THE ROLE OF NGOS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT
The case of Uganda.

By

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To my Supervisor and LUMES staff
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<tr>
<td>AWO</td>
<td>Arbeiterwolfahrt Bundesverband</td>
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<td>URDF</td>
<td>Uganda Rural Development Foundation</td>
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<td>ACFODE</td>
<td>Action For Development</td>
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<td>DENIVA</td>
<td>Development Network of Voluntary Associations</td>
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<td>NRM</td>
<td>National Resistance Movement</td>
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<td>LC</td>
<td>Local Council</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisations</td>
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<td>LO</td>
<td>Local Organisations</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>SAPs</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
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<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<td>DANIDA</td>
<td>Danish International Development Agency</td>
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<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Agency</td>
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<td>TWCs</td>
<td>Third World Countries</td>
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Abstract
The role of NGOs in rural development has become a debate of interest not only for the donors but also, in many cases, to the governments who receive such help and the grassroots recipients. Past development approaches have failed to mitigate, let alone eliminate, underdevelopment, poverty and repression Dicklitch 1998 who goes on to claim that it is these failures that have laid the foundation for the euphoric embrace of civil society and NGOs as the panacea for underdevelopment and authoritarianism.

The scramble for solutions to Africa's development problems as Aubrey (1997) points out has led to many scholars to rethink and reshape the development research agenda. Besides focusing on discerning reasons for Africa's non-development predicament, more attention is being placed on trying to rid Africa on it's immense human suffering, pervasive poverty and increasing dependency on western financial institutions specifically the International monetary fund IMF and the World Bank. From one perspective this requires minimising development failures and increasing it's success. For a long time in the history of NGOs there has been two rather 'active' actors thus the donors and the recipient governments with the 'passive' recipients to whom much of the development aid is meant to go.

The trilateral partnership of foreign donors, African governments and African NGOs presents an attempt by development practitioners to minimise the failures earlier mentioned. For the purpose of scale, the key concepts of this paper are participation empowerment and sustainability, discussion is going to be limited to arguments that have been put forward for and against the NGOs in development putting in mind that majority of the African population is rural. Since the plight of chronic underdevelopment is normally accompanied by terms like dictatorship, mismanagement, corruption among others it is compelling to mention in the discussion issues of good governance and economic liberalisation.

Referring to examples from studies carried out in Uganda and other third World countries where such organisations have been involved in development, the paper concludes with a view that, with the present nature of governance in many third world countries and Africa in particular, the role of NGOs in development and environmental conservation is destined to have very short lived impacts. This is mainly because; the state apparatus in itself is a 'drain' to the poor economies which are mainly dependent on the majority rural agricultural populations. National legislature in many cases inclines NGOs to follow government development policies that have already proved inadequate.

For the largest part of their existence NGOs have treated symptoms other than causes of underdevelopment, the affected parties have been rendered spectators for a long time. Some literature even argues that some donor countries have other ambitions other than development for example Aubrey 1997, this should not however make us forget that there are many genuine voluntary donors who would like to see tangible changes in the lives of those who suffer. There is (as always has been), a

\[1\] The terms rural development and development are used interchangeably since development per say has no formed definition the one used by Chambers will serve the purpose because it is rural areas in many third world countries that are not or are less developed than urban places.
need to not only bypass the state but also to “disintegrate” the long lived labyrinth of colonial designed exploitation that is used by many rulers in such countries to keep rural people at the margins of survival. Those who are interested in real changes should start looking at recipients as capable of determining their destiny and not as though they are totally helpless. The question of development and environment lies in the hands of individuals to a large extent they should therefore be allowed to take part in decision making procedures that affect their lives.

Donors should also be more transparent about their agendas this will not only reduce the tension between the state and egos but also improve on the trust grassroots people can put in the ‘kind saviours’. On the side of the internal and external operations of NGOs, there is a need to improve on the amount and quality of information to and from the grassroots or private donors about what their donations are being used and what has been obtained. Consolidation of NGO activities can help in minimising failure risks by sharing experiences between NGOs.

Chapter 1

1.1. Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the supposed victory of the liberal economic and political agenda; accelerating economic globalisation and the potential of breakdown of the nation state as the fundamental unit of sovereignty for an increasing number of critical issues marked a change in development trends. Today transitional capital flows of unprecedented magnitude, unevenly spread across the globe are increasingly dwarfing the role of aid; and escalating conflict in the absence of new, appropriate global mediation institutions or mechanisms in a post Cold-War world. These are just some of the more evident aspects of this new scenario which some have called the New World Order, if one may use a more appropriate term the New World Disorder. Whatever vocabulary one uses, it is now beyond doubt that these and other dramatic developments of the past decade have brought with them a significantly changed context for the future relationship between industrialised and developing countries.

1.2. The problem

In terms of Third World countries characterised by large-scale poverty and poor conditions of living, development can be defined as a way of improving living standards of people. Development and promotion of development is not only a complex but also a highly controversial matter. Holmén and Jirström (1994). Who further state that in a highly varied World with a plethora of insufficiently understood local preconditions and general influences, it is extremely difficult to find general recipes for poverty alleviation and development promotion. Today, while everybody seems to advocate NGOs as the ultimate development instruments, there is also a great deal of disagreement and confusion about what Local and Non-governmental Organisations are and what they can achieve.

