.<sup>10</sup> Julie Hearn (1998) also agrees that: "One result of Africa's marginalization in the world economy is the peculiarly important role that aid plays in the continent. Whilst Africa's share of international trade is an almost insignificant 3%, it accounts for more than 30% of the global aid business."<sup>11</sup> Regardless of the magnitude of such assistance, the impact has not been felt by way of registering significant development. The choice of NGOs as the agents of development in the rural communities is a demonstration of the faith that the international community has in their capacity. They are viewed as market based actors able to deliver social welfare services to poor people at lower cost and higher standards of quality than government.

### **Scope.**

The study will analyze the activities of NGOs in Zimbabwe and make comparisons by citing examples from the Sub-Saharan African region. Case studies of Community Based

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<sup>9</sup> Okechukwu Ukaga and Osita Afoaku, Sustainable Development in Africa A Multifaceted Challenge. Africa World Press, Inc, Asmara, Eritria, 2005, p8.

<sup>10</sup> Sourced at, [www.ciaonet.org/isa/cIaOI/-68k-](http://www.ciaonet.org/isa/cIaOI/-68k-). Accessed on 23 September 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Julie Hearn, "The NGO-isation of Kenyan Society: USAID and the Restructuring of Health Care. in, Review of African Political Economy." No. 75, ROAPE Publications, 1998, p89.



Organizations (C.B.Os) involved in agriculture, health, education, environmental conservation, research and income generating activities will constitute the research evidence. Reference will be made to International NGOs whose financing role is critical to the development efforts of C.B.Os. As national NGOs are the major point of contact between International Non Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and CBOs their activities will also be referred to in the study. Expanding the area of investigation to the three types of NGOs has important implications on the effectiveness of CBOs. Further, it will facilitate formulation of recommendations pertaining to the research problem. The investigation will focus on the period from 1980 to current. An overview of the NGOs in the pre-independence period will be conducted covering some countries in Sub Saharan Africa.

### **Literature Review.**

Development is a contested term as it has different meanings for different people. There are resultantly contending views regarding the impact of NGOs on development. Such divergence centers on responsibility for failure. Host governments are blamed for their inability to create space. On the other hand, NGOs are viewed as arms of capitalist enterprises. To achieve the study objectives, literature on development theory will be reviewed extensively.

Development theory as it relates to the third world including sub-Saharan Africa emerged in the 1950s to deal with: "How the economies of Britain, France, Portugal and other

European powers, might be made more productive as decolonization approached.”<sup>12</sup> Prior to this landmark era of decolonization, development theories such as mercantilism centered on how individual European states could amass wealth through protectionism especially of trade and markets. Classical development theories being mercantilism and liberalism dominated approaches to the discipline of international political economy up to the end of World War 2. At the time, Adam Smith was the leading proponent of *laissez faire* economics with the market acting as an invisible hand directing factor distribution. Individuals, households and firms were to be the main players with little or no provision for welfare provision through public institutions. Thereafter focus shifted to neoliberalism which to date guides the formulation of development policies across the globe. It is important to highlight that in pre-colonial Africa, development did not follow any prescribed format but was a response to the environment hence manifested different patterns unique to geographical regions.

America assumed the world’s hegemonic status after World War 2 to date. It therefore played a leading role in prescribing rules for the global conduct of economic affairs. American statesmen, public administrators and scholars therefore influenced development policies adopted by governments in sub-Saharan Africa after gaining independence. As hegemons determined to entrench their values world wide, it is reasonable to argue that Americans wanted to perpetuate the exploitation of the newly independent states. This, they sought to achieve by advocating an open door policy of free entry and exit into the third world countries.

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<sup>12</sup> Colin Leys, The Rise and Fall of Development Theory. Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1996, p5.

The earliest set of development paradigms for Africa brought to the attention of policy makers were modernization theories of the late 1950s and early 1960s. In terms of implementation, the policies were based on the idea of empowering the African elite, raising rural productivity and transferring underutilized labour out of agriculture into industry. Proponents of the modernization theory regarded traditional values, institutions and beliefs as largely constraining factors or cultural blockages in the development endeavor. In essence, development could only be realized through adopting: “Broadly social-democratic ethos of the period, including its commitment to planning and its conviction that the economic problems would yield to the actions of benevolent states endowed with sufficient supplies of capital and armed with good economic analysis.”<sup>13</sup>

The perceived success of the Marshall Plan in Europe provided support for the argument that aid was necessary in fostering development. Proponents envisaged modern values being diffused through education and technology transfer to the elites of the third world. Aid policies therefore formed the central component of modernization theories which were operationalised through granting technical assistance and educational scholarships. The Breton Woods institutions were established to avail credit to national governments in support of development programs. American values of democracy and liberalism became the yardsticks to qualify for assistance.

Protectionist policies recommended by John Maynard Keynes following the Great Depression of the 1930s complimented modernization theories and were applicable up to

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<sup>13</sup> Leys Colin, The Rise and Fall of Development Theory. Indiana University Press, USA, 1996, P8.

the late 1980s. Characteristically described as the statist model, the main pillars were active participation by government in regulating the economy through minimum wage setting, price controls and establishment of public enterprises. Import substitution and subsidization of local industries were the main tools to achieve development. The end of the Second World War ushered in the Cold War resulting in competition to gain ideological mileage. Large amounts of foreign aid were availed to achieve ideological goals. Most of the post independence development in Africa was achieved at this time.

Modernization theories created a dependency relationship. Economies of former colonies became sources of primary products and markets of finished goods produced in European countries. The failure to transform the backwardness of Latin American communities was significant in fuelling criticism against dependency models. The major undoing of the theory was its adoption of approaches to development based on acquiring and using Western-style systems, standards and expertise to problem solving methods. As development is generally homegrown and not something that is easily exported from one place to another, the model failed to address socio-structural conditions such as empowerment of all the citizens by making them the central agent of development. The failure is summed up by the argument that: "Central to "modernization" was to see poverty, rather than rights and freedom, as the main problem facing "developing countries". The victims of years of injustices, whose lives had been destroyed by years of

colonial rule, were now defined as “the problem”, and thus the stage was set for the entry of the development NGO to participate in the process of depoliticizing poverty.”<sup>14</sup>

Andre Gunder Frank (1991), a German-American played a leading role in popularizing the weakness of concept of dependency which emerged in the 1960s. In his view dependency led to the underdevelopment of the periphery. The international development community was accused of entrenching dependency of developing countries on the West. The motivation was seen as being to facilitate capitalist exploitation of the periphery. Foreign aid which created dependency was for the benefit of elites considered as “lumpen bourgeoisies.” The solution preferred by critics of dependency models was to reduce links with the metropolis by bringing about auto-centric national economic growth. Dependency theorists were united in criticizing capitalism as the source of underdevelopment in third world countries. Marxism-Leninism was recommended as the appropriate model to address social injustices of uneven economic development. Collective ownership of means of production by the proletariat was viewed as desirable. In modern day terms, this equates to Colin Leys’s recommended development model for Sub Saharan Africa. He argues that: ‘For capitalist development to occur, there must be local, domestic, internal, “national” (and, perhaps, “indigenous”) capitalists; and these vary greatly in their individual and collective capacities.’<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Firoze Manji, The depoliticization of poverty, in, Deborah Eade, Ed, Development and Rights A Development in Practice Reader, Oxfam GB, Oxford, 2004, p17.

<sup>15</sup> Colin Leys, The Rise and Fall of Development Theory, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1996, p164.

At the same time that dependency theorists were criticizing modernization models, social scientists became interested in the political dimension of economic growth and development. This was due to frustration with the inability of traditional constructs to provide policy-relevant development options. Traditional development models failed to emphasize the importance of laws and institutions in triggering economic growth and development. The public choice perspective was introduced in 1962 by J.M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock with the objective of promoting economic efficiency by governments rather than individuals through the market. The theory reinforced traditional development models. It however went further to explain Africa's underdevelopment in terms of lack of institutional arrangements. The argument was that the state was not constrained to the extent of making it difficult for civil servants and politicians to engage in opportunistic behaviour. Institutional arrangements failed to enhance indigenous entrepreneurship and facilitate wealth creation through constitutional guarantees of economic freedom. The failure to improve the ability of all Africans to participate fully and effectively in political and economic markets and the inability to advance peaceful coexistence of populations were considered as constraints.<sup>16</sup>

The public choice theory therefore was premised on the need to provide an appropriate institutional environment as a precondition for development. Such arrangements were in the form of laws and institutions which reflect the desires, interests and aspirations of the people. Poverty and underdevelopment were therefore not caused by poor leadership but

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<sup>16</sup> Okechukwu Ukaga and Osita Afoaku, Sustainable Development in Africa A Multifaceted Challenge. Africa World Press, Inc, Asmara, Eritiria, 2005, p63.

by weak and inefficient rules, non-viable institutions and incentive systems that encouraged and rewarded opportunistic behavior.

The period from 1990 has been dominated by ideas of the Bretton Woods institutions and World Trade Organization.(W.T.O.) Their prescriptions are supposed to cure African underdevelopment and poverty. By and large, the inability of African governments to service debts owed to international financial institutions and the critical state of African economies weighed heavily in favor of World Bank and IMF sponsored Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Critical aspects of the restructuring process include privatization of public sector enterprises, opening up of markets to all willing and able players and deregulation of the economic sector. The provision of conditional aid is the instrument used for achieving structural adjustment of economies. To support this view Julie Hearn argues that: "Aid policy came to be dominated by the New Policy Agenda of neo-liberalism and liberal democratic theory. NGOs were assigned a key role."<sup>17</sup> Perceived benefits deriving from opening up markets are based on the "trickle down" theory which among other things postulates a broader public sector tax base.

Recent IMF modifications to SAPs were in reaction to the increasing levels of poverty and marginalization of mostly rural communities following government's withdrawal of welfare support. This has seen the introduction of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility. In terms of policy thrust, requests for aid now have supported with Poverty

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<sup>17</sup> Julie Hearn, "The NGO-isation of Kenyan Society: USAID and the Restructuring of Health Care," in Review of African Political Economy." No. 75, ROAPE Publications, 1998, p89.

Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) incorporating the needs of poor grass roots communities. The IMF therefore endorsed increased participation of civil societies in evolving and implementing development programmes. NGOs champion these prerequisites as solutions for development based on their “comparative” advantage over government. At a superficial level, the fact is that NGOs and donors share a common language representing convergence of interests. IMF endorsed principles of participation, empowerment and mobilization to achieve development are championed mainly by NGOs. It appears that sponsoring private voluntary organizations is to enable Western governments to play an increasingly pivotal role in economic, social and political affairs of countries where they have interests. The governments’ role is relegated to facilitating economic growth and not the provision of services which can be purchased on the open market. This was the context within which NGOs were established in Zimbabwe.<sup>18</sup>

The twenty-first century witnessed the emergence of globalization which has had significant implications on development theory. Globalization is a new, complex, dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon. It evokes strong emotions because it is associated with both challenges and opportunities. Generally it is associated with capitalism or market fundamentalism. Its effect is to impose the burden of universal standards, rules, rule enforcement and the pressure to conform to these universal norms. The pressure to conform to universal standards forces governments and citizens to assimilate new values which may be in conflict with local cultural values and practices. What is unique with globalization is the inability by those affected to resist its

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<sup>18</sup> Kaseke, E, Social Work Practice in Zimbabwe, in Journal of Social Development in Africa Vol 6 No. 1, School of Social Work, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1991.



prescriptions. Globalization has resulted in the exposure of weak African economies to unfair competition from established Western firms. Following this realization, the UNDP commissioned the Human Development Report in 1999 to provide guidelines to soften the adverse impacts of globalization. The findings of the investigation recommended the following:<sup>19</sup>

1. Adoption of ethics involving non-violation of human rights.
2. Equity within and among nations.
3. Inclusion by ensuring non marginalization of people, organizations, communities and nations in programmes.
4. Initiating development programs for marginalized communities.

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The challenge for the twenty-first century is therefore for developing countries to foster mutually beneficial partnerships involving governments and civil society to manage globalization. Further, “An appropriate macroeconomic policy environment and a supportive institutional framework are essential to growth and poverty reduction.”<sup>20</sup>

Complimenting the neo liberal theories are environmental theories. These seek to explain development from a sustainable and conservational perspective. In the 1980s, the concept of sustainable development was perceived by Scandinavian academics and international

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<sup>19</sup> Kiggugu Moses, Managing Globalization in Developing Countries and Transition Economies: Building Capacities for a Changing World, Praeger, Westport, 2002, p6.

<sup>20</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003,p16.

development agencies. The United Nations immediately embraced the concept as a critical guide for the formulation of Third World development policies. As an economic paradigm, sustainable development is that: "Which meets the needs of the present without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."<sup>21</sup> The model recognizes the increasing toll on the environment due to the unbridled pursuit of economic development. Attention is drawn to the effects of greenhouse gases, global warming, and extensive deforestation, expanding desertification, the unchecked usage of fossil fuels and decimation of wild life. It is therefore of great relevance to pursue development approaches which show sensitivity to the planet. Due to the transnational effects of degradation, the involvement of a cross-section of actors becomes imperative.

NGOs are particularly visible in contributing to agendas on environmental management and protection as guarantees for development. Further, due to their ability to lobby governments, they can persuade countries such as the USA which has refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions among many agreements. The close relationship between poverty and environmental degradation is illustrated in a 2003 finding that: "Poverty and environmental degradation are closely linked, often in a self-perpetuating spiral where poverty accelerates environmental degradation and degradation exacerbates poverty."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Okechukwu Ukaga and Osita Afoaku, Sustainable Development in Africa A Multifaceted Challenge. Africa World Press, Inc, Asmara, Eritrea, 2005, p12.

<sup>22</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p6.

Economic development has traditionally been linked to industrialization. It is through industrialization that states are able to produce surpluses which they trade to realize much needed income. In support of this view, Uma Lele (1992) maintains that: "Many analysts of long-term economic growth point out that agriculture plays an important role in structural transformation during the early stages of development. Broadly based agricultural production has an enormous potential on the pattern of consumption, savings and investment."<sup>23</sup> It is therefore widely accepted that industrial takeoff depends on a sound agricultural foundation. Industrialization theories are resultantly premised on successful agricultural transformation. The introduction of cash crops, intensive agriculture, improved seed banks, agricultural research, disseminating relevant information and the education of farmers are necessary measures. Even the World Bank acknowledges through its comprehensive researches that: "In most of the poorest developing countries agriculture is the main source of rural economic growth."<sup>24</sup>

In an industrializing environment the incomes and savings of farmers increase with increased crop yields. Farmers then have a high purchasing power in the market place which transforms into modern villages with clean water, better access to health facilities and education. It can by inference therefore be argued that any successful initiatives aimed at development in backward communities should focus on improving agriculture first. The successful transformation of South Korea into an industrialized state can be cited as an example of successful industrial transformation based on agriculture. In

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<sup>23</sup> Lele Uma, Ed, Aid to African Agriculture Lessons from Two Decades of Donor's Experience. World Bank Publication. The John Hopkins University Press, London, 1992, p5.