There are however few places where the challenge for development and environment has been greater than that in Africa. After decolonisation of many parts

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2 For example business, investment and capital flows, the environment, human rights and social development
of the world, the state became the care taker and ultimate power for development. Many countries in Africa followed the foot steps of their former masters which of course was and still is one of the evils that traumatise the majority of people in the rural areas. Past preoccupation with static state led development approaches have often resulted in nations characterised by swollen, decrepit and corrupt bureaucracies, high levels of debt and political repression. The current fixation on NGOs as vehicles of empowerment, democratisation and development falls within the parameters of neo-liberalism which is thought to be the way to counteract forces that have made majority of the world’s population live in unfavourable poverty and under development that would probably be avoided.

Development strategies like the Structural Adjustment Programs SAPs, put in place by the World’s largest financial institutions has to a certain extent proven dysfunctional. As a consequence, the emerging context for NGOs in the 1980s, 1990s and well into the 21st century has brought with it a sense of hope to the endemic problems of the continent. In the last few years however, focus on these organisations has continued to change rapidly for a multiplicity of interacting reasons: First the fast changing global, regional, national and local external environment which provides the overarching context for all NGO activity. The evolving and changing relationships between Southern and Northern NGOs, due to reasons both in the external environment and ongoing internal changes in their dynamic interaction may reveal yet another dimension to successful means of implementation of sustainable development strategies. There are also emerging new challenges in the relationships between NGOs and the broader social movement for change dealing not just with development but broader social justice issues of which NGOs are only a small but highly visible part within this field. However is the Role of NGOs overrated? How effective are NGOs in empowering people in order to attain a foundation for sustained participation in development?

1.3. Objectives and structure

With the wake of changing aid policies and strategies for development by donor countries and institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations NGOs are seen as one of the contending agents for development in many Third World countries. This paper seeks to discuss the role that NGOs have played in this arena in Africa and Uganda in particular. The questions behind this paper are Can the NGO sector be taken as an alternative to the State in terms of delivering development promises? How effective are NGOs at strengthening grassroots and local organisations? How do donor pressures influence NGOs and their links to the state?

The paper is divided into seven Chapters where Chapter one introduces the trend in aid and development between developed and developing countries. Chapter two discusses different views that are given by different authors on what NGOs are and what they do. In the course the paper, the North and South classification of NGOs engaged in developing activities and their affiliate counterparts in Third World countries has been used in reference to the donor-recipient scenario. Chapter three presents the contribution of NGOs to development and environmental conservation. This is followed by a chapter viewing the relationship between NGOs and the state mainly based on African studies. Chapter five is a narrower view of studies made on

3 Neo-liberalism is a form of political orientation originating in the 1960s which blends liberal political views with emphasis on economic development.
Ugandan NGOs both local and foreign. In this category, NGO/ state relation and the strength of indigenous sector is emphasised. Mention and reference has been made about the IMF and World Bank whose structural adjustment programmes have had a big influence in the social, political and economic development of countries where NGO involvement in these areas is significant. Chapter six analyses NGOs in Uganda where the political environment, like in many Third World Countries has rendered a seemingly positive but questionable attitude in issues of empowerment, participation and sustainability.

Chapter 2

2.1. What are NGOs

Any non-party/political group, advisory agency, aid charity or professional body which may list among its aims the protection of the biosphere and its inhabitants. Gareth Jones et al 1990. There are many definitions of NGOs which will normally depend on what one wants to refer to. To tell what NGOs are and what they not is an almost impossible task since they are so varied in all their aspects. Holmén and Jirström 1994 write that "the term NGO does not refer to a certain and well known type of organisation and as if NGO can be almost anything" they refer to Farrington and Bebbington 19934 that "everything for a neighbourhood organisation concerned with better lighting to organisations operating globally, such as OXFAM, are equally labelled NGOs". As the term continues to seem like an uncontrolled trade mark, some people put in more effort to try and define these "organisations" Since it is important in studying their characteristics and behaviour.

In view of the African NGOs as a whole, it has to be noted that in a way all non governmental institutions can be considered NGOs since before organised state structures were put in place, self help efforts and groups were a cultural fact as may be in different societies where the society net work is the strength of individuals. Mulyungi 1990. Such grassroots groups continue to play a key role in rural development, these groups however should not be confused with the recent upsurge of the NGO boom. Thus NGO is a blurred concept. It does not refer to size, purpose or type of activity. It is used indiscriminately about western aid agencies (Northern NGOs) and groupings in aid receiving countries (Southern NGOs). What does the term really cover?

Clark 1991 defines NGOs by characterising them into six categories:
- Those involved in relief and welfare
- Technical innovation organisations
  - Public service contractors
  - Peoples development agencies
- Grassroots development organisations and advocacy groups

On this list can be added the Environmental NGOs that are pretty recent in the policy forum but are said to have a big significance in development. Most of the NGOs will somehow belong to one of those categories however they can have more than one of the listed activities or in the process can switch from one category to another as need dictates. All attempts to define these organisations tell us little about the roles,

4 Quoted as a second reference. Holmen and Jirström 1996
functions and objectives of any NGO. Carroll 1992 and Fowler 1990, suggest that one should distinguish between groups according to their origin, scale of operation, ownership, approach and operation dimension an ideology if when followed properly will help in the definition of NGOs one however should consider how complex this would be since then there would be as many definitions as there are NGOs.

2.2. The North-South classification

Probably the largest and most significant form of classification in this paper, is to group NGOs into categories of their origin. According to Riddell (1995) Northern NGOs are those that belong to an entity whereby governments and other voluntary donors (In the North) channel their donations to countries through NGOs in the South. Southern NGOs are those that are created and operated by nationals of the developing country and they normally work for the country’s own development, most of the African NGOs are community based and are run by local members. Theoretically, southern NGOs may also operate in other countries. Aubrey 1997.

Many northern NGOs are or, at least have been more relief than development oriented and their funding is mainly supported by charity. The current decline of Official Development Aid (ODA), has resulted in the transfer of financial and other resources through the NGO sector. Holmén and Jirström 1996 who refer to them as ‘quasi-NGOs’ since the aid so delivered has strings attached where governments in the donor countries still retain some control over how the aid is used. On the other hand Southern NGOs are semi-dependent due to the fact that much of their funding comes from the North. Because the state has been bypassed in the process, governments in the South establish their own ‘gongos’-government organised NGOs which are sometimes aimed at soaking up foreign financial flows and to boost the image of the National political elite through control of indigenous NGOs. Holmén and Jirström.

In categorising NGOs further, Musengimana 1990 writes, “in the developed countries, the term is used to differentiate between governmental and non-governmental development aid. It is attributed to organisations, which critical of the delays, bureaucracy and relative inefficiency of government institutions have decided to contribute in their own way to international solidarity in the favour of Third World” hence majority of their funds come from voluntary contributions. He goes on to say that NGOs in the south were born above all to tackle specific problems of daily life and to bring a process of development dynamics to the grassroots. Though his attempts are narrow, he gives some of the many characteristics of these organisations i.e. origin and purpose. However he warns that the term NGO risks jeopardising and complicating the development of activities at the grassroots level by suggesting that organisations so named automatically challenge the authority of the government. This has been seen in many African and probably other countries with a relatively young tradition of democracy eg Rwanda, Burundi, Burma, Eritrea and Uganda.

For reasons of clarity, we use some characteristic that can be used to give NGOs a shaped entity. First, Non-governmental organisations do not belong to the apparatus of the state. In many third world countries however the state may be indirectly involved especially where a small contribution is being made. They may seek to exert influence on the formation of public policy and they may be financially supported by the state, but they are legally and organisationally independent from the apparatus of the state. Second, Non-governmental organisations are to be distinguished from
commercial and profit-oriented organisations operating in the market place. Special features of Non-governmental, non-profit organisations are their idealistic mandate and commitment to a cause. This might be an important criterion as far as northern NGOs and relief organisations are concerned but it can hardly be an appropriate definition for southern NGOs if it was we could be prevented from learning anything from, say independent rural co-operatives which do exist as Jirström and Holmén point out. There are a lot of entities that are used for shaping the NGO structure but in this case characteristics mentioned above will be in reference.

Chapter 3

3.1. Contribution of NGOs to development

NGOs are said to contribute to development in various ways. A part from the most obvious relief roles played in emergency situations, NGOs have had a big part to play in poverty eradication, agriculture and health service provision. This aspect of providing essential basic services increases the contact NGOs have with society and hence the possibility of increasing awareness about the general political and economic environment. With view of the need to improve governance in countries, which are not ‘democratic’, which most donor agents put as a demand in return for financial support. Areas where NGO involvement has been strong include among others;

3.2. Rural development

Is a process through which people living in rural areas are exposed to alternatives that can improve their standards of living. Such alternatives may include economic activities through which people can make money and they may include the right to get involved in making decisions that directly or indirectly affect their lives. Rural development according to Chambers 1995 is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of development. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the land-less. Badshah Akahtar (1996) notes that, development in rural areas requires the following;

- **institutional development**: helping rural people set the priorities in their own communities, through effective and democratic bodies, by providing the local capacity and access to funds for them to plan and implement local economic development;
- **investment in basic infrastructure and social services**: the provision of physical infrastructure (eg housing, water and power supplies, transport) and social services (eg basic health care and schools);
- **improving income and employment opportunities** and by broadening access to natural resources (eg arable and grazing land, irrigation water, woodland and forests);
- **restoration of basic economic rights** to marginalised rural areas by establishing periodic markets as the organising spatial and temporal framework for development;
- **resource conservation**: investing efforts in the sustainable use of natural resources; and
- *justice, equity and security:* dealing with the injustices of the past and ensuring the safety and security of the rural population, especially that of women.

The initiative in many developing countries starts with "outsiders" who in this case refers to International Organisations funded by Northern governments who have preferred to channel development aid through NGOs in order to bypass the State whose competence in the rural development process was in question or simply put inefficient. Chambers (1995). The work done by NGOs in rural development varies greatly between regions and countries. In most cases they have concentrated in areas of agriculture, forestry, soil and water conservation, health and many other fields. One should note however that the so called outsiders are nothing new on the African continent, they have always been there what may be new is the inconsistency in programmes that they tend to implement for the people.

There is another side of the initiative taken by local people, organised to join efforts to achieve either a shared purpose satisfying shared or individual needs. We use the term Local Organisation as defined by Holmén and Jirström as Organisations indigenous, non-governmental and non-profit oriented which represent an attempt to mobilise locally, provide skills, labour and assets for some productive and or income generating purpose. Since the main aim of both NGOs and LOs is to directly or indirectly transfer power and control to the poor, the terms will be used the discussion as those organs outside the State with the same goal of rural development in which case LOs under the State are excluded.