<sup>24</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p14.

investigating effective development initiatives of NGOs, the industrialization theory has relevance as it focuses on agricultural transformation as a necessary preliminary stage.

A complimentary approach to the development initiatives of NGOs is to elaborate the perspectives of the UN as reflected in its mandates. In terms of the UN Charter, the roles of NGOs are humanitarian assistance, preventative diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace building. In "The Agenda for Peace"<sup>25</sup>, the then UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali (1992) stated that: "This wider mission for the world organization will demand the concerted attention and effort of individual states, of regional and nongovernmental organizations, and of all of the United Nations System." In as much as the market system sees structural adjustment as the way forward with civic organizations playing important roles in development, the UN endorses the active participation by NGOs in the reconstruction of shattered economies. In Zimbabwe the space for NGOs was created by the legacy of colonization which marginalized rural communities.

The findings and recommendations of African academics who have researched on NGO activities provide invaluable literature on appropriate development models. In a study carried out in Kenya on NGO activities, Orieko Chitere and Roberta Mutiso (1991) concluded that: "The Participatory Action Research (PAR) project was conceived by us. Both of us had, prior to conceiving the project been involved in socio-economic studies and evaluations of practical rural development projects of governmental and non-governmental agencies in extension, community development and social welfare. We

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<sup>25</sup> Available at, [www.globalpolicy.org/reform/initiatives/1992.htm-12k](http://www.globalpolicy.org/reform/initiatives/1992.htm-12k). (Accessed 28 August 2005).

were disturbed by the lack of involvement of would be beneficiaries of these projects in their conception, planning, implementation and evaluation.”<sup>26</sup> The participatory approach therefore conceives development as ideally being spearheaded by respective communities. These communities identify development projects of their choice and engage NGOs for financial and technical assistance. It is contended that NGOs should impart skills to enable members of the community to run the projects on their own. This envisages a bottom up approach to development. This approach therefore sees Community Based Organizations (CBOs) as the most effective form of NGO involvement in development.

Legislation and administrative procedures put in place to regulate the activities of NGOs are important sources of literature for study of the subject. The legislation regulating NGO conduct in Zimbabwe will be analyzed in this section. In Zimbabwe, the Private Voluntary Organizations Act seeks to introduce mechanisms which enhance monitoring and supervision of NGO activities. The Act has been ammended by empowering district and provincial authorities to register NGOs. It is apparent from the legislation that for effective development, both the NGOs and government should have a common vision which facilitates constructive engagement.

The Kenyan government is also concerned with deficiencies in the coordination of NGO activities to avoid duplication, ensure that their work fits into the government's development plans and emergency policies. It has established an NGO Board in line with the provisions of the NGO Coordination Act of 1993 to facilitate registration and

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<sup>26</sup> Orieko Chitere and Roberta Mutiso, Ed, Working With Rural Communities-A Participatory Action Research in Kenya. 1991, Kenya, Nairobi University Bookshop.

coordination of NGO activities. The government through this legislation regulates the membership, areas of operation and exercises financial monitoring through demanding submission of returns. There is however opposition to the introduction of a regulatory framework by NGOs. Through the NGO Council, members of the organizations are advocating self regulation arguing that bureaucracies established to ensure that standards are met, make them too overburdened to carry out their tasks effectively. Despite the resistance the government has pushed for a regulatory framework which ensures that NGO activities are monitored and given some direction.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) conceived in Nigeria in 2001 provides an alternative policy framework for development. NEPAD is indeed a reaction to the failures of Structural Adjustment Programs which formed the basis for development programs since the 1980s. The objectives of the program as stated in the document are that: "The New Partnership for Africa's Development is a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction, that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politic. The program is anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world."<sup>27</sup> The strategy envisaged is of poverty alleviation by developing African-owned and African-led sustainable development programs. A new global partnership between Africa and donors should redress historical injustices. The new initiatives aim to address issues of

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<sup>27</sup> The New Partnership For Africa's Development (NEPAD), Abuja, Nigeria, October, 2001, [http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_resources/Conference\\_Reports\\_and\\_Other\\_Documents/NEPAD.htm](http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/Conference_Reports_and_Other_Documents/NEPAD.htm)

infrastructure, capital accumulation, human capital development, institutional frameworks, structural diversification, enhance competitiveness, and improve health and environmental management.

To facilitate evaluation of the program's success, the African Peer Review Mechanism (ARPM) was conceived. It involves an independent assessment of individual member's performance by another country. The APRM is a tool for self-assessment intended to encourage the adoption of policies, norms and practices deemed necessary for the attainment of NEPAD's objectives. With NEPAD's focus on global partnership, the envisaged role of NGOs is that of a development partner subscribing to shared ideals in an honest and progressive way. NGOs can assist in evaluation by providing information on grassroots development where they are actively involved.

A critical examination of the NEPAD initiative reveals that there are no significant deviations from neo-liberal prescriptions. The program relies on the goodwill of donors. It envisages massive infrastructural developments which require huge financial outlays. Africa does not have the requisite liquidity to embark on the program. Possession of natural resources provides a positive attribute yet their exploitation represents a major challenge. This has led some quarters to argue that NEPAD should be referred to as "KheePAD", a suggestion that the begging bowl should be extended for the program to be a success. Dependency on aid still confirms the significance of NGOs as donors have the greatest faith in them. In essence the neo-liberal approach remains as the dominant development model.

The Millennium Development Plan is a UN sponsored economic rescue package intended to trigger development in third world countries. At a UN summit in 2000, eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed on by 190 countries. The goals range from halving global poverty and hunger to providing health and sanitation, tackling illiteracy and discrimination against women. They were introduced as part of a wider attempt to encourage the international community to effectively participate in the development of third world countries. More importantly is the realization that the Goals will be met “only through increases in rural incomes and broadened opportunities for rural inhabitants.”<sup>28</sup> Along with the goals, targets were drawn up to give the international community a number of tangible improvements to aim for within a fixed period of time and provide an evaluation framework. The intention is that almost all of these targets be achieved by 2015. The eight MDGs are:<sup>29</sup>

1. Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achievement of universal primary education.
3. Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.
4. Reduction of child mortality.
5. Improvement in maternal health.
6. Combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensuring environmental sustainability.
8. Developing a global partnership for development.

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<sup>28</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p14.

<sup>29</sup> Available at, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/-30-> (Accessed on 28 August 28, 2005)



The perceived roles of NGOs are advocacy and partnership in the fulfillment of stated goals. The successful attainment of the MDGs is still based on the availability of aid from developed countries hence Amara Essy (2003) argued that: “In the spirit of the partnership that is being forged between Africa and the wider international community, there is need to go beyond the commitments of African leaders and governments. The international community must also demonstrate some degree of even handedness and the requisite political will to address the African problem, as has been done in other parts of the world.”<sup>30</sup>

### **Theoretical Framework.**

The theoretical framework for this paper is based on the neo-liberal development theory which is currently the international system’s widely adopted development model. Neo-liberalism’s dominant prescription is extensive liberalization with unregulated participation of myriad players in political, economic and social decision making. Development can only be realized when the government creates space for the participation of many actors in the market. Government’s role should then be limited to the provision of a regulatory framework.

As it applies to Zimbabwe and other countries in the sub-region, the model prescribes Structural Adjustment Programs which involve, *inter alia*, a shift in responsibility for socio-economic development from government alone to the commercial and voluntary

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<sup>30</sup> Amara Essy, in, Kinfu Abraham, The African Quest: The Transition from the OAU to AU and NEPAD Imperatives. EIIP, 2003, P465.

sectors and the people as a whole. NGOs can be useful partners in development. Effective development including at community level is achieved by allowing without constraints the free entry and exit of many players in the various economic sectors. PRSPs have been incorporated as conditions to access development aid.

Third world countries should include in their project proposals aspects that satisfactorily address the needs of marginalized communities before any assistance is given by international financial institutions. As a theory, neo-liberalism prescribes the preservation of the autonomy of the NGO enterprise versus the instinct of the state to control. The minimalization of government participation and withdrawal of economic regulation are based on the argument that this leads to efficiency. Benefits accrue to society through the “spill-over effect.” Further, the government’s mandate is deemed as being to administer public affairs and monitor all national activities through legal institutional frameworks and specific institutions. The consequence of this withdrawal is that it creates space for private participation which maximizes individual welfare. The neo-liberal theoretical framework has ushered a demand for democratic and participatory policy making processes.

The shortcomings of neo-liberalism as a framework for analysis relate to its failure to achieve development mostly in the third world. Liberalizing economies has resulted in marginalization of poor communities which had previously benefited from government subsidies. It is also evident that there is very limited participation of the masses especially the marginalized in rural areas. Free entry of private firms into the markets has led to the

collapse of indigenous small firms including community based income generating projects. This therefore makes it necessary to compliment the development framework with industrialization, environmental, public choice and participatory theories which concisely describe, predict and prescribe Africa's development dilemma. The contents of NGO legislation provide useful conceptual glasses to view development from the government's perspective. The value of neo-liberal theory is its prescription of financial support to projects and freedom of actors to participate in economic activities of their choice.

The industrialization theory advocates that development should be preceded by successful agricultural transformation. If any meaningful economic transformation of communities is to be achieved, intervention should be directed at improving the agricultural sector. Participatory theory stipulates that the marginalized communities should identify and participate in development projects intended to benefit them. The feeling of belonging and sense of ownership provides an incentive to communities to contribute positively to the success of projects. Public choice theory maintains that institutions such as legal ones should be established to facilitate development and act as safeguards against abuse by bureaucrats. Environmental theories on the other hand advocate sustainable development based on conservation of resources not only for future generations but for sustenance of the very base upon which productive activities depend. The regulation of NGO activities through relevant statutes becomes applicable to the extent that priority sectors for development need to be correctly identified. The necessary platform for coordination is provided by such regulations.

The development initiatives of NGOs will therefore be investigated within the framework of the neo-liberal theory which essentially advocates private participation in economic activities and the provision of welfare. Creation of space to participate in economic activities is a critical tenet of the model. It acknowledges the important role of aid to the third world which currently has found a channel in NGOs. The failure of development in the third world by following strictly the neo-liberal model has been explained from mainly two perspectives. First is that the model relies extensively on modernization theories which transcribe "European" models on the third world whose structures cannot compete with established Multinational Corporations (MNCs). In an attempt to modernize structures the third world becomes dependent on foreign assistance, a situation which creates a debt trap. Economic output is resultantly directed at servicing the huge debts. Due to the failure of the neo-liberal model to generate development, it is necessary to compliment it with paradigms which suit Africa's unique environment. Hence the study will adopt a framework combining neo-liberalism with participatory, industrialization, public choice and environmental theories. This framework recognizes the need to deconstruct existing social relations of production still firmly entrenched within the capitalist world economy. It is necessary to construct a rights based model based on a combination of the other theories alluded to.

## Definition of Terms.

### Development.

Development is the general improvement in the welfare of members of a community. It is reflected as the improvement in access to health, sanitation, decent shelter, education and recreation. In short, development should be associated with qualitative change in the condition of living. J.A. Schumpeter defines economic development as: "Only such changes in economic life as are not forced upon it from without but arise by its own initiative from within...Every concrete process of development finally rests upon preceding development."<sup>31</sup> To achieve development, a country should experience sustainable economic growth as a major condition. Economic growth raises the productivity and incomes of poor people. In Africa, external funding is critical to fill in the budget deficits which are always the case. To buttress this view, George Bond and Nigel Gibson maintain that: "Without economic growth, it is almost never possible to reduce income poverty and even advances against other aspects of human poverty, such as illiteracy and child mortality which cannot be sustained without economic growth."<sup>32</sup>

### NGO

NGO refers to a Non Governmental Organization. It is a registered, private, independent, non-profit organization which works at grassroots level to represent the interests of the poor. NGOs are broadly classified as Community Based Organizations (CBOs), national

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<sup>31</sup> J.A. Schumpeter in, A. Abubakar, Africa and the Challenge of Development: Acquiescence Versus Freedom and Development, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1989.

<sup>32</sup> George Bond and Nigel Gibson, Ed, Contested Terrains and Constructed Categories: Contemporary Africa in Focus, Boulder Publications, USA, 2002, p110.

and international. Further classification is into intermediary, service, trusts and trade unions. Their activities range from relief work, advocacy to development.

### **NGO Development Activities.**

NGO development activities are generally concentrated at community level especially in rural areas. They are in diverse fields such as agriculture, fisheries, environmental conservation, and development of infrastructure, forestry and wildlife management. In a survey carried out by the Asian Development Bank in 1991 titled “The Urban Poor and Basic Infrastructure Services in Asia and the Pacific,”<sup>33</sup> among a variety of roles NGOs can play, six emerge as the most important. These are development and operation of infrastructure, supporting innovation, demonstration and pilot projects, facilitating communication, technical assistance and training, research, monitoring and evaluation and advocacy for the poor. NEPAD views NGOs as development partners and has acknowledged the inclusion in national structures of the African Peer Review Mechanism as an optional substructure with NGOs being given important roles in assessing development. The new initiative by the IMF replacing ESAP is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. With this new focus, the role of NGOs is perceived as being a point of contact for their governments and a bridge to the grass roots community.

### **Modernization Theory.**

This is a theory developed in the 1960s as a model for development in the newly independent countries located in Latin America and Africa. The model was conceived based on the firm belief that empowering elites would trigger development. Development

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<sup>33</sup> Sourced at, [www.napash.org/aa\\_federal\\_system/98\\_national\\_influence.html](http://www.napash.org/aa_federal_system/98_national_influence.html)

models in Europe and North America at the time were transcribed on the former colonies. Keynesian prescriptions which included increasing inflows of foreign investment, trade volumes to the peripheries and other freedoms associated with free markets formed the basis of the economic model. It came to be labeled as “capitalist development” as emphasis was placed on setting up local industries, commercializing agriculture and encouraging private investment. All these endeavors were targeted at increasing exports. According to Okechukwu and Osita Afaoku (2005) the proponents of the model “regarded traditional values, institutions and beliefs as largely constraining factors or cultural blockages in the development endeavor... the only kind of modernization these scholars and policy makers were talking about is capitalist development.”<sup>34</sup> A

### **Dependency Theory.**

The Dependency Theory is an economic theory which emerged in the early 1970s as a reaction to the failure of liberalism to achieve development in third world countries. As a theory, it is based on the Marxist approach which views capitalism as an exploitative ideology. It explains the inherent relationship of dependency which results from adoption liberal approaches which prescribe private ownership of capital, pursuit of self interest and free markets as necessary conditions for economic growth. Advocates of the dependency theory argue to the contrary that such liberal prescriptions create conditions where the rich exploit the poor perpetually. On a macro level, economies of poor countries are exploited by their rich counterparts on whom they depend for survival. The theory is premised on the existence of a centre representing rich countries and a periphery

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<sup>34</sup> Okechukwu Ukaga and Osita Afoaka, Sustainable Development in Africa A Multifaceted Challenge. Africa World Press, Inc, Asmara, Eritria, 2005, p10.

comprising poor countries which are dependent on the centre for survival. International agencies such as the IMF and World Bank including NGOs became the major agents for linking the centre with the periphery.