### 3.3. NGOs and civil society

Within the dominant discourse of liberalism, the literature on NGOs and civil society⁵ has stressed democratic transitions and political and economic liberalisation go together suggesting that economic and political liberalisation will help to lead to democratisation; economic freedoms plus gradual relaxation of civil restraints leading to mature democracy. Bratton 1990. This he argues will eventually give a favourable environment for development in Third World Countries (TWCs). The discourse of pluralism and neo-liberalism suggests that the existence of a plurality of autonomous associations (NGOs) is crucial to the development of civil society and democratisation. The pluralist theory insists that there is needs for autonomous organisations to constitute independent centres of power to check abuses of central or local authority and thus procure greater accountability from the regime.

The State is thought to mediate between sectoral interest, consequently compromising between the demands of various associations and classes. Dicklitch 1998. NGOs play an important role in this mode, in that NGOs are viewed as being capable of pruralising the institutional environment and thus of providing alternative

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⁵ Civil society is described as the realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self generating, self supporting autonomous from the state, and bound by legal order or a set of shared rules. It is distinct from society in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demand on the state and hold state officials accountable. Diamond, 1994
structures to the monopolies of the state. Bratton 1990. Who goes on to argue that 'By building independent organisations at the community, regional, and national level, NGOs in Africa have already begun to populate and pluralise the institutional landscape. As such they have an impact not only on economic development and social welfare but also strengthening civil society'. Since state-society relations in Africa are now at cross-roads, the pluralist theory suggests that the retreat of the state will 'create enlarged political spaces within which associational life can occur. Bratton 1989. Under these conditions, groups within civil society will enjoy greater opportunities to attract a following, develop a bureaucratic form and formulate policy alternatives, he argues.

While the arguments presented for pluralism are strong it does not mean that this will lead to mature democracy or multiparty politics. In the African perspective, there exists no social structures that make party politics viable. As Uganda's president Museveni also stresses, there are no broad economic classes with workers on one hand and owners of capital on the other, he further notes that there are peasants farmers, bureaucrats, and those who live on the production of others. In this case there are no political or economic interests to tie people together across ethnic lines hence party and NGO formation will be ethnically based. In the end instead of having a pluralised civil society one may end up with an even more divided society. This approach is only going to be effective when the concept is rooted in the societies that are in question.

Another important aspect on NGOs is their capacity to increase awareness in parts of the society that do not directly take part in policy formulation. NGOs have been and still are being used as channels for development aid. They complement the development process of others and they can help make the development process more accountable, transparent and participatory. They have been more effective in publisizing management failures and corruption, human right abuses and in some cases contributed to policy formulation. Matembe 1996. They not only "fill in the gaps" but they also act as a response to failures in the private and public sectors (Salamon and Anheiner 1991 and 1992, Bratton 1990.

3.3.1. Empowerement

Empowerment is a process where people are given more chances to take control of their lives by getting involved in deciding upon issues that affect their daily lives. Literally empowerment means commissioning or authorising. Holmén and Jirström (1994) refer to empowerment as 'creation of an environment in which people question and challenge the structural reasons for their poverty through learning and action'. While development has been ‘delivered’ to many Third World countries, many scholars have realised the importance of the victims of underdevelopment being involved in a more functional manner.

The greatest potential of NGOs in their capacity to generate self-help initiative however is said to lie in empowerment. Dicklitch 1998. It is in this vein that NGOs are

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6 Museveni quoted in Vision 1995, Pg 10
viewed as vehicles for development and democracy, and more specifically as vehicles for democratic development. Indigenous NGOs have the potential of giving voice to popular demands which may subsequently empower like minded members to articulate a collective interest and take a collective action. NGOs have the potential to be significant vehicles of empowerment because of their ability to reach grassroots. Bratton 1990.

Certain indicators can be used to measure the degree to which individuals or communities are politically or economically empowered. Economic empowerment can be gauged by visible improvements in the standard of living directly related to the activities of the NGO as well as attempts to educate and therefore empower individuals to help themselves economically and politically to achieve greater self-sufficiency. On the political level, this can be gauged by determining whether the NGO has helped people to have greater access to policy makers and policy formulation.

It is generally believed that NGOs have demonstrated the capacity to design and implement developmental programmes using innovative approaches without the governmental hassles and bureaucratic red tape, which actually reach the people at the grassroots Aubrey 1997. This rather optimistic view has been supported by citing examples from India, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Mali. Garilao 1987. Supports this view of NGOs by asserting that they are emerging as advocates of self-reliance who will, by themselves, bring about significant policy and institutional change.

On the other hand, there are some who are more or less pessimistic about NGOs; de Graaf 1987 argues that NGOs are oversold since their presumed effectiveness in development is not as positive as it is thought to be his argument is based on the issue that ‘NGOs are not systems on their own’ but are integrated into a wider and more complex political and administrative environment in which they have limited influence and even less control.

There are those who have argued that now-days NGO/aid is used for politics other than development. Hellen Allison uses an example to illustrate this point and argues that ‘British aid is moving away from helping the poorest people and is increasingly being used to sell British exports and to further the governments foreign and economic policies. Kabiru Kinyanjui further speaks of the involvement of foreign donors in the African development process. He argues that foreign aid is increasingly being used to 1) control international trade in the favour of industrialised countries, 2) depress agricultural commodity prices and 3) prescribe what he calls ‘the bitter medicine’ conditionalities of the World Bank and IMF in essence he argues that foreign aid is being used as a policy tool. Well as one can not deny or accept such allegations, one has to accept that for whatever they are meant, the adjustment programmes put in place by the financial institutions have failed to eliminate poverty and bring about development at least in the short term. Holmén (1997) states that ‘at the time when development aid declines, so do foreign direct investments and transnational corporations tend to leave Africa for more profitable endeavours elsewhere. In this respect, he argues SAPs have not apparently resulted in increased

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7 In this paper we refer to democracy as simply defined by Thersaus dictionary as ‘the political orientation of those who favour government by the people or by their elected representatives’

8 Quoted as second reference from Aubrey 1997 pg.26
integration of Africa with the World economy. Rather the continent has become more or less left to its self. This has been argued, is probably a necessary precondition in order development to take off there. One can note two things here, first that the Banks' programmes were more profit oriented than for the good will of African development. And when this is not achieved of course the corporations have to leave and look for profits where they exist. Secondly, it is as well too late for the continent to be left alone. This would have been done many years ago on the contrary those complaining about Africa's failures never leave one wonders. The continent should be left to move by its self direction does not matter. The risk in this game however is that the poor are being manipulated in order to perpetuate the unjust global socio-economic relations, as the Aid business prospers, poverty might be perpetuated on a far greater scale than the most generous programmes can relieve.

3.3.2. Participation

NGOs have become important contributors in the development arena as a whole in the third world. Much of this trend has been made possible because of their scale Bebbington and Farrington 1992 noted that in that year alone they contributed 12% of the total development assistance worth 6 billion US dollars. Many NGOs have demonstrated an ability to reach poor people, work in inaccessible areas and achieve tasks which are difficult for official agencies. Tendler 1982, this again can be contributed to; their readiness to access financial resources, they are normally well organised and most of the time have specific well defined goals. In contrast to state organs say ministries which have nodes of power concentration in major cities, NGOs are credited for being well positioned in areas where their services are to be delivered. However, there are also those which are urban based who have an urban bias and have all their administration centres far from the people they serve. Chambers 1995.

The term participation can refer to mere physical presence in developmental activities in the form of paid or voluntary labour. It may also mean membership in committees and attendance at meetings. In this view, participation ensures that it includes women and representatives of minority groups. Fisher (1989) claimed that decision making is the essence of participation. While decision making is a crucial element in participation, in practice it is common to place heavy confinement on decision-making powers. Participation is based on values of democracy and equity. However, in the case of resource management, involvement of rural people in decision-making is not just a case of imposing democracy; people abide to management decisions if it reflect their interest. Participation becomes a pragmatic strategy Fox and Fisher, (1990). Participation takes different meanings based on the government, NGOs and local people points of view. For most governments participation is “we decide, you participate”. The local people are supposed to participate in the implementation of plans made by the government. Since most plans do not reflect the needs and priorities of the people, they are hesitant to participate.

It has been advocated that to promote participation, outsiders should participate in villagers' activities instead that villagers participate in the programs of the outsiders. Though to the contrary in many cases this has proven to be the case! Fisher (1989) also argues that people will begin to participate in the development process when they believe that; (1) outsiders are urging them to participate in a spirit of respect, commitment and support, (2) local people have equal rights to take part in the decisions about the resources and that a consensus on its use can be reached; and (3) they have the rights to the resources and will therefore receive any and all
benefits that accrue. This is not always the case since decisions are normally
prescribed before many of the organisations begin to operate. In this case one may
note that normally written and approved by remote means do not confer with the
reality since in many incidences they tend to eliminate small practical details.

Wignaraja (1984) pointed out the role of the community organiser. In participatory
development process, an initiator is one who identifies with the interest of the poor
and who has faith in people. It is achieved through a process of awareness creation,
wherein people are mobilised to self-reliant action and in the building up of collective
strength. Rahman (1981) advanced that local people need outside help for analysis
and understanding of their situation and experience not for telling them what to do.
This view raises questions as to whether local people can not understand or analyse
their situation. It is my opinion that they do, as they always have which can explain
why they have mastered living in tuff conditions. In his book Putting the Last First,
Chambers argues that outsiders arrive with their preconceived ideas of “they do it the
wrong way and We have to help them understand Their situation”. This, he say limits
the outsiders’ possibility of learning from the local people. But if they know and
understand their bad situation why don’t they do anything about it……one wonders!

Sukwong, Natpracha and Stehens (1990) defined participation in development as a
process of involvement wherein people take hold of their lives in analysing existing
situation and making decisions in research, planning, implementing and managing,
monitoring and evaluating, and equitable sharing of benefits. Participation for the
achievement of group goals occurs at three levels. In the lowest level peoples’
contribution is merely a passive giving. A more meaningful participation is when
people are organised around a common concern. Optimum participation indicates
empowerment of people in the control of situation that affects their lives.

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Social/Gender Handbook
presented a more detailed description of people participation. It consists of four
stages. The first stage is when people act as passive recipients of assistance,
material or services without control over their continuation. Next is doing action
prescribed by others. A more advance stage is when people are consulted on
problems and needs although not necessarily on the context, analysis and options
for solutions. There is no real community responsibility or ownership. At the highest
stage of participation, people organise themselves to address their needs, plan
solutions to problems and take responsibility for development action. In
circumstances where the consultation step is missing, participation can not be
sustained.