### **Marshall Plan**

The Marshall Plan was conceived by the U.S.A. in 1947 and directed massive financial aid to Europe on set conditions. These are democracy and liberalism. Such aid was granted on generous terms and was intended for post-war reconstruction. Lessons drawn from the success of the plan in Europe were that the granting of massive aid to third world countries could trigger development.

### **Research Hypothesis.**

The economic development of rural communities in Zimbabwe depends on their effective mobilization into NGOs (CBOs) engaging in viable projects. Rural communities have been marginalized since the advent of colonization. As a result they lack skills and capital to initiate development on their own. The government is incapacitated to intervene effectively due to lack of funds. Government's bureaucratic structures limit its ability to reach grassroots communities. NGOs can therefore contribute effectively as partners with government in community development in the areas of health, agriculture, education, environmental conservation, research and income generating projects. The capacity of NGOs obtains from their strong relationship with international aid agencies for the provision of various forms of assistance including capital and skills. Besides the legal mandate to develop the communities in which they are involved in Zimbabwe, NGOs through their long relationship with such communities are able to forge viable links.



## **Research Methodology.**

In fulfillment of this study, an analysis of NGO activities by focusing on CBOs will be done. This will involve identifying projects undertaken in Zimbabwe soon after independence and trace their contribution to the socio-economic development of communities. Cases of NGOs involved in agriculture, health, environmental protection, research and income generation projects will be the basis for the study. Examples will be cited of NGO activities from countries in the Sub Saharan region to reinforce some arguments and trends observed.

## **Sources of Data**

The sources of research data will be as follows:

1. **Secondary Sources.** Extensive research from existing literature on the subject will be conducted. Relevant books, magazines, publications, and Internet Sources will be used.

2. **Primary Data.** The following individuals will be interviewed:

- (1) Government officials under whose charge NGOs fall.
- (2) Representatives of NGOs.
- (3) Embassy officials of sponsors.
- (4) Academic authorities on International Relations, Social Science and Political Economy.

## **Projected Outcome of the Project**

The projected outcome of the project is to bring out factors contributing to the failure of NGOs to develop communities in which they are involved in Zimbabwe. An attempt will be made to recommend ways in which NGOs can contribute effectively to community development.

## **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The research will cover five chapters in total subdivided as follows:

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|------------------|---|
| <b>Chapter 1</b> | Introduction.   |
| <b>Chapter 2</b> | Evolution of NGOs in Zimbabwe.                        |
| <b>Chapter 3</b> | The Development Activities of NGOs in Zimbabwe.       |
| <b>Chapter 4</b> | The Effectiveness of NGOs in the Development Process. |
| <b>Chapter 5</b> | Conclusions and Recommendations.                      |

## CHAPTER TWO: EVOLUTION OF NGOs IN ZIMBABWE.

### Introduction

The evolution of NGOs in Zimbabwe is closely associated with changes in the social, economic and political conditions. Prior to independence, the settlers evolved a political and economic strategy which marginalized the black population leading to a suppression of civil society. Where government social services were provided, these were for the purpose of ensuring the integrity of structures of colonial rule. Burial societies, women's clubs, church development arms and elite social clubs were the closest form of NGO activity in the black community. The few NGOs in existence were promoted and initiated by settlers through their governments to "civilize" the blacks as with the missionary tradition. As Firoze Manji argues, "For the vast majority of the rural population, it was left to a clutch of charities and missionary groups (what in today's jargon would be recognized as NGOs) to exchange their spiritual wares for material support in education, health, or other social services."<sup>35</sup>

Such a scenario ideally justified intervention by the government and civil society to improve welfare. To the contrary, communities were left to fend for themselves on a hand to mouth basis. There was evidently no push by civil society to redress the lack of socio-economic development amongst the poor rural communities. The advent of independence witnessed the proliferation of various types of NGOs. One may argue that this was made possible through the accommodation of the new government. Whilst this may be true, NGO intervention was visibly concentrated on relief services which did not have any

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<sup>35</sup> Firoze Manji, *The Depoliticisation of Poverty*, in, Deborah Eade, Ed, Development and Rights. A Development in Practice Reader. Oxfam GB, Oxford, 2004, p17.

impact on development. International NGOs became particularly active when SAPs were prescribed by the IMF around 1991. This can be attributed to the fact that NGOs compliment the activities of the IMF.

### **The Pre-Independence Period**

For a long time, the state has remained as the major actor in the development process both during the colonial and the post-independence periods in Africa. This role remains one of its constitutional mandates among many others such as the provision of security. With the advent of colonialism, the framework which the various African communities had used for purposes of the provision of basic-needs and services were either destroyed or, when adopted, were subordinated to the colonial structures. The communities continued to fend for themselves for the better part of the early phase of colonial rule with minimal government assistance. The role of the family as a key production and distribution institution continued to be important, supported by a network of kinship ties, which obligated the kinship group to come to the aid of one another in times of need. This was the case among the various African communities until the colonial authorities registered their presence on the ground through the construction of various facilities intended to “supplement/complement” the efforts of the ‘natives’ in service provision.

Such services were sparse and hardly met the requirements of the sprawling rural communities. Gravel roads were constructed more to facilitate administrative access by the colonial government than to develop the communities. Agriculture remained being of a subsistence nature with cash crop cultivation prohibited. Hospitals and schools were few and far from intended beneficiaries. Community mobilization was suppressed as it

was considered to provide a platform for political activism. Development which could improve welfare therefore remained a pipe dream for the black communities.

While the colonial state emerged, especially during the later phase of colonial rule, as a partner in service provision both in the urban and the rural areas, new non-state actors had also emerged. The emergence and influence of religious organizations as providers of basic-needs and services began during this period. Throughout the country, missionary organizations established institutions through which basic needs and services especially health care and education were provided. There was a visible absence of government institutions in these sectors. The mission centers became the only centers, excepting the urban and the European settled areas, where clean drinking water could be found for the better part of the colonial period. The Protestant and Catholic missionary orders played a major role. In Zimbabwe the Jesuits established Silveira House as a private voluntary organization to assist black farmers. Their activities were restricted to one province Mashonaland East, where they assisted rural communities with hybrid maize seed, agricultural training and credit schemes.

An equally important role the missionaries played was that of humanitarian assistance through the provision of clothing, foodstuffs, and healthcare for especially the orphans and the destitute, who otherwise could not get assistance from the existing kinship networks and government social services. In performing these services, the missionary organizations emerged as the most important non-governmental actors during the colonial period. It is worth noting that missionary activities had marginal impacts on the development of communities in which they were involved with the majority continuing to

live in abject poverty. Missionary activities were prompted by the visible absence of colonial government support in the critical sectors of education and health. A valid observation is that missionaries contributed positively by building schools and hospitals not in the role of private voluntary organizations or NGOs but under the guise of spreading Christianity. Most of the Black Nationalist leaders who subsequently challenged the colonial government by leading liberation struggles were the product of these missionary schools. Indeed, very few non-missionary NGOs had a foothold in sub Zimbabwe before the independence era.

The pre-independence period in Zimbabwe was characterized by the visible absence of a civil society sector. Church run voluntary work took the form of assisting orphans, the destitute with clothing and food, and setting up hospitals and schools. United Nations sanctions imposed on Rhodesia following the proclamation of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, shut out the country from the international system. This had a long-term impact on the involvement of NGOs in Zimbabwe's development as demonstrated by De Graaf (1986) that: "Zimbabwe has been slow to catch up with other countries in using expatriate volunteers. This has largely been due to the oppressive policies pursued by the pre-independence regime which was condemned by the international community. As a result, Rhodesia was isolated from contact with volunteer agencies involved in Asia, Latin America and other parts of Africa."<sup>36</sup> Missionaries played an important role in receiving aid from donors which was channeled to rural communities as relief supplies.

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<sup>36</sup> De Graaf, M, Catching Fish or Liberating Man. 1986. in Skilled Manpower Needs of NGOs in Zimbabwe, Journal of Social Development in Africa, School of Social Work, Harare, 1997, p7.

NODIC countries stood out prominently in channeling aid through the International Red Cross Society (IRCS) and World Council of Churches (WCC). Their assistance was in the form of medicine, clothing, food and teaching materials. The inaccessibility of rural areas due to the war and restrictions on movements imposed by the government made it difficult for beneficiaries to access the aid. One may observe that in spite of the international sanctions imposed on the regime, multinational companies had access to raw materials through the apartheid regime in South Africa which maintained close links with Rhodesia. The scope to involve civil organizations on behalf of the multinational companies was not there. It is pertinent to derive an important lesson from the early participation of missionaries in voluntary work. This is the effectiveness of projects undertaken jointly by communities under the supervision of Silveira House.

The activities of missionaries were also visible in Kenya during the period leading to its independence. When the "Mau Mau" uprising broke out in 1952 thousands of men, women and children were interned in concentration camps under emergency legislation. Voluntary organizations mainly under the leadership of missionaries mobilized themselves to render "humanitarian assistance" in the form of food and clothing. Such charitable organizations can be said to have actively helped to suppress anti-colonial struggle. For example, the Kenya Women's Association, "Maendeleo Ya Wanawake" (MYWO) and the Christian Council of Kenya (CCK) were both involved in government-funded schemes designed to subvert black resistance during the 'Mau Mau' uprising. The CCK established a "rehabilitation program" in response to the emergency caused by human displacement from areas where conflicts had broken out. It offered "pastoral care"



to internees in the concentration camps, a euphemism for a process of interrogation during which “loyal Africans” were screened from potential “terrorists.” It also established community centers in Nairobi’s more troublesome slums and shantytowns to extend “rehabilitation” services to urban communities affected by the ‘Mau Mau’ uprising.

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The programs of care delivered by private voluntary organizations then, did not seek to redress the social circumstances that caused impoverishment, but instead concerned themselves with the apparent failings of Africans themselves. The problem for Africans was not injustice, but being ‘uncivilized’ and suffering from the ‘native’ condition. Firoze Manji an American historian supports this argument by maintaining that charitable welfare was deemed as the sweetener that made the colonial condition more palatable.<sup>37</sup>

As in Zimbabwe, there were no visible development activities by NGOs in Kenya before independence. The few voluntary associations were missionary societies which concentrated on relief work. Missionaries had the infamous role of “collaborating” with the colonial government in suppressing resistance to colonial rule. This was the case in detention centers where they preached against violence. Voluntarism and the white settler agenda seemed to have a point of convergence in the case of Kenya. From the perspective of the theoretical framework chosen, participatory abilities of the colonized were not developed. At independence, there was a deficiency of capacity in policy formulation and implementation on the part of the disenfranchised population. Rudo Gaidzanwa argues

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<sup>37</sup> Manji Firoze, The Missionary Position: NGOs and Development in Africa, available at: [http://www.fahamu.org/missionary\\_position.pdf](http://www.fahamu.org/missionary_position.pdf). (Accessed on 20 July 2005).

that: "The political and administrative structures provided very little room for policy makers outside the civil service to participate in meaningful policy-making and development."<sup>38</sup>

### **The Post-independence Period**

In most of Sub Saharan Africa, there was a spate of new NGOs around the time of Independence. Given the association of private voluntary organizations with the brutal colonial system, one question that begs an answer is how they survived in the same communities in which they previously falsified their motives. One view is that they quickly reconstructed themselves into community development organs with indigenous administrations. These organizations have continued to grow in the post-colonial era. Since the 1980s in Zimbabwe, NGOs have mushroomed, doubling and tripling their numbers. The failure of government on the economic level can be regarded as a major reason for the proliferation of NGOs. The growing stature of NGOs in development is related to the decline of the state as the dominant development actor.

Generally African governments had been enjoying reasonable economic growth in the 1950s through to the 1970s. This was spurred by international financial support under modernization development models adopted for former colonies. Governments as recipients of massive financial aid became visible development actors through setting up public enterprises and providing social services at subsidized rates. The impact of these interventions was reflected in dramatic changes in average life expectancy, in infant and child mortality rates, in literacy levels and educational enrolment and achievement. To

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<sup>38</sup> Rudo Gaidzanwa, Ed, Policy Making Issues In Southern Africa. Southern Africa Printing and Publishing House, Harare, 2001, p6.

support this argument Firoze Manji maintains that: “While NGOs may today debate and shower praises on each other for their own capacities to “scale up”, the new governments at independence implemented programmes of “scaling up” in a manner that no NGO has dared contemplate.”<sup>39</sup>

This trend was soon reversed following the oil crisis of 1973 which contributed in part to a subsequent recession. The resultant shortage of aid funds and spiraling prices of commodities due to the increase in oil prices contributed to the economic crisis which emerged in sub Saharan Africa from the 1980s. There was a paradigm shift in the attitudes of donors and development policy-makers, away from the state centered development models towards the concept of minimalist state. This marked the era of neo-liberalism with its associated Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). According to liberal consensus, the function of economic policy was to safeguard the right of the minority to accumulate profits at the highest possible rate referred to as development. Neo-liberal reforms under adjustment programs actually caused much of the growth in poverty and inequality in Africa. This was a direct result of the withdrawal of government support to welfare programs in the areas of education, health and income generation projects. Withdrawal of government support for extension services, provision of agricultural inputs and marketing infrastructure affected peasant farmers adversely.

It can be argued that in order to present the same neo-liberal economic programs with a more human face, NGOs were co-opted as instruments of development assistance and good governance. Welfare initiatives that accompanied the good governance agenda were

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<sup>39</sup> Firoze Manji, The depoliticization of poverty, in, Debora Eade, Ed, Development and Rights A Development in Practice Reader, Oxfam GB, Oxford, 2004, p16.

in the form of funds to provide “safety nets” for the vulnerable through the NGO sector. As a result, the role of NGOs in the development of third world nations grew precipitously. According to data available, the European Economic Community (EEC) does not intervene directly on the ground but rather channels the bulk of its assistance through NGOs. In 2001, 26% of EEC aid was implemented through NGOs. In 1994 Norway’s development aid of \$8billion surpassing the volume of the combined UN system of \$6billion was channeled through NGOs. The US currently transfers 40% of its aid program through NGOs.<sup>40</sup> It is fact that aid is a major instrument of foreign policy, hence its disbursement is closely related to the furtherance of a donor’s interests. Africa after the Cold War has traditionally interested the West as a source of strategic raw materials.