NGOs show some skill in participatory approaches especially in poor rural
communities which might otherwise be difficult from a governmental point of view. (Bratton 1988 and 1990). One would shortly say that NGOs have done some
significant work in organising rural populations by uniting them under services that
they offer. Their involvement has led to a clearly recognised need for pluralism and
prominent citizen’s voices in National development planning. NGOs contribute to this
in many ways including, at the local level, the promotion of grassroots mobilisation for
social change (Clark 1991) participatory development (Bhatnagar and Williams 1992)
Which has led to increasing realisation of the need to “roll back State”, in countries
where it has become over-extended thus giving greater prominence to the private
and voluntary sector where people do the work themselves. Long experience of work
with communities living in environmentally sensitive areas also provides NGOs with
comparative advantage in dealing with such issues for example population, energy and pollution problems.

While there are many descriptions and definition for participation and it's relevancy in development, there is a great deal of confusion as for what the term stands for. Holmén and Jirström (1994), ‘the term can be used by planners to justify through reference to frequently perfunctory consultation where decisions are already taken’. Genuine rural people’s participation flourishes only when legal and policy conditions allow them to. While many LDCs voice strong support for democratic principles of government and for public participation in decision making, their policies and laws tend not to reflect that position. In some countries laws still limit the right of rural people to organise themselves and to pursue their self help interests. In other cases they may be allowed to do so under the guidance of government officials or committees. This can partially explain why rural people do not have the capacity of improving on their situation.

In recent years the attributions discussed above have become increasingly important and have improved the attention of many aid agencies and governments to assisting women, the food insecure indigenous people and other vulnerable groups, which NGOs are in better position to reach. (Bebbington and Farrington 1992a and 1992b). This recent surge of interest in NGO activity in Africa and other Third World countries however calls for more examination of what role they actually play as opposed to what role they are expected to play in political and economic liberalisation leading to democratisation and hence fair development.

3.4. NGOs and the Environment

In the process of human civilisation, both development and underdevelopment have had each it's share on the current human inflicted changes on the environment. However people on both sides blame each other for the wrongs done and hence buying themselves more time to make excuses for taking action or responsibility sometime in future. Hempel (1996) noted that many industrial nations are eager to seize on Third World population growth and deforestation as the critical issues of the day while developing Nations have continued to point out the destructive lifestyle of the rich and powerful Nations. These vocalised arguments have in many occasions overshadowed the issue that something has to be done and now.

The Earth Summit of Rio 1992, like the Stockholm Conference of 1972 attempted to provide a mobilising vision and motivational ethic that would persuade billions of individuals to take more responsibility of their environmental misdeeds. This required that people would welcome added regulations of behaviour and forms of development that were deemed incompatible with the goals of environmental protection. Hempel (1996). This combination of vision and environmental ethics so far has failed to overcome the entrenched interests of powerful political and economic institutions. It is in this sense that there is a need to focus more on the State-civil society relation as one of the areas that should be reformed if environmental concerns are to be incorporated in the development issues.

At the time when many are politically preoccupied with the modern state, the number of people who doubt the ability of the state to sufficiently address environmental problems increases. Wapner 1996 notes that there are many scholars and common people who feel that the state is so ill equipped to regulate the multifarious practices that contribute to environmental harm. He goes on to state that as a result, these
thinkers and like minded people envision alternative arrangements and conceptualise what a transformed state would like if such institutions were fashioned in the service of environmental protection.

Over the past two decades many National governments have increased their commitment to environmental protection and have devised policies and undertaken specific action to translate that commitment into practice. Wapner (1996). An indication of this is the growth of Ministries of environments all over the world. The State has shown ability to address international and global environmental problems as indicated by the growing number of conventions and treaties that have been signed by the majority of countries. Such efforts were boosted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro 1992 when governments signed conventions focusing on biological diversity and climate change. Countries also drafted a number of documents acknowledging and committing themselves to address issues related to environment and development. The principle of sustainable development defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987:8) so far represents the most applicable means of compromise between the forces of economic growth and those of environmental protection. The term which stands many tests of weaknesses as Environmentalists and Economists stress the word the favours their position, has so far dominated the aid sector in many developing countries.

Critics of the State however go on to argue that the State is unable to confront environmental issues in a unified way. On the domestic level, it has been pointed out that much National legislation where effective enforcement has been elusive. Hempel for example writes that most of the nearly 180 International environmental agreements that have been adopted thus far are enforced only to the extent that parties perceive co-operation to be in their own interest in which case compliance without enforcement has been a tendency. The International level had it's critics point out that though many agreements have been signed violation is abound. Wapner 1996 and Hempel 1996 coin these failures partially to the non-binding and unenforceable nature of these agreements. Where efficacy and high environmental standards are reported, Wapner warns that since there are no external institutions for monitoring and verification of domestic implementation, there are high chances of producing biased results.

Current environmental problems are said to require more non-state oriented politics. In recent years, scholars have begun to think theoretically about this type of activity and have provided a degree of clarity to it. In particular the social movement theory which emphasises post structuralism, feminism and critical though have broadened the understanding of power. Today as Wapner notes all these events have heightened our sensitivity to how politics takes place in homes, offices and market places as well as inside the walls of congresses and parliaments. Until then Chambers says that politics has been a way of keeping eyes away form the ugly facts. The initial changes were made by transitional environmental groups that today engage in World civic politics for example Green Peace, Friends of the Earth, World Wildlife Fund and the United Nations Environmental Programme.

Poverty and the Environment
The relation between poverty and environment is said to be the worst only second to population growth which some take to be a disaster. Hempel argues that it leads to all three major types of environmental destruction. Through contamination of water supply due to lack of sewage treatment facilities, it promotes over-exploitation of natural resources and it encourages eco-simplification through the destructive effects that poor people (in search of land, water and fuel) have on habitats. In Africa this has been blamed on poor land legislature that prevents poor people from owning land. The customary law that does not recognise women as land owners and communal land use. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 1992). Today many NGOs have incorporated environmental aspects in their programmes however results are not yet promising.

Agroforestry

There are many ways of solving rural poverty problems. A part from direct economic emancipation rural people can be helped by improving their agricultural production. In many parts of Africa NGOs involved in the area of environmental conservation have employed agroforestry approaches. Agroforestry is a land-use practice where trees are interplanted together with crops on the same piece of land. The most argued reason for the need of agroforestry in sub-Saharan Africa is that this system can solve many problems at the same time.

Chapter 4

4.1. NGOS AND THE STATE

Recent discussion about the role of NGOs in development grew out of many donors frustrations at the apparent failure of their existing delivery methods to benefit the poorest of the poor. Cleary 1997. In many cases, bilateral donors attributed this failure to venal and corrupt governments more interested in accumulating the wealth of their client groups than improving the lot of the poor. In such instances NGOs mainly of foreign origin have tried to neutralise situations that would otherwise have been impossible for the less vocal and marginalised groups. The relationship between the state and NGOs varies greatly. In many third world countries, governments have created an environment that ranges from co-operation to conflict with NGOs. Aubrey 1997. This is mainly contributed to the fears of reigning governments losing control over the population, and, the ultimate competition that rises as governments stand lesser chances of access to the resources that NGOs have to offer. Holmén and Jirström also present this view that ‘frequently NGOs have been presented not only as opposed to the state but also as alternatives’. They go on to note from Holloway that in the eyes of the government, externally supported NGOs are deemed suspect until proven otherwise. They further refer to Tandon 1991 who argues that the recent western emphasis on NGOs might represent a form of neo-colonialism. Given the issue that many western NGOs have a high level mistrust to the southern governments, they tend to have their working structures finalised in many cases without consultation to the recipient government. Lack of information on the impact of NGOs in rural development and other fields is another factor that contributes to a relatively poor dialogue between NGOs and the State.

The growing debate around questions of governance, public accountability and democratisation have increased focus and attention on NGOs which have in many cases claimed efficacy. The unclear objectives especially with NGOs that advocate for good governance normally arouses suspicion which in turn leads to the stringent
control mechanisms displayed by southern governments. This fear can to a certain extent be justified looking at the position of southern governments who not only are impended by economic constraints but also in many cases do not represent the poor majority, such governments are definitely both externally and internally insecure. One may further look at the same part of the so called hidden agendas of northern NGOs as a way through which those with financial resources can keep control over countries with poorly managed economies and hence uncontrolled access to markets they can create down there. On the other hand since northern NGOs are renown for their desire to ensure that democracy is embraced by the recipient governments, if properly understood, democracy might be one way through which the disadvantaged and underdeveloped parts of the societies in the south can improve their situation Aubrey further notes that African heads of governments in particular are able to make the operational environment for NGOs more confrontational since they have de facto unchecked and unlimited power to facilitate or quell development efforts.

The trio relationship between the three parties is yet another issue that has made NGOs an interesting sector to study. In discussing this relationship reference is made to three different parties thus a southern government, an NGO and the donor who in most cases is physically invisible but practically active in influencing the course of action. The three entities form what is referred to as the Interorganisational relations theory. Much of the work done on this theory however has been blamed of being biased towards the examination of the relationship between NGOs and the state specifically those in the south. Aubrey 1997 argues that during the 1990s western academics have concentrated on grassroots empowerment, civil society and democratisation of the developing world in which case the donors’ side has had little analysis.

4.2. The Donors’ intentions

Much of the literature about the relationship between donors and recipients stresses some of the outcomes that donor’s demand in return for aid given to TWCs (Third World Countries). Studies by John Farrington and Davis Lewis Antony Bebbington show that the most prominent in the development arena includes ‘good governance’ the promotion of which has become an explicit objective of most aid donors. But experience is showing that the good government agenda is less threatening than it first appeared, and provides opportunities for improving the quality of aid. Good governance principles if applied consistently, openly and intelligently - can bring benefits for both recipients and donors. Definitions of what good governance means vary. For most donors, Riddell 1995 outlines the main ingredients as including:

- democracy (particularly multi-party democracy);
- respect for human rights and the rule of law;
- efficiency, accountability and transparency in government and public administration.

For some donors, good government also embraces:

- popular participation;

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9 This can be illustrated by the booming arms industry which has got an incredible market in southern countries unfortunately as we may all know it is the poorer segment of society that pay the price.
equity and poverty concerns;
a commitment to market-oriented economic policies.