The proliferation of NGOs in recent years can also be attributed to the attitude of the bilateral and multilateral donors. They have decided to channel a good percentage of development assistance through non-state actors in line with their development objectives. Indeed, there are those who argue that the growth of the NGO sector could be attributed to the perception by both the leftists and rightists of the NGOs as a sector through which they can promote their agenda. This lends credence to the observation that the market and voluntarism have a long association. It can be further argued that because of the greater power that donors have over NGOs, they (NGOs) represent a convenient avenue for asserting donor influence as opposed to the risks and difficulties of dealing with governmental agencies. To support these views, USAID’s declared strategy for 1998 was to assist Zimbabwe achieve “sustained growth based on broadened ownership,

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<sup>40</sup> Sourced at, [www.eurosources.org/sample.htm](http://www.eurosources.org/sample.htm). Accessed on 23 July 2005.

strengthen community-based environmental and natural resources management, reduce fertility and increase use of HIV/AIDS prevention methods. This strategy supports overall US interests in developing future markets for American goods and services.”<sup>41</sup>

The awareness of the favor that NGOs found in donors' eyes obviously provided an opportunity for all kinds of NGOs to come up. This is supported by the argument that: “NGOs will do better the less stable the world becomes...( because) finance will become increasingly available to agencies who can deliver “stabilizing” social services.”<sup>42</sup> It can be argued that instability in Africa provides opportunities for the exploitation of its resources by diverting attention to security issues. The case of the Congo provides a typical example. Further, the leaning towards NGOs also coincided with the crisis in governance and the consequent agitation for democratization of the body politic, which eventually led to the emergence of a number of civil society organizations and other traditional NGOs agitating for openness in the way the government conducted its activities. This development has to be seen within the broader context of the donor pressure for ‘good governance’ in economic management and the opening up of the political space for fair competition. Since the end of the Cold War, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies have pursued a ‘new policy agenda’ which gives renewed prominence to the role of NGOs in development of civil society.

The phenomenal growth of the NGO sector in the post independence period referred to above was not experienced in some African countries. This is largely the case in those countries which until recently were ruled by ideologically oriented parties (Tanzania,

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<sup>41</sup> USAID CP '98: Zimbabwe-The USAID FY 1998 Congressional Presentation, sourced at, [www.usaid.gov/pubs/cp98/afr/countries/zw.htm-44k](http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/cp98/afr/countries/zw.htm-44k). (Accessed on 20 July 2005).

<sup>42</sup> Fowler Alan, Striking a Balance, Earthscan Publications, United Kingdom, 1997, p229.

Zambia and Ethiopia before 1990). The NGOs which existed before the 1990s, operated under very strict state control. There was a visible absence of support to CBOs by INGOs. The exception was the case of NODIC organizations whose presence was visible. NODIC countries did not participate in the colonization of Africa and by extension did not have an interest in its resources. This trend has a telling effect of revealing that other than being developmental and humanitarian, NGOs operate in ideologically friendly environments. The converse can be true that their proliferation on liberal soil facilitates maximization of benefits accruing to their sponsors.

In Zimbabwe the search for indigenous policy frameworks and the perceived need to mobilize society for development spurred the growth of NGOs after independence. There have been four phases in the growth of NGOs since independence in 1980. The period between 1979 and 1980 was characterized by welfare oriented organizations. NGOs tried to reorient themselves and redefine their constituencies. They also sought to establish linkages with the state and civil society. Focus was on assisting disadvantaged groups especially women whom they organized into clubs concerned with hygiene, nutrition, sewing and childcare. Some organizations also emerged in the same period whose theme was rehabilitation, relief and social services for the reconstruction of the country. It is pertinent to note that Community Based Organizations (C.B.O.s) formed the bulk of the NGO enterprise at this stage. Save for assistance given by NODIC NGOs, their formation and survival depended on the encouragement and financial support given by the government. According to Sam Moyo, et al, (2002), "Initially leadership of the organizations was vested in social workers, nurses and former teachers but was eventually lost to international organizations. Whites continued to hold onto nature

conservation and hospice-type NGOs.”<sup>43</sup> The visible absence of NGOs from former colonial masters in the early years of independence can be subjected to many interpretations. One of these may be uncertainty regarding the prospects of investments in Zimbabwe which had initially proclaimed a socialist ideology.

In terms of development theory the approach adopted by NGOs in the early years of independence represented an extremely limited thrust to achieve significant impact on community development. The initiatives were mostly individual self-help projects which did not have a positive impact on the capacity to generate long-term development.

Further, the agricultural sector which up to today forms the back-borne of both the rural and national economy, did not receive much attention. The activities of NGOs during the early years of independence is summed up in a study commissioned by the School of Social Work (1992) as: “Initially the NGO sector mainly acted as a channel or redistribution, trying to secure minimal living standards for the “have nots” without generating structural changes in society. Consequently, activities were not development oriented at all but rather aimed at maintaining the status quo.”<sup>44</sup>

The period 1982 to 1986 was dominated by a generation of NGOs with a focus on long-development. Their focus was on rural areas where they assumed there was surplus labor which could be harnessed through group labor to non-farm activities. Income generation activities targeted included savings clubs, market gardening, milling, poultry, pig-keeping, baking and soap making. NGOs during this period also targeted training in

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<sup>43</sup> Moyo Sam, etal, NGOs, the State and Politics in Zimbabwe, SAPES Books, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2000, p3.

<sup>44</sup> Skilled Manpower Needs of NGOs in Zimbabwe, Journal of Social Development in Africa, School of Social Work, Harare, 1992, p7.

welding, carpentry, building and agriculture. Based on the assumption that women had time and needed extra cash they were organized into C.B.O.s. Apart from government financial support, national and international NGOs availed training and equipment.

To improve the effectiveness of CBOs, the then Zimbabwean Prime Minister directed that structures be established from village level. They were escalated to ward, district, provincial and national levels. The structures were meant to promote popular participation in policy formulation and implementation of development projects.

Although much progress was registered in the early stages, development at community level eventually stagnated.

The projects failed as women needed to devote much of their time to crop cultivation and other routine household chores. There was also strong competition from established suppliers who offered cheaper products leading to the collapse of community based initiatives. Lack of training in marketing and record keeping also contributed to failure of the majority of community run projects. Despite the failure by NGOs to achieve sustainable development over the period, important lessons were learnt as demonstrated by Kate Wellard and James Copestake (1993) who argue that: "By far the most indelible mark left by NGO intervention is the community gaining confidence in itself to initiate and guide its own development. People could ask themselves: Why do we buy bread when we can make it?"<sup>45</sup>

The third phase of NGO growth was between 1987 and 1991. Focus was concentrated on advocacy in the areas of human rights, aids, women empowerment and the environment.

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<sup>45</sup> Copestake James and Wellard Kate, Non-Governmental Organizations and the State in Africa Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development. Routledge, New York, 1993, p31.



This phase was also characterized by networking with regional and international organizations. The realization of the important contribution NGOs could play in development was stressed by President Mugabe in 1989 by declaring that: "The task of developing Zimbabwe is an operation that must be tackled by the people themselves with government providing and or harnessing all resources at its disposal. Government appreciates that NGOs can and do play a vital role in development, with the proper vision and approach and with good and open communication and collaboration with government, they can act as valuable partners in the development process."<sup>46</sup>

The period after 1987 in Zimbabwe was characterized by the marginalization of structures of accountability and democracy inherent in movements centered on rights. These structures were replaced by the ascendancy of the expert, supported by bureaucratic and centralized decision making known as national planning. The age of the development expert, the relief expert and subsequently the conflict resolution expert had arrived. Extraction of resources by multinationals was entrenched even further.

After 1991, NGOs concentrated on poverty alleviation in response to the negative impacts of ESAP. They received encouragement from the Social Dimensions of Adjustment Program adopted to minimize social costs of economic adjustment on disadvantaged groups. The thrust of the program was to involve NGOs in poverty alleviation strategy. On their part, NGOs began to engage the government on policy changes determining the direction of economic development such as channeling assistance to the poor in society. Many international NGOs entered the field of community development. On the other hand, national NGOs experienced a sharp decline

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p27.

in their activities due to low levels of government financial support. The channeling of effort towards advocacy marked the ground breaking thrust of INGOs to create a favorable environment for the free market system. The poor rural communities dominated by women continued to be the targets of development assistance. The failure by government to render support for development was exposed and this could have important consequences on the perception of donors by the largely illiterate rural folk.

According to available data, Kenya recorded a GDP growth rate averaging 6.7% p.a. accompanied by some tangible development during the first decade of independence (i.e. roughly up to the middle of the 1970s). Following the oil crisis of that period which directly affected the flow and direction of financial resources, the country embarked on a downward development trend. By the late 1970s, the country was already facing a development crisis on many fronts. One such important front was food. By 1980 the food situation had developed into a major crisis occasioning the formation of long queues both in rural and urban areas for access to the little that was available in the shops.

The diversion of scarce resources to meet food import requirements together with importation of oil at inflated prices occasioned by the crisis in the Middle East (following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war) deprived the state of money both for development investment and for the provision of services in the existing facilities. This was the same period during which a number of humanitarian organizations either began to operate in the country; or for those which were already in the country, intensified their operations in support of efforts by the state. World Vision, for example, began to be more visible in the

country during this period by providing the badly needed humanitarian assistance among other services.

It is also during the same period that a number of developmental NGOs already operating in the country intensified their activities. In fact, with steady decline in government support for development projects and decline in qualitative and quantitative provision of services, the NGO sector emerged as a major player especially in the provision of services. NGOs would give special attention to the groups perceived to be inadequately catered for by the state such as the urban poor, the orphans and those in need of soft loans for a variety of productive activities. Despite the positive contribution of NGOs in lieu of government, Julie Hearn describes their role as “NGO-isation” of society. She argues that: “NGO-isation is the clear outworking of western foreign policy aimed at redefining the central relationships between the states, society and external actors. This process should be understood as part of an attempt at societal engineering.”<sup>47</sup> She cites the example of the Protestant Hospital in Kenya and argues that USAID created the hospital’s comparative advantage over the public sector.

### **Current Funding of NGOs**

Ideally the major source of NGO funding should be threefold being members’ contributions, the government and foreign donors. In Africa, foreign donors constitute the biggest financiers with governments also competing to get their share. The source of funding has a major impact on the operational flexibility of NGOs as donors prescribe terms which favor their interests. It follows that NGOs should satisfy conditions set by

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<sup>47</sup> Julie Hearn, “The NGO-isation of Kenyan Society: USAID and the Restructuring of Health Care.” Review of African Political Economy No. 75, ROAPE Publications, 1998, p91.

donors if they are to benefit from sustained funding. Unfortunately donor goals may not represent the development priorities of beneficiaries. In this regard Sam Moyo (2002) notes that: "UNDP funding for NGO activities is channeled through its Africa 2000 Network which, together with the National Selection Committee of UNDP, is responsible for project identification and selection."<sup>48</sup> This analogy applies to national governments in Africa which have been vigorously pursuing strategies to extricate themselves from restrictive measures which do not favor their development priorities.

The provision of aid is indeed a furtherance of the national interests of the donor countries. In the majority of cases the objectives which donor countries seek to achieve through aid include the following:

1. Ideological motives. Aid is only availed to organizations operating in an ideologically friendly environment. This goes further to the requirement that the beneficiary governments should be acceptable to the donors.
2. Protection of the interests of citizens and investments of the donor country. This ties in well with the liberal prescription of free entry and exit into markets.
3. Securing markets for exports and sources of raw materials.
4. Extending influence mostly political, this may extend to securing operational bases in strategic regions.

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<sup>48</sup> Moyo Sam, et al, NGOs, the State and Politics in Zimbabwe. SAPES, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2000, p70.

Results from a research carried out by the School of Social Work in Zimbabwe (1993) showed that out of the 36 NGOs sampled, 28 indicated their main source of funding as foreign donors.<sup>49</sup> This supports the notion that many NGOs in developing countries have a weak resource base making them dependent on donors. Questions that emerge are whether the funds can lead to self-financing, sustainable and productive institutions and programs which have internally driven impetuses and capacity to pursue development. Due to the precarious financial situation, the sustainability of projects and capacity to pay competitive salaries for skilled personnel is threatened.

### **Sectoral Distribution of NGOs**

The sectoral distribution of NGOs refers to the specific sectors in which they render assistance. Broadly these encompass agriculture, health, education, research, income generation projects and conservation. This classification facilitates ascertainment of their primary development concerns in comparison with the wider socio-political and economic development thrust of the country. A cursory survey of the activities of NGOs reveals a pattern of sectoral bias in their approach to development. Zimbabwe has data not too dissimilar to the situation in the Sub Saharan Africa region as a whole.

In an interview with the National Coordinator of the National Association of Non Governmental Organizations of Zimbabwe, Bob Muchabaiwa (10 July 2005), it was revealed that the registration of NGOs was influenced by the status of sectors they intended to operate in. The main considerations for registration of NGOs were given as follows:

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<sup>49</sup> Skilled Manpower Needs of NGOs in Zimbabwe. Journal of Social Development in Africa, School of Social Work, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1997.

1. The developmental needs of particular areas with priority given to underdeveloped ones. In this regard, government registered NGOs only when they intended to operate in underdeveloped regions.
2. Focus on specific programs such as prevention of child labor which negatively impact on the values of society.
3. Requests by communities for development assistance.
4. Government to government agreements including UN mandates.

This section will provide an overview of the activities of NGOs by sector. The source of the data is the National Association of Non Governmental Organizations (NANGO) register compiled in 2004. Survey results of a research carried out by Sam Moyo (2002) of the Southern African Political and Economic Series (SAPES) were also used. It emerged from the two sources that 15% of all NGOs in Zimbabwe are involved in education carrying out mainly direct literacy activity or research. "Advocacy NGOs" account for more than 30% of the entire total; these are mainly focused on Women and Gender issues. A further 3% are concerned with child and human rights issues. Health has 10% while on the humanitarian front 15% of the NGOs are concerned with supporting communities in dire straits due to agricultural vis-à-vis land redistribution

programs. As a direct result 30% of NGOs are specifically concerned with agriculture and food security.<sup>50</sup>

The sectoral activities of NGOs involved in community development in Zimbabwe are summarized in the following table:<sup>51</sup>

**Table 2.1**

**Sectoral Activities of NGOs in Zimbabwe**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Agriculture and Rural Development.	Food security, provision of inputs, appropriate technology, dam construction and food for work in road construction, bridge construction and gully reclamation.	30
b. Health and sanitation.	Construction of hospitals and clinics, service delivery toilet construction and nutrition.	10
c. Children and youth.	Shelter for orphans, street kids, abandoned children and supplementary feeding.	2

<sup>50</sup> Moyo Sam, et al, NGOs, the State and Politics in Zimbabwe, SAPES, Harare, Zimbabwe, p55.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p55.

d. Environment	Research, advocacy, community level environmental management, tree planting and conservation.	3
e. Education, Training and Research.	Improving literacy, research, rural extension, women's and child-child access to education.	15
f. Women	Income-generating projects, support to CBOs, self assertiveness training and granting financial assistance.	30
g. Relief	Drought relief, borehole drilling and shelter for destitutes.	10

The sectoral pattern displayed in the analysis reflects that the majority of NGOs are involved in agriculture. This buttresses the industrialization theory which maintains that successful industrialization is necessarily preceded by a well established agricultural sector in the rural areas. In line with this view, the agricultural sector targeted by the majority of NGOs represents an appropriate strategy for community development. Involvement in the health sector is low at 10% yet an unhealthy population cannot contribute meaningfully to development. Education and research have 15% concentration



each. The women's sector has 30% of the NGOs involved in development. It is worthy highlighting that women have a major influence on public policy including voting patterns. Although not directly impacting on development, advocacy has a high concentration in the entire NGO sector. This can be interpreted as an attempt by NGOs to influence the direction of public opinion and resultantly government policy.

Currently there are over a thousand NGOs registered in Zimbabwe with the National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations. About 60% of these are community based with an involvement in implementation of various projects.<sup>52</sup> They receive the bulk of their funding from INGOs, with the church and government contributing in a small way. Among the INGOs, their activities are classified into intermediary, service, advocacy and development. Intermediary organizations are mostly national and facilitate activities of small organizations such as CBOs. They also mediate between such groups and the government or funding agencies. They identify rural projects to be presented to foreign donors. Examples are Christian Care, Catholic Development Association (CADEC) and Organization of Rural Associations in Progress (ORAP), which are involved in rural institution building and social mobilization in Matabeleland, Midlands and Masvingo provinces. The Organization of Collective Co-operatives of Zimbabwe (OCCZIM) aims to unite all registered CBOs under its umbrella and targets groups in the manufacturing, retail and consumer sectors.

Service NGOs in Zimbabwe assist in project formulation, execution and engage in consultancy and research on behalf of donor agencies. They provide specialist services in the area of training, education and information with examples being Zimbabwe

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<sup>52</sup> NANGO Register, 2004.

Environment Research Organization (ZERO) and Environment Development Activities (ENDA). International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) engage in collaboration and co-ordination with local NGOs. From the NANGO register it can be confirmed that there are 30 INGOs employing between 200 and 300 expatriates. Examples are Oxfam, Save the Children, World Vision, CARE, LWF and NOVIB. INGOs are the major source of project financing for other NGOs. Although the main point of contact between INGOs and CBOs is through national NGOs there are many cases of direct involvement with the communities.

Indeed, a close examination of the operational areas of NGOs in Zimbabwe shows that activities are concentrated in agriculture and gender sectors. The health and education sectors have a significant though low presence on a relative basis. Given that over time NGOs are free to determine the sector in which to operate, the interests of major donors can be deduced. Some critics attribute the preponderance of activities in certain sectors to a convergence of interest in those particular sectors.

For example, the concentration of NGOs in the education sector is according to Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) for a purpose that: "Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the

world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control.”<sup>53</sup>

## Spatial Distribution

### Introduction

This section analyses the geographical distribution of NGO activities in Zimbabwe. The objective is to highlight the geographical location of their activities. The analysis will be limited to provincial presence of NGOs. An attempt will be made to establish a relationship between the development needs of specific areas and subsequent deployment of NGOs. Ideally provinces with the most unfavorable geophysical endowments and adverse colonial legacies should register a higher presence of aid agencies. NGOs involved in agricultural research should correspondingly have a greater presence in the dry parts of the country.

A summary of locations sourced from the “Poverty Reduction Forum: Zimbabwe 2003/4 Directory” is as per the table below.<sup>54</sup>

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### Table 2.2

#### Geographical Location of NGOs in Zimbabwe

<u>Location</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Health</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Research</u>	<u>Environment</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Projects</u>	<u>Building</u>
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<sup>53</sup> Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature, James Curry, London, 1986, p16.

<sup>54</sup> Institute of Development Studies University of Zimbabwe, Poverty Reduction Forum: Zimbabwe 2003/4 Directory, Graphtec Communications Zimbabwe, Harare, 2003.

1. Manicaland.	47	24	35	4	15	28	37
2. Mashonaland	32	15	27	3	13	22	25
Central.							
3. Mashonaland	31	15	27	3	12	23	25
West.							
4. Mashonaland	32	15	27	3	12	23	25
East.							
5. Masvingo.	33	16	28	3	12	24	25
6. Matabeleland	32	16	29	3	11	23	28
North.							
7. Matabeleland	36	18	35	3	13	25	34
South.							
8. Midlands	34	15	30	3	12	24	27

From the table above, the biggest number of NGOs in all categories operate in Manicaland (190) followed by Matabeleland South (164). The geographically disadvantaged areas of Masvingo and Matabeleland North have 141 and 142 NGOs respectively. Although Manicaland still has the largest concentration in the agricultural sector, a significant presence is evident in the regions prone to drought. The same pattern is displayed in the health, education, income generation and capacity building sectors. In

the absence of the distortion created by statistics for Manicaland, the spatial disposition of NGOs seems to confirm the generalization that they operate in areas with some disadvantage. These areas include the drought prone provinces of Masvingo and Matabeleland.

In Kenya any organization registered with the Bureau is, among other requirements, supposed to indicate its area(s) of geographical operation. From the Bureau data, there are more NGO activities in the western part of Kenya (Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western provinces) than in other areas of the country (with Nairobi being a special case). Indeed one could explain the greater representation in the Rift Valley Province in particular, partly by the fact that it has some of the most deprived areas in the country (that is, it is arid and semi-arid especially in the southern and northern parts). At the same time the region has some of the richest districts which may by inference suggest the influence of prominent personalities in channeling the flow of services to their areas. The operational headquarters of NGOs would as expected, be located in key urban areas. This may be critical for purposes of linking up with potential donors, most of whom are foreign based. Maintaining regular contact with donors provides a feedback mechanism and is important for sustained aid flows.

What emerges from the evolution of the NGO enterprise is that they responded to the growing impoverishment and conflicts on the continent. They are the products of a process which began as a popular mobilization against oppression and exploitation. It has turned out however that the main focus of development was to discover and implement solutions which would enable the victims to cope with impoverishment or find

sustainable solutions for living with it. Firoze Manji maintains the role of development NGOs as being that: "Their roles have gradually changed from articulating an embryonic anti-imperialism to becoming an integral part of post-colonial social formations."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Firoze Manji, The depoliticisation of poverty, in, Deborah Eade, Ed, Development and Rights. A Development in Practice Reader. Oxfam GB, Oxford, 2004, p13.

## **CHAPTER 3: THE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES OF NGOs IN ZIMBABWE-SPECIFIC CASES.**

### **Introduction**

Development can be considered to occur at three levels being the micro, macro and global. NGOs in Zimbabwe contribute to development at the micro level as they target mostly marginalized communities in the rural areas. They embark on small scale projects which benefit localized communities. NGO development activities need to be viewed within the wider context of national development priorities. Ideally there should be complementarity rather than divergence in the development thrust. The government's role is to provide a regulatory framework through legislation such as the Private Voluntary Organizations Act. Where NGOs operate, their activities have been a mixture of both success and failure. Selected case studies applicable to Zimbabwe will be analyzed in this section to establish the reasons for the two outcomes. This approach should go a long way to addressing the research problem.

### **Agricultural Sector**

The National Farmers Association is a membership based NGO representing members in communal areas. It grew out of the Master Farmer Scheme during the colonial period. In 1988, it had a paid-up membership of 70000 farmers and 150000 other participants in

4500 clubs nationwide.<sup>56</sup> As the largest representative body of black farmers, it has the unique ability to represent their interests in the policy process including at national level. It has played an active role in expanding smallholder access to the market. The NGO seeks to develop competency by training selected farmers who in turn spread modern scientific techniques to other farmers in communal areas. Master Farmer certificates and badges are awarded to communal farmers who adapt and practice improved methods. The extension approach is based on the 'trickle down' theory in which a few progressive farmers receive training and information which they are expected to pass onto other farmers through farmer to farmer dissemination and demonstration. Its major success is the high adoption rate of visible innovations such as hybrid maize. On a negative side the program failed to produce notable yield increases because marketing of surplus crops is difficult. This is due to the absence of dedicated marketing facilities for the small scale farmers in the rural areas.

The case of the achievements of this NGO in increasing output provides valuable lessons. First is the importance of the participation of members at grassroots level. This provides an opportunity to farmers to gain practical experience through direct involvement. Ownership of the programmes facilitates accountability which is critical to success. The element of demonstration is critical to communal development as this gives first hand knowledge on good farming techniques. Rewards such as the Master Farmer certificates provide the necessary incentive for farmers to adopt new techniques and practices leading to increased yields hence development.

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<sup>56</sup> Copestake James and Wellard Kate, Non-Governmental Organizations and The State in Africa Rethinking Roles For Sustainable Development, Routledge, New York, 1993, p25.



Silveira House, a church based centre for discussion and development is one of the most active CBOs in Zimbabwe. It began agricultural extension work in 1965 despite the colonial government's strict control over collaborative activities in black communities. In order to overcome this restriction, missionaries used the Catholic Association (CA) which brought together a number of lay leaders for a range of activities. Communal farmers were identified and formed into groups under the guise of hardworking Christians in the Murewa district of Mashonaland East province. One of the most successful projects initiated is the Pump-Prime Revolving Loan Fund (PPRLF) involving the provision of credit for inputs to small farmers. To provide security for loans, groups of farmers guaranteed individuals' repayment. In cases where individual farmers failed to repay, groups would offset the debt and recover it from the defaulting farmer. Further initiatives involved the collective marketing of produce by selling crops to the Grain Marketing Board (G.M.B.). Costs of inputs and the loan advanced to farmers were deducted from the payment made by GMB. Silveira House also facilitated the employment of agricultural extension workers who were paid from the service fees charged as contributions by farmers. According to Copestake, "Whilst the average peasant farmer was harvesting between two and five bags per acre, the groups were harvesting eight to ten bags and twenty-eight to thirty-six bags in 1970/71 and 1974/5 respectively."<sup>57</sup> After independence the new government encouraged Silveira House to adopt the loan scheme for replication nationwide. Other NGOs also saw it as a model.

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<sup>57</sup> Copestake James, et al, Non-Governmental Organizational Organizations and the State in Africa: Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development. Routledge, New York, 1993, p55.

In terms of training, the program had three main components: courses at the group plots, in the field and “good farming” competitions. All the three components had a strong demonstration element. This was achieved by organizing field days (green shows) where government officials and farmers were invited. The most distinctive contribution of Silveira House however lies in the emphasis on group formation, group work and solidarity. Government did not and still does not have the means to mobilize groups in the way an NGO with good contacts with people does. A significant decline in the group initiatives was witnessed in the period commencing 1990 when the government had taken over coordination through the various local authorities. By the time the NGO stopped offering courses on agricultural techniques in 1994, the communal areas it operated in had changed from being food deficit regions to producing a large portion of the country’s marketed maize. The decision to withdraw from assisting small scale farmers with training was exacerbated by local government agricultural officials who regarded CA officials as a rival power structure.<sup>58</sup>

The activities of Silveira House provide invaluable lessons for the success of NGOs involved in community development. The concept of group development schemes introduced by Silveira House provides an insight into the conditions that facilitated the success of rural agriculture in Mashonaland East province of Zimbabwe. The model was adopted countrywide but success became minimal in the 1990s when coordination and supervision became minimal.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p63.

The Environment and Development Association (ENDA) has been operating in Zimbabwe as a non-governmental organization since 1983. During this time it has worked with thousands of small scale farmers in Zimbabwe's semi-arid communal lands of Matabeleland North and South. The area it has been operating in has soils which are unfit for intensive farming, a historical legacy which has been compounded by poor rainfall patterns, natural resource degradation and depletion. ENDA is committed to working with marginalized people in Zimbabwe. Its approach to development emphasizes participation by the people, the majority of them being rural women. Major work has been conducted with peasant farmers by selecting indigenous small grains, improving and replicating them for wider use as a strategy against droughts. Appropriate processing technology has been commercialized and new products for flour from the drought- tolerant grains have been developed. Farmers are setting up their own seed production projects. Through the initiatives of ENDA, the government has now brought sorghum and millet into the controlled marketing system, providing guaranteed markets for farmers involved their cultivation.

### **Health Sector**

Health is critical to human resources development. At independence, the infant mortality rate for whites was 14/1000 while for blacks it was 120/10000. The effectiveness of government intervention was manifested in various health indicators after the first decade of independence. Infant mortality was reduced from 88/1000 live births to 61/1000 in 1990. A deteriorating economic environment under ESAP during the 1990s curtailed the potential of government intervention. The most immediate effects of ESAP were felt in the health sector. More stringent procedures governing free access to health were

introduced as part of cost recovery measures. NGOs responded to the failure by rural communities to access health facilities by supplying drugs and equipment to rural health institutions.

In the health sector, NGOs are dominated by church-related organizations operating rural hospitals and clinics. The Zimbabwe Association of Church-Related Hospitals (ZACH) services rural communities. The association's income is from foreign donors and government, in addition to annual subscriptions from hospitals, clinics and associate members. The organization gives advice to member mission hospitals on policy issues, assists in negotiating conditions of service, raising cash donations and equipment from abroad, recruitment of doctors and training in AIDS counseling. Mission hospitals under ZACH represent 68% of rural health services and 45% of total health services in Zimbabwe.<sup>59</sup> NGOs which are not church or government related such as Oxfam, Christian Care, ICRC, Save the Children and World Vision concentrate on primary health care, nutrition education, information and child-welfare issues. At community level, they established a reputation for establishing community based organizations focusing on family planning and Aids counseling.

One of the NGOs with strong grass-roots attachment is the Family AIDS Caring Trust (FACT) established in 1989. The organization engages in AIDS support, education, and counseling and offers home-based care in Masvingo. It collaborates with Mashambanzou the only AIDS drop in centre established by the Catholic Church in 1990. Its major success was registered when it collaborated with the government to run community based

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<sup>59</sup> Moyo Sam, et al, NGOs, the State and Politics in Zimbabwe, SAPES Books, Harare, 2000, p107.

health and sanitation programmes. Village health workers were trained and given bicycles with which to distribute condoms and offer advice on the construction of latrine toilets. The workers were given allowances which contributed in part to their motivation.

## **Education Sector**

Education plays an important role in reducing poverty. By enabling individuals and households to harness knowledge, increase and diversify incomes, manage risks, and increase social mobility, education offers the prospect of breaking through the cycle of poverty. In rural areas, education improves agricultural productivity and efficiency.

Benefits accruing to rural communities from education are summarized in a 2003 World Bank Report as, "Skills acquired through formal and informal education enhance farmers' ability to acquire and decode market and technical information, select optimal cropping patterns, and purchase the right mix of inputs. Education also plays a critical role in facilitating off-farm employment and economic development."<sup>60</sup>

Serious involvement of NGOs in education started when Zimbabwe attained its independence in 1980. Prior to independence, no agency or foreign government, except apartheid South Africa, was willing to be seen openly associating itself with a rebel state (Rhodesia) which had unilaterally declared independence from Britain. Apart from the massive reconstruction program that was required in education, especially after primary education was declared to be free in 1980, there was the additional problem of children

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<sup>60</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p64.

returning home from camps in neighboring countries adding to the pressure for school accommodation. There was also an immediate need to reform the curriculum to replace the old colonial one which was unacceptable to the new political dispensation. The required curricular reforms needed a high level of funding, in particular to produce school textbooks which were ideologically acceptable to the new government. Related to these curricular changes was the area of teacher training which had to be accelerated to meet with the challenges of the massive school expansion. Gender imbalances perpetrated by the colonial government also needed to be urgently redressed.

Soon after independence in 1980, the Swedish Development Authority (SIDA) became involved in the reconstruction of schools which had been destroyed or damaged during the war. It also embarked on building teachers' houses in the rural and disadvantaged areas. Curriculum development was one of the areas in which SIDA supported heavily. Apart from putting up an education service centre at the University of Zimbabwe, the organization also helped by training curriculum staff both locally and abroad. SIDA withdrew its assistance around 1995. One of the most adversely affected programs was the Ex-refugees and Ex-combatant Scholarships Program which left a number of beneficiaries stranded. Whilst SIDA was operating in Zimbabwe, it had a strong grassroots orientation. Members of the community were involved in the provision of inputs such as bricks. This participatory approach had important consequences on the ownership of the schools constructed. Communities were obligated to safeguard the schools against burglaries and to carry out regular maintenance.

USAID played a significant role in supporting the training of teachers and setting up teacher's training colleges. Assistance in education was however stopped because of some political misunderstanding with the Government of Zimbabwe. Up until 2000, limited support still came in the form of the Volunteer Service Organization (VSO) which provided volunteers to teach English, Science and technical subjects in rural secondary schools.

UNICEF whose policy has always been to ensure the welfare of children and women established operations in Zimbabwe soon after independence in 1980. Its major activities are to render support to primary-school teacher training, strengthening early childhood education and adult education particularly for women. It has expanded the scope of its activities to include gender sensitization. The area of early childhood education has been successful in most of rural areas. Resources in the form of instructors and materiel are sourced from the communities.

## **Research**

ENDA responded to the serious lack of data on the socio-economic requirements of communal areas. This followed the realization that NGOs and the government embarked on projects without understanding underlying factors determining the kinds of interventions appropriate to achieve sustainable solutions. The NGO initiated the Indigenous Seeds Project in collaboration with government and local communities. Its

objective was to facilitate the supply of the best available seeds for specific environments.

Preliminary research revealed that communities had requirements for seeds which are drought resistant, early maturing, palatable, disease resistant and high yielding with minimum use of expensive external inputs. Farmers in the dry parts of Matabeleland were involved in planting, monitoring and evaluation according to their own chosen criteria. The interest of farmers was also to retain the traditional small grains in their cropping system. Collaboration was with the Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP), Silveira House and USAID. At the local level, local politicians, traditional leaders, grass-roots organizations and government agencies are involved. Through the joint initiatives, improved varieties of sorghum and millet were distributed.

Following the successful development of a suitable seed variety, the number of hectares planted in Matabeleland increased from zero in 1988 to 69000 in 1995.<sup>61</sup> This brought additional food security to rural households. The outcome of such collaboration was the setting up of an independent gene bank. The experience of the Indigenous Seeds Project has shown that when there are perceived mutual benefits, projects can be successfully implemented. The approach is based on people defining their own needs and prioritizing them. In this way a culture of development evolves at its own momentum. In addition, all forms of external exploitation are minimized whilst innovations and decisions are made by the community itself.

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<sup>61</sup> USAID CP'98: Zimbabwe, sourced at: [www.Usaid.gov/pubs/cp98/afr/countries/zw.htm-44k](http://www.Usaid.gov/pubs/cp98/afr/countries/zw.htm-44k).



ENDA's involvement in research also saw it assembling a group of researchers in Mazvihwa communal lands of southern Zimbabwe in 1985. The researchers comprised of unemployed youths and adults trained by ENDA staff. Preliminary investigations had revealed that the themes of drought, woodland, grazing, and water, lack of drought animals and shortage of house-building materials occupied an important place in people's lives. Local farmers showed an interest in woodland resources which became the focus of the research. The research involved ascertaining knowledge of local people of trees, their ecology and use. A fully trained local worker was appointed as the link between ENDA and farmers. He gathered information from farmers on woodland resources, attitudes to tree planting, existence of management rules and local priorities. Findings were used to draw up a nursery and woodland resource plan. Since the project's inception, 150 villages have been targeted. Results of the initiatives showed a disappointing outcome. Seedling survival was high for individuals and institutions but very low for communal woodlots.<sup>62</sup> The ability to organize communities for productive purposes is essential in order to register project success. Communities cooperate and subscribe the most in areas where there are perceived benefits.

### **Environmental Conservation Sector**

Environmental problems in communal areas can be viewed in part as a result of successive legislations, starting with the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. It confined farmers to set areas and forced them to cultivate the same land over and over again.

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<sup>62</sup> Copestate James, et al, Non- Governmental Organizations and the State in Africa: Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development. Routledge, New York, 1993, p75.

Further problems arose from increasing population, inappropriate land use practices and imposed poorly designed conservation policies. The end result was over exploitation of resources including wildlife resources. CAMPFIRE represents a joint effort by the Zimbabwean Parks Authority, government and CBOs at collaboration in the area of wild life management. USAID was the largest donor in the CAMPFIRE program.

Collaboration is in the area of program design, implementation, research, information dissemination, international lobby and mobilization of local communities. The NGO indulges in improving access by communities to the process of natural resources exploitation. The communities are assisted to protect and manage wildlife resources in their areas sustainably. The process also involves the disposal of these resources with proceeds being channeled to development and welfare of members. As of 1994, 26 of 57 Zimbabwe's districts became active program participants managing their natural resources sustainably. Resource based benefits were evident in the increasing wildlife populations while communities benefited from increased income and empowerment. On the negative side local district authorities, elites and tourist operators have gained access to the larger share of benefits from CAMPFIRE.<sup>63</sup>

Donor co-ordination of the program in the 1990s involved other NGOs from Holland, Canada, EU, Japan, Norway and the United Kingdom. Principal contractors involved in the program included Price Waterhouse an accounting firm, Action Magazine, and University of Zimbabwe Centre for Applied Social Sciences.

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<sup>63</sup> Moyo Sam, et al, NGOs, the State and Politics in Zimbabwe. SAPES, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2000, p121.

The Mutoko Agricultural Development Project is a CBO started in 1989 with funding from the EEC and COOPIBO, a Belgian NGO. Its formation was based on the premise that government institutions have difficulties in reaching and mobilizing communal farmers, the services they provide are not tailored to meet the needs and capabilities of communities. In terms of approach the organization uses farmer representatives, being volunteers elected by their Village Development Communities (VIDCOs) to establish and maintain links with the community, project and government agencies. Representatives of farmers have a key role to play in mobilizing people, demonstrating new agricultural practices and providing a two-way feed back. Targeted activities include demonstrating and teaching farmers correct cropping practices, promoting interaction between farmers, and research and extension organizations in the development of economically and ecologically sustainable farming practices.

Other NGO organizations were incorporated into the project. These include Silveira House and the Self-Help Development Foundation which provide training on agricultural practices. Close cooperation with relevant institutions and the participation of farmers in the process of technology development has enabled agriculture to be placed in a wider perspective through the addition of forestry. The success of the project is due in part to the fact that it was preceded by the setting up of a Savings Club; hence farmers had a platform for cooperation. The contribution by individual members also guarantees the availability of funds hence hedges against disruption in the event of donors failing to assist. Further, the strong linkage between extension and research is in sharp contrast to the usual formal system of operating separate services.

In the area of agro-forestry, the activities of the Shurugwi Social Forestry Project shall be examined. The project was initiated in 1987 with funding from the Ford Foundation. Its objectives were to promote tree planting in communal areas. Its approach involved involving farmers in planning and implementation of tree growing projects. Projects are organized at Village Development Committee (VIDCO) level comprising 100 families. The families are represented by an elected committee. Materials for nurseries are sourced from the Forestry Commission and purchased using contributions. These include mesh wire, poles and polythene. Success was registered in only one VIDCO whilst failure in others was attributed to lack of dedicated labor and time. Unsuitable leadership was also found to have contributed to the failure.<sup>64</sup>

### **Income Generating Activities**

The Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) was established to service its member organizations, a number of CBOs, in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces soon after independence. CBOs are organized into family units comprising of five to ten families which come together for any work they choose to do. Groups comprising of family units carry out larger projects such as dam construction while umbrellas comprising of groups carry out larger projects such as irrigation to avoid duplication. Associations are formed from several umbrellas and ORAP district representatives. Board representatives from association level meet regularly to formulate policies, share experiences and evaluate the progress of projects. Some projects embarked on are in the areas of market gardening, tailoring, carpentry, cattle breeding, food-for-sale and

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<sup>64</sup> Copestake James, et al, Non –Governmental Organizations and the State in Africa: Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development. Routledge, New York, 1993, p43.

improvement in quality of basic needs such as drinking water, health and nutrition. The projects embarked on to date have recorded remarkable success largely due to the organization structures set up taking advantage of kinship ties. It should also be emphasized that perceived benefits by the communities are clear.

For the purposes of this study, the Mhlabangubo project based in Tsholotsho, Matabeleland South shall be discussed. At inception the project had a membership of about twenty people, mostly women. The project is a small vegetable garden of about 0.5 hectares. Vegetables are sold locally and to the nearest town Tsholotsho. Initially the locals resisted the idea of setting up a vegetable garden even though they had good soils and water. Efforts by personnel from the Ministry of Agriculture to convince the locals to undertake the project failed and it was only on the insistence of ORAP that the project commenced. Today this particular garden is now one of the best small gardens in the district. According to Copestake, "the members still do not want any members of AGRITEX, the government agricultural extension service to advise them."<sup>65</sup> The resistance by members to the intervention by government agencies is explained in part by the members' insistence that AGRITEX was not involved in the planning and initial implementation of the project. The people view the late intervention with suspicion often fearing that it may be hijacked. To thwart these suspicions, the ORAP field worker now works with government agencies in planning meetings and helping people to understand that the interest of all agencies is in developing the communities.

Since 1996 ORAP also established a program which provides small-scale financial services to the rural community projects. Initially the NGO availed Z\$618,000 to start the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p81.

microfinance operations. Initially there were 16 groups with each borrowing a total of Z\$245,000. The total number of borrowers has since grown to 404 with in excess of 300 on the waiting list for funds. Interest charged is set at 8% per month on flat balances. The current arrears rate is approximately 3%. The credit program is staffed by one manager and two field officers. Credit program staff has basic accounting skills. ORAP uses a very innovative incentive scheme for its credit program staff, in that they are paid solely on the basis of loan collections. This policy seems to have engendered a serious attitude evidenced by full repayment. The mechanism however decreases the program's capacity to grow by charging low interest rates. The capital base is further reduced by low interest earnings on the small portfolio remaining after salaries have been deducted. Despite these shortcomings, ORAP's establishment of a credit facility has contributed substantially to the viability of the income generating projects. The employment of a dedicated staff which is paid according to performance provides an incentive for performance.

The Self Help Development Foundation (SHDF), sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Germany, is an NGO which facilitates the organization of savings groups throughout the country. The institution first began operating in 1983, but was primarily confined to rural areas until it expanded and developed a national network in 1985.

Savings groups are concentrated around an income-generating activity, and are comprised of 20 to 30 members from the same village. Currently, it is estimated that the SHDF coordinates savings in approximately 11,000 groups that service around 300,000 members throughout the country. The savings amounts are quite small as the average group deposits only Z\$ 400 per month. CARE, an NGO also operating in Zimbabwe

helped to capitalize the loan book with US\$20,000 over two years to start-up, and has added about US\$10,000 in technical assistance and capital expenditure support.

The Zimbabwe Ecumenical Church Loan Fund (ZECLOF) is a non-profit organization initiated in 1995 by Zimbabwe Council of Churches to facilitate a revolving loan fund for use by churches, affiliated solidarity groups and community grass roots organizations. Approximately one third of ZECLOF's capital is lent out for general social service projects such as church building, education, training and housing, while two-thirds is allocated as loan capital to a variety of income generating projects, predominantly in rural communities where access to formal commercial banks is limited.

ZECLOF currently has a board council of 12 members, which includes an accountant, two directors of local NGOs, and a number of church leaders and social workers. It embarks on micro enterprise credit after experimenting, without much success, with church groups and churches on capital loans mainly for infrastructure. Repayments have been very low. The current portfolio is at Z\$3.7 million distributed over 44 groups.

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## CHAPTER 4: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NGOs IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

### Introduction

Zimbabwe's economy is agricultural based. Most rural communities depend on agriculture for livelihood. The development thrust for rural areas remains focused on agriculture. However, Zimbabwean rural communities are still poor despite many years of frantic efforts by government and private voluntary organizations. Such underdevelopment is reflected in the low use of fertilizers, tractors, other agricultural technologies, limited infrastructure, inadequate education and health and depletion of natural resources. Much of this can be attributed to the legacy of colonialism. Required changes to effect development should derive from stronger participation of rural communities and greater voice of the rural people. CBOs provide the ideal forum for effective community development which has remained elusive.

Popular movements which emerged out of the struggle for independence formed the basis for the setting of CBOs. They gradually were no longer given roles to play in the social development process. As Firoze Manji observed, "Rights were no longer the flag around which the oppressed could rally. Indeed, the concept of rights was codified and rarefied in laws and constitutions whose relevance or application was determined by the self-proclaimed, and increasingly unaccountable, guardians of the state."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Firoze Manji, The depoliticisation of poverty, in, Deborah Eade, Ed, Development and Rights A Development in Practice Reader, Oxfam GB, Oxford, 2004, p16.



The role of NGOs in development is acknowledged as crucial. They play an even greater role in Zimbabwe where the government is faced with massive problems of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. The perceived roles of NGOs in development were given by Zimbabwe's Vice-President Muzenda in 1987 as: "Priority is being given to long-term projects in the development of small-scale irrigation schemes, water projects, provision of agricultural inputs, encouraging co-operative efforts, improvements in livestock and grazing schemes, food storage and processing. The small size and specialized nature of such projects render them ideally suitable for participation of churches and NGOs who are often quicker to react to situations and who are usually closer to the peasant communities."<sup>67</sup> In assessing the effectiveness of NGOs in development, their capacity and efficiency are the basis for their failure or success. They face a number of constraints in their operations. It is noted from the study that a number of factors contribute to the failure by NGOs to develop effectively the communities with which they are involved. These factors will be discussed in this section starting with financial limitations.

### **Financial Capacity**

Almost all NGOs are dependent on international donor agencies for their funding which exposes them to the risks associated with external financial dependence, such as the drying up of donations. It can be argued that the problem is not dependency on foreign funding but rather the lack of financial options in the event of the donor pulling out.

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<sup>67</sup> Copstake James and Wellard Kate, Non- Governmental Organizations and the State in Africa Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development, Routledge, New York, 1993, p27.

There is no in built mechanism to ensure the long term survival of the organizations in the event of the donor pulling out.

The Zimbabwe School of Social Work commissioned a report to investigate the pressing requirements of the NGO sector. This study was prompted by the evident failure of NGOs to make an impact on community development. Resources available to NGOs to sustain competent and professional institutions are limited. Extracts of research findings from some of the 60 NGOs studied demonstrate a number of weaknesses shown on the following table.<sup>68</sup>

**Table 4.1**

**Major Constraints of NGOs**

<b><u>Sector</u></b>	<b><u>Post</u></b>	<b><u>Vacant Posts No.</u></b>	<b><u>Reason Not Filled</u></b>
Training	Principal	1	Remuneration low to attract suitable candidate.
	Bookkeeper	1	As above.
	Agriculturalist	1	As above.
Health	Training Officers	4	Financial constraints
	Projects Officer	1	Organization Restructuring.
	Bookkeeper	1	Financial constraints
	Admin Secretary	1	Financial constraints
Income Generating	Training Officers	1	Financial constraints
Projects	Projects Officer	1	Organization Restructuring.

<sup>68</sup> Skilled Manpower Needs of NGOs in Zimbabwe. Journal of Social Development in Africa, Harare, 1992, p11 and 12.

Organizations	Agriculturalist	1	Financial constraints.
	Depot Manager	4	Financial constraints.
Catering for	Economist	5	As above.
Co-operatives	Marketing Personnel	17	As above.
	Bookkeeper	1	As above.
	Business Advisor	1	As above.

It is quite evident from the findings of the above study that posts were not filled due to lack of funds rather than shortage of skilled manpower. This finding is supported by the fact that most NGOs depend on donor funding which may not be adequate to support operational and administrative costs. It is also evident that the most common areas needing skilled manpower are in financial management, training and agriculture. Most rural people derive their livelihood from agricultural production yet the sector lacks requisite support in the form of skilled manpower. In order to fill the gap in manpower disposition expatriates are recruited who in turn create gaps on expiry of their contracts. Any NGO development is therefore likely to meet with limited success.

CBOs do not know in advance the level of support they will receive from their partner NGOs and donors including the government. This restricts their level of commitment on a long term basis. If they generated their own funds, they would determine the level and direction of support and be in a position to contribute meaningfully to government development plans on a long-term basis. Organizations involved in agricultural research are not self-financing as they also have to rely on external assistance. Research however is long-term and demands continuous monitoring and documentation of results. Any

break due to financial uncertainties or constraints will immediately jeopardize the program.

### **Co-ordination**

Poor coordination among NGOs and with government is a factor for failure. Inefficient coordination has led to less capacity for lobbying on government policies. Areas of coordination include exchange of information, co management of projects and programs, collaboration in program development and division of execution responsibilities. Coordination reduces duplication, achieves rationalization of services and avoids marginalization of development assistance. Access to resources is expanded, capacity to outreach is increased and planning is joint. The lack of coordination among NGOs mirrors wider societal problems including atomization of society into interest groups, regional lobbies, ethnic and other groupings. Before starting their projects some NGOs do not always consult with organizations already working on the ground leading to duplication of projects or uneven distribution of resources. Some unscrupulous farmers have exploited such situations and secured material from many sources.

### **Operating Environment**

The proposition that NGOs might reproduce and even reinforce the contradictions and tensions of the social order in which they operate is a realistic observation. Income-generating projects (IGPs) embarked on in the early 1980s were not viable because of

weak distribution systems, depressed local purchasing power, competition from large industries and many demands on women's labor. For most of the post-independence period, NGOs maintained a cautious ambivalence towards the state, finding ways to accommodate the development discourse of the state and avoiding frontal, policy-lobbying confrontations with the government.<sup>69</sup> The importance of a supportive environment is supported by Rudo Gaidzanwa who argues that: "The need for changing development paradigms in order to transform the political, economic and human domains should be emphasized since development that is meaningful must necessarily change structural relations of power for the benefit of the weak, vulnerable, the marginalized and the disempowered."<sup>70</sup>

### **Government Support and Appropriate Institutions**

The success of NGO development initiatives depends to a large extent on the forging of a partnership with government. Such a relationship encourages the creation of a supportive environment reflected by the behavior of public servants and policy. Christopher Gibbs, in a World Bank commissioned study on the effectiveness of NGOs found out that: "NGO facilitation of government relations with herders' associations in drought-prone areas of Kenya works in part because of leadership at the highest level of government, a policy of decentralization that requires NGO collaboration in district-level development plans, and district-level officials who take seriously the injunction to work with

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<sup>69</sup> Moyo Sam, et al, NGOs, the State and Politics in Zimbabwe. Sapes Books, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2000,p45.

<sup>70</sup> Rudo Gaidzanwa, Ed, Policy Making Issues In Southern Africa. Southern Africa Printing and Publishing House, Harare, 2001, p7.

community-based organizations.”<sup>71</sup> The essence of this approach is implementation of a decentralized policy. It emerged from the study that smaller organizational units such as village associations are better equipped to manage their resources than large alternatives. The effectiveness of CBOs is enhanced through giving them more autonomy than assigning resource management to institutions imposed from above.

Private companies lack tax incentives in Zimbabwean laws. The Finance Act of Zimbabwe tends to exclude NGOs from receiving fiscal allocations unless governed by the Auditor General’s Standing Orders. Sam Moyo then argues that: “Unless the development strategy of government is shifted in a manner that recognizes NGOs as a key instrument to further development, and in a way which incorporates the funding of NGOs through regular budget procedures, the contribution of NGO work will remain marginal and ad hoc.”<sup>72</sup> There is no overall government policy governing co-operation with NGOs as this is considered a matter for individual ministries and departments at central and regional levels. NGOs are expected to present their plans to district or provincial development committees. Very few development plans have been submitted for incorporation into the National Development Plan since ESAP in 1991. This has rendered the National Economic Planning Commission irrelevant. NGOs have not been successful in delivering fundable public relations causes or projects with economic value to attract funding from private companies. As a result they have avoided productive activities such as irrigation, small-scale mining, local agro processing and packaging.

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<sup>71</sup> Gibbs Christopher, et al, Nongovernmental Organizations in World Bank-Supported Projects: A Review. The World Bank, Washington, 1999, p23.

<sup>72</sup> Moyo Sam, et al , NGOs, the State and Politics in Zimbabwe. SAPES Books, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2000, p77.

During the 1992 drought local based NGOs could not accept external offers of equipment since they lacked funds to pay customs duties.<sup>73</sup>

Rodrick Mupedziswa<sup>74</sup> refers to the “ivory tower syndrome” characterized by a tendency to look down upon grassroots people as a hindrance to the effectiveness of NGOs. He argues that rural people are not viewed as rational. This attitude by technocrats tends to kill any motivation for participation at grassroots level. Although participation is included in country plans, participatory structures are inadequate on the ground hence creating tension between technocrats and civil society.

### **Infrastructure**

It has been argued that infrastructural problems are more serious in rural areas and need to be given more stress than the financial incentives. Rural areas need link roads connecting them to major highways and nearby small towns. Economic viability of several micro enterprises depends on the existence of road linkages. Rural areas are not well connected by road net works leading to problems of access.

### **Interests of Donors**

Alan Fowler argues that NGO organizational structures “seem to have emerged from their (founding) history rather than being appropriately designed for the purpose of micro-level development.”<sup>75</sup> Many conservation NGOs are engaged in activities

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p103.

<sup>74</sup> Rodrick Mupedziswa, in, Rudo Gaidzanwa, Ed. Policy Making Issues In Southern Africa. Southern Africa Printing and Publishing House, Harare, 2001, p63.

<sup>75</sup> Alan Fowler, Striking a Balance. Earthscan Publications, London, 1997, p13.

appealing to their Northern constituencies, such as saving the rhino, but rarely undertake activities considered less fashionable in the North such as reversing soil erosion or deforestation in communal areas. Such activities do not always correspond with the needs of people on the ground. Concentration of activities is therefore on accessible areas neglecting those the community considers as pressing. The failure to take on board the interests of communities has impacted negatively on the effectiveness of CBOs. Failure due to lack of beneficiary participation is reinforced by Deborah Eade's view that:

“Instead of exercising their right to participate in shaping their societies, people are best offered the opportunity to participate in top-down development projects that all too often act as a vehicle by which their existing rights and values are still further undermined.”<sup>76</sup>

The effectiveness of NGOs has also been negatively affected by the increasing demand by donors to show constituencies quantitative results. The Development Fund for Africa through which OECD channels assistance describes its approach as “results oriented” with funding targeted at sectors with measurable inputs. NGOs are pressed to engage in projects giving quick returns to the detriment of long-term development oriented projects with long gestation periods. NGOs then tailor project proposals to attract funding irrespective of whether or not they have capacity to implement them. Donor preference for some projects over others affects negatively the ability of local NGOs to determine and fulfill their own agenda. Funds for small projects are relatively easier to access leading to their scaling down to match funding patterns. NORAD donors hold back 10% of funds whilst awaiting the production of audited financial statements causing cash flow

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<sup>76</sup> Deborah Eade, Ed, Development and Rights. A Development in Practice Reader. Oxfam GB, Oxford, 2004, p9.



problems. Therkildsen and Semboja (1995) sum up the impact of donor interests as: “NGO competitive advantage has to do more with the push by Western countries to reduce the role of African states. It is this larger political concern that lies behind the ability of NGOs to raise foreign resources which constitutes their real comparative advantage.”<sup>77</sup>

### **Competition from Established Businesses**

CBOs involved in small income generating projects have always competed with established organizations on an equal basis. Some of the projects they are involved in are in oil extraction, soap making and bread baking. Most of these projects initiated in the 1980s have nearly all but collapsed due to the favor established firms find in the minds of rural communities. Rural communities are not protected from the unfair competition involving large firms. Lack of confidence among the rural entrepreneur and perceived inferiority of goods and services produced by them does not help the situation in any way. Deborah Eade argues in support of adversities of unfair competition by maintaining that: “If competition is the name of the game, there will always be losers than winners, and “mal-development” is the result.”<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Therkildsen and Semboja, in, Julie Hearn, “The NGO-isation of Kenyan Society: USAID and the Restructuring of Health Care,” Review of African Political Economy, No. 75. ROAPE Publications, 1998, p94.

<sup>78</sup> Deborah Eade, Ed, Development and Rights. A Development in Practice Reader. Oxfam GB, Oxford, 2004, p10.

### **Lack of Promotional and Extension Programs**

Rural development objectives are more easily met when agricultural and rural development extension are put in place. The approaches need to appreciate requirements of small and poor farmers. Generally, demonstrations in farmers' fields of new varieties and technologies are needed to assure widespread and rapid farmer adoption. In Zimbabwe research and extension has largely favored established commercial farmers. The emerging technologies do not suite application in small holder farms. For agricultural projects extensive reliance is on traditional methods which are not profitable.

### **Lack of Awareness and Skills in Rural Communities**

The pressure of poverty and lack of employment opportunities act as incentives for people to come forward to take advantage of available opportunities. But opportunities are rather limited and lack of education and training on the part of the rural people makes it difficult for them to make head way even if they can start some economic activity. Lack of information on inputs, markets and low cost technologies militate against success of rural programs. It is observed in a 2003 World Bank report that: "A willingness to spend more on public resources targeted to the rural poor, and decentralizing decision making to localities are first steps, but these are limited by a lack of political voice and influence in many rural areas."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p6.

CBOs are led by executive committee members popularly recognized as leaders. They are in the majority of cases semi-illiterate. These NGOs then suffer from a lack of leadership and strategy. Lack of adequate core funding and low levels of availed funds mean that NGO staffing will always be deficient. Poverty and weakness of their constituencies, poor infrastructures, services and market conditions of areas they operate in prescribe productivity, efficiency and effectiveness of their work.

### **Corruption**

On the issue of accountability, NGOs are viewed as focusing their attention on their legal obligations to the donors rather than their moral obligations to their client-groups. This is so because the poor do not have the ability to force 'accountability' on NGOs, nor do they have the legal or economic standing to do so since they do not, in the majority of cases, pay for the services they receive. There are thus a number of NGOs involved in misappropriation of funds, although this is difficult to trace. And some interviewees expressed the now common view that some NGOs only exist to go round the world looking for funding. Others have left incomplete projects behind but still go on to write glowing proposals for new areas to attract more funds.

Increased greed as most of the communities struggle to emulate the developed ones has led to increases in corruption among and affecting NGOs. Such lack of transparency can also be attributed to demands for increased presence of NGO intervention in economic activities, corruption in the public sector with officials demanding "cuts" before approving projects. The erosion in the moral fiber among NGO officials has led to the

adoption of a “business as usual” attitude. The media has not been active in exposing corrupt practices among officials.

In Kenya, it was revealed that the Non-Governmental Organizations Co-coordinating Board (NACC) received complaints that some CBOs involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS were unable to account for the funds they received from the National Aids Control Council (NACC). Of the 400 CBOs, 20% failed to account for their activities. This led to the suspicion that: “Some bogus NGOs may have pocketed up to one billion shillings paid to them by NACC.”<sup>80</sup> In response to this scandal, it was proposed that the mandate of NACC be expanded to monitor and evaluate the activities of all NGOs operating in the country. Prior to this proposal, NACC only had a mandate to scrutinize the validity of documents presented to it by NGOs to facilitate registration.

### **Attitudes of Rural Communities**

Rural communities appreciate being approached by NGOs rather than by government field extension workers. The latter normally summon farmers to meet them and more regularly deal with their traditional contacts, the leading farmers. The relative success of CBOs often hinges on adherence to the values associated with voluntarism and to the quality of the working relationships with clients. Rural communities can cooperate in community once they perceive certain benefits accruing to them. Further they need to be recognized as being custodians of their communal resources. To bolster the importance of this relationship Kate Wellard et al argue that: “Most important of all, perhaps, is the

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<sup>80</sup> Daily Nation. Nairobi, Monday August 15, 2005.

need to ensure that the growth of NGOs does not undermine accountability to their members, and to the communities with or for whom they are working.”<sup>81</sup> Negative attitudes of rural communities towards development initiatives have negatively impacted the effectiveness of CBOs. Further, community development has traditionally had a bias towards women’s groups. However, these initiatives are seen by the participants as an extension of their usual social club activities and not as economic alternatives. Hence participation is only in evident during the post harvesting and pre-planting periods.

### **Participation by Stakeholders.**

The effectiveness of CBOs has been severely hampered by lack of participation by relevant stakeholders. Formal efforts should be directed at involving communities in identified projects especially in planning. Experience should be built through pilot actions, accompanied by training in participation by project. The consent of village leaders is critical. To demonstrate the importance of participation Christopher Gibbs sited an example from Mali and maintained that: “Lack of parental participation during project design and implementation led to weak local ownership of community schools. As a result, classrooms (a community responsibility) have been built, but these are unlikely to be properly operated or maintained.”<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Copestake James and Wellard Kate, Ed, Non-Governmental Organizations and The State in Africa Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development. Routledge, New York, 1993, p3.

<sup>82</sup> Christopher Gibbs, et al, Non Governmental Organizations in World Bank Supported Projects: A Review. The World Bank, Washington, 1999, p27.

## Summary Findings of Determinants of Effectiveness of NGOs

The World Bank commissioned a survey to ascertain the determinants of the outcomes of NGO/CBO involvement in community development projects. The survey carried out by Christopher Gibbs, et al, (1999) involved sampling at least two NGOs from the four continents. For purposes of this study, the findings for Kenya and Mali have been selected based on their proximity to Zimbabwe. The results are as shown on the following table:<sup>83</sup>

**Table 4.2**

### Determinants of Outcomes of NGO/CBO Involvement in Community Development Projects.

<u>Project</u>	<u>Environment</u>	<u>Relationship Between Actors</u>	<u>Balance of Capacities</u>	<u>Activity Outcome</u>
<b><u>Kenya</u></b>				
1. Emergency Drought Recovery.	Supportive	Mixed	Strong	Satisfactory
2. Population.	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Unsatisfactory
3. National Extension.	Unsupportive	Weak	Weak	Unsatisfactory

### **Mali**

1. Natural

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<sup>83</sup> Gibbs Christopher, et al, Non-Governmental Organizations in World Bank-Supported Projects: A Review. The World Bank, Washington, USA, 1999, p12.

Resource Management.	Mixed	Weak	Mixed	Unsatisfactory
2. Health, Population, and Rural Water Supply.	Mixed	Weak	Weak	Unsatisfactory
3. Education Sector Consolidation.	Mixed	Weak	Mixed	Unsatisfactory
4. Agricultural Services.	Unsupportive	Weak	Mixed	Unsatisfactory

For assessment, the project team considered that to be satisfactory, NGO activity: “had to achieve (or without major restructuring be likely to achieve) most of its major goals with few shortcomings.”<sup>84</sup> The survey hypothesized that the determinants of NGO success are a supportive environment, constructive relationships among partners and strong and balanced capacities among partners. When two or more determinants of NGO performance are mixed or weak, the outcome is almost certain to be unsatisfactory. A supportive environment was deemed to be where NGO relationships with government were favorable in terms of encouragement to participate. In Zimbabwe the relationship between government and NGOs is strained over among many factors land redistribution, governance and perceived human rights abuses.

With regard to relationships, close working relationships are clearly critical to project success. NGOs are most often valued partners when they complement government rather

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<sup>84</sup> Gibbs Christopher, et al, Nongovernmental Organizations in World Bank-Supported Projects: A Review, The World Bank, Washington, 1999, p12.

than substitute it such as by filling gaps in the provision of essential services and sustaining community level investments. Capacity refers to the ability of partners in a shared enterprise to carry out their responsibilities to include skills and resources necessary to perform tasks reliably. For partnerships to work, all partners have to be capable. The capacity of NGOs is usually in the form of independence of thought and action, financial self-sufficiency, innovation, ability to reach the poor and cost-effectiveness of projects. Government's capacity includes financial resources and ability to mobilize both NGOs and CBOs. In Zimbabwe the study revealed that the combination of determinants for the success of CBOs was weak. This explains the failure to effectively develop communities in which they are involved.

### **Responses to Questions Distributed to NGOs**

Questions attached as Annex A were distributed to NGOs operating in various sectors in Zimbabwe. Responses were received from 18 NGOs. It was apparent that the majority of them relied almost entirely on foreign donor funding. Due to the current ~~standoff~~ standoff between the government of Zimbabwe and the West, most of their funding had been cut adversely affecting their effectiveness. They also cited a regulatory environment which they considered as inhibiting their effectiveness. As examples, the response by Wildlife and Environment Zimbabwe was that: "Donor shyness from Zimbabwe is affecting all NGOs adversely. But in our case, being membership based, we manage to plan projects with their input which satisfy their requirements." This response in addition to the financial implication of donor funding, also raises an important determinant of NGO success. This



is the participation of communities. ENDA Zimbabwe further supported this by maintaining that effectiveness can be improved if government gives support to local NGOs which in turn should “seek to empower target groups to participate fully in their own development processes.” The response from Africa 2000 Plus Foundation highlighted problems of corruption: “Once local leadership is corrupt, the tendency to threaten all members becomes high.” ZFU on the other hand cited a weakness in communities of, “Lack of realization and appreciation that the program is to their benefit.” Plan International stated that: “The major challenges faced are the unstable macro-economic environment so that resources meant for projects are no longer adequate to in most cases and you end delivering less than what was planned.”

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The role of NGOs in Zimbabwe's development has been the subject of debate over the years. The debate centers on whether NGOs have contributed positively to the economic development of communities in which they are deployed. One view is that their contribution was visible during the early years of independence. Thereafter they were negatively affected by withdrawal of financial support by both government and international donors. Increasingly they have become more involved in governance issues with democracy and liberalization being cited as pre-conditions to access aid. Issues of poor governance blamed on central government have seen aid to CBOs being withdrawn. This largely explains the failure by CBOs to contribute positively to economic development especially in the period after 1990. It is pertinent to note however that conditions for donor funding are those of the IMF and other Western institutions. NGOs have been put at the forefront of championing these conditionalities.

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With the liberalization of the economy and implementation of ESAP in Zimbabwe, rural communities were left without the much needed government support for their projects. The Zimbabwean economy is basically agricultural. This means that any meaningful development programs should focus first and foremost on agriculture. This view receives support from a 2003 World Bank Report, which concluded that rural development in Africa can be achieved through: "Emphasizing community participation, strengthening of voluntary producer organizations, primacy of the private sector in production and trade, a stronger role for markets, greater attention to the needs of women, enhanced activity of

local government in provision of public services, and transparency and accountability in the use of public funds.”<sup>85</sup>

Non-Governmental Organizations have been key partners in the development process in Zimbabwe especially after independence. Over the years their number has increased tremendously and this has been accompanied by the diversification of their functions. Their activities essentially parallel and complement those of the state. The impact of the role of NGOs has been felt especially in times of national crisis when they provide food relief in food-starved areas. In general though, their complementary role has increasingly been felt in service sectors when the state capacity to deliver has dwindled against a background of rising demand and shrinking resources.

The deteriorating relations between Zimbabwe and Western governments from the late 1990s have resulted in most international NGOs suspending their development programs. CBOs which rely extensively on funds channeled through INGOs have borne the greatest brunt.

Most NGOs adopt the community development approach in which project activities are area directed rather than directed to individuals. The general assumption underlying this approach is that those who actually need the service will always come forward upon knowing that a service is available. In order to ensure that indeed this is the case, INGOs establish operational relationships with community based organizations (CBOs) that are supposed to know the nature and character of the needs existing in a given area.

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<sup>85</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p100.

NGOs are involved in filling the gaps left by the government. They emerge in response to a perceived need. This involves justifying their existence by defining the niche that exists in terms of development and how their activities will compliment endeavors by other development agencies. The National Co-Coordinator of Zimbabwe's NANGO believes that for NGOs to contribute effectively to development, it is imperative to create space so that besides the government they can operate effectively. An environment of tolerance is a necessary prerequisite. Ideally NGOs have to be popularly supported by their constituency, that is, by the people whose interests they purport to represent.

Whether the presence of NGOs makes any impact or not on local level development depends on the financial resources at their disposal. However, their actual achievements may be difficult to quantify because of lack of reliable data and measurability of their roles. It is quite evident that practically all NGOs receive assistance from foreign donors in one form or another. The weak funding base, dependence on donors and absence of state resources to support NGOs are key factors which determine their weakness.

Concerns over sustainability of the funding base, the influence it brings with it and appropriateness to priority needs of communities are issues of concern. A broader question can be asked, whether NGOs can be accountable to the poor at all if they are funded by donors, as quoting a traditional African proverb: "If you have your hand in another man's pockets, you must move when he moves". In a 2003 World Bank report, it emerged that: "Approaches such as community driven development, pluralistic rural service provision and support to producer organizations emerged and have been piloted.

The major challenge for the future is to scale up the best practices among these pilot projects.”<sup>86</sup>

The determination by the government to exercise control over the operation of NGOs was influenced by the NGOs’ tendency to ignore the existing government framework for project identification and service provision. In particular, the government did not approve of the NGOs’ preference for dealing with the beneficiaries directly or through local NGOs. In fact, the direct choice by the NGOs of where to operate has at times led to their being accused of bias in favor of certain areas and/or projects. It has been suggested that this unilateral intervention by the donors in the choice of geographical area of operation has in a way contributed to the uneven distribution of services across localities, a problem the government has always been accused of as well. A case in point of the antagonism between NGOs and the state is illustrated in Kenya wherein the Minister of Health is unhappy with the practice by NGOs of dealing with non medical experts in the Office of the President, rather than those in the Ministry of Health.<sup>87</sup>

The effectiveness of NGO development initiatives is further adversely affected by the absence of support services in rural areas. For example, agricultural marketing institutions, particularly “parastatals have been inefficient, uncompetitive, and poorly linked to international markets.”<sup>88</sup> Given the limitations confronting NGOs, it is

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<sup>86</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p12.

<sup>87</sup> Gilbert Gicaru Githere, Have NGOs Usurped Role of Government. in Kenya Times. Nairobi, 16 February 2005.

<sup>88</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p42.

recommended that the following be adopted to enable them to contribute more effectively in community development:

1. NGOs should seek sustainable, regular and long-term sources of funds and the expansion of their income base. To achieve this, they can expand membership contributions, engage in business ventures and establish endowments funds. Business ventures embarked upon should be in line with the mandate of the NGO as additional benefits through demonstration or setting examples would be achieved.
2. Budgeting and financial planning should be refined by NGO managers to ensure that resources are fully accounted for. This involves rigorous training of locals by both the government and other aid agencies in critical skills such as project management and marketing.
3. Coordination among the NGO sector, rural communities and government promotes optimal utilization of resources. Duplication is avoided while larger projects can be embarked on. The importance of coordination was emphasized in 1987 by then Zimbabwe's Secretary for griculture, Dr L.Chitsike who stated that: "We believe that without co-ordination, progress in a modern society is impossible...unnecessary quarrels, duplication of resources takes place with the result that wastage occurs."<sup>89</sup>  
NGOs should register themselves and attend appropriate development committee

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<sup>89</sup> Copestake James and Wellard Kate, Non- Governmental Organizations and the State in Africa Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development. Routledge, New York, 1993, p27.

meetings. Appreciation of common interests requires effective communication.

The relationship between and amongst all Ministries and agencies engaged in all aspects of rural development should be formalized to ensure proper and effective linkages and direction. This is important as rural development cuts across the work of many ministries and departments.

4. The use of empirically documented information determines where and how NGOs can intervene. The Government of Zimbabwe should guide NGO participation in terms of areas of participation, limitations and general development of the country as a whole.

5. NGOs need to convince the government that they merit appropriate and consistent policies based on consultations and exchange of views. There is a need to generate funds for their operations as this enables them to work out programs under their own control. Even the World Bank acknowledges that: "In order to achieve broad-based economic growth and reduce vulnerability, people and enterprises in rural areas need access to a range of services for saving, borrowing, remittance transfers, transaction payments and insurance."<sup>90</sup>

6. As NGO projects are small in scope and context and include non economic objectives, the traditional methods of evaluation such as cost-benefit analysis may not

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<sup>90</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development. The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p33.

apply. Rather, participatory evaluation methods involving NGOs, communities and government need to be employed. Necessary support should be given to projects during their infancy even though they may not be breaking even at that stage.

7. All the NGO programs pursued for community development need an exclusive incentive framework to offset the disadvantages of location in rural areas, infrastructural bottlenecks and other extra costs in spatial movements of factors of production. A suggested framework of incentives should include reservation of items for production in identified small scale sectors, tax concessions and excise rebates, tax holiday in backward and rural areas, adequate and timely credit packages, managerial assistance, supply of inputs, special schemes for poor technically qualified entrepreneurs, rural artisan marketing schemes and encouragement of cooperatives.

8. Certain projects should be specifically identified and supported as preserves for community based NGOs. Some small rural industries are eco-friendly and non-polluting. For example, collection and propagation of medicinal plants can be directly linked to community development for the production of necessary resources. Forest based industries need special attention as they serve simultaneously in preserving



forest resources. Honey processing, cultivation of medicinal plants and wood trees that are used for making a variety of demand based industries should be the focus of development initiatives.

9. Zimbabwe has a variety of minerals in the rural areas most of which are being exploited illegally. These are highly export oriented and international investors would be too willing to collaborate with CBOs. To streamline using these resources for the community's benefit, mineral policies need to be integrated with rural development policy.

10. The government and NGOs should encourage agro-based industries focusing on among others fresh fruits and vegetables. It is desirable that a policy support is given for localized processing covering areas like horticulture, floriculture, agriculture, aquaculture and dairy industry. Infrastructure facilities like cold storage, post harvest technologies and training need to be encouraged.

11. The entire development process needs to be more focused. A general list of such thrust areas includes handicrafts, food processing, fruit processing, fish and mineral

based activities with specific incentives offered for their growth.

12. There should be some action to integrate and support reputable non-governmental agencies, in the government's rural development programs. International NGO's are to be engaged to assist entrepreneurship development in rural communities. In the same way, the UN and its affiliates have to establish strong linkages between organizations working in the field of development.

13. Decentralization of the regulation of NGO activities should be encouraged.

Transferring of responsibility also requires a transfer of resources and power.

Enhancing accountability to the local constituency should be encouraged through checks and balances.

14. Supporting participatory approaches involve processes through which stakeholders influence and share control over priority setting, policy-making, resource allocation and access to public goods and services.

15. Agriculture should be the principal source of overall economic growth and serve as the cornerstone of poverty reduction. This is against the background that in developing countries, the sector is the largest, and has important growth linkages to the rest of the

economy. This development thrust is supported by the finding that: “Agriculture is the largest employer, providing 68% of the labour force and 25% of GDP.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development, The World Bank, Washington, 2003, p40.









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