Donor’s prerequisites vary greatly, well as some will stress the environment and women issues, others may as well stress fast economic profits and human rights in terms having a strong defence system. Disagreement among donors on the content of the good governance agenda means they have pursued distinct, sometimes contradictory policies, and have failed to give clear signals to recipients about what they are trying to achieve, usually portraying a confused the picture, and diluting the impact of good governance initiatives. This has raised suspicions in developing countries, particularly when the threat of withholding aid has been used to force multi-party elections. In such situations, Governments in the South have questioned the legitimacy, accountability and constituency of Northern NGOs because most appear to be unable or unwilling to develop good governance principles in their own home countries. This does not come as a surprise since there are many contradictions to good governance done by countries who advocate for it in other parts of the world. At present, the good governance agenda is double sided. Apart from donors defining it in different ways, there are glaring inconsistencies in the way it is applied. Some of the most obvious are:

The fact that donors continue to provide substantial aid and trading privileges to some powerful and influential countries such as China and Indonesia, despite clear evidence of human rights abuses.
The fact that some of the donor nations most active in promoting good government have themselves been among the largest suppliers of military equipment to the Third World. Recent reductions in sales to some parts of the Third World are not due to any change in policy. They are because Western suppliers are being priced out by tight budgets and competition from other lower cost suppliers, like China. Matembe (1996)

These examples show the conflicts between good intentions, and political realities. These may be inevitable from an economic point of view, they do not strengthen Third World confidence that good governance policies are being applied consistently or fairly. This makes the whole aid issue look so controversial and not meant to benefit those poor, weak, starving rural people instead meant for those who directly benefit from behaving well that is doing what donor countries expect them to. And what if recipient governments change their policies and satisfy good government criteria? Will there be more aid? Not necessarily. The German government has recently increased aid to countries that have complied with good government criteria, and cut funding for others. But most donors have stopped short of making hard and fast commitments. Dicklitc 1998. To make matters worse for the underdeveloped parts of the world, the situation does not improve even when it is Southern NGOs involved. Similarly as Aubrey notes, almost as a mirror image of the Northern NGO situation, the legitimacy and accountability of many Southern NGOs is being increasingly questioned by people’s community-based and other organisations in the broader social movement for change in the South as the capacity and confidence of the latter grows.

4.3. Expectations from recipients

People in many rural areas expect NGOs to be agents of development who can help in distributing financial resources fairly between various sectors of the community.
However, Chambers (1995), Riddell (1995), Holmén and Jirström (1994) argue that whether Northern or Southern, NGOs have failed to identify and hence improve the conditions of the poorest among the poor, this is evidenced in countries like Sudan and Ethiopia who have had long NGO involvement but still have millions of starving people. Many times NGOs do not have sectoral biases but they may be impeded by other shortcomings for example academic inclinations which are not always practical.

NGOs are also expected to fill in the gaps where State organs have failed. Though governments in developing countries expect aid in return for good governance, they are also afraid of what might happen if they do not follow the demands from donor nations. The question for state credibility comes up in many communities as NGOs continue to perform better than governments. These organisations can act as advocates for respect of human rights since they have platforms for airing concerns of the poor segment of societies. Apart from educating people about various aspects of life, NGOs can act as representatives in the policy making procedures.

Studies of this decade which include a series of NGOs and the state in Africa, Asia, and Latin America by Kate Wellard, James Copestake, John Farrington and Davis Lewis Antony Bebbington and Graham Thiele have had different views on unravelling the relationship between NGOs and the State where facts about the real donors are inadequate. Many Southern NGOs, for example, are perceived as accountable only to their Northern funders, contributing not to development alternatives but only to their own institutional survival, lifestyles and alternative rhetoric. This perception is only likely to grow with the use of both Southern and Northern NGOs as global social welfare providers and "ladies" in the "global soup kitchen" of the New World Order. This perception will also become more pronounced and widespread with increased direct ODA and multilateral development assistance (eg World Bank, UN) funding of Southern NGOs. Matembe (1996)

Chapter 5

5.1. NGOs in Uganda

Uganda is one of the African countries who have had a long history of war, torture and other fighting records. These periods have not only claimed lives of those dying in war but also those who remain to become victims of surviving by living in absolute poverty, diseases and daily fear. A population characterised by that kind of suffering is obviously a vulnerable prey to those who happen to seize power by whatever means. As a result much of the country's budget has been going to defence and the rest to the officials who can do the 'work' meanwhile the state organs became proper incubators of corruption and other forms of mismanagement. Apart from the colonial period which Riddell 1995 refers to as Uganda's golden era, it is the last 12 years that common people have had to live without the sound of gun shots, it is therefore this period that has witnessed some form of development. Coincidentally this was the time when other African countries were getting on with the NGO programmes, in Uganda therefore they came at the right time when they were most needed. According to the World Bank report 1996, 70% of Uganda's budget comes from foreign aid. Uganda like in many third world countries (TWGs) who have weak economies and other bureaucratic handicaps, NGOs have played complementary roles to the state what can be referred to as 'gap filling'. In many rural areas, they
have taken up the role of some government institutions like education not only in schools but also for people especially adults in various areas of life for example family planning etc. Out of the 43 hospitals in the country, 30 are run by NGOs and the church in the health sector the government has no small scale units in remote areas (Uganda Health Report 1995). This makes it interesting to see whether the agents of aid and development NGOs can have an even bigger role to play in the country’s development through involving citizens.

5.2. The Church

The early colonial period witnessed the establishment of some of the NGOs that are still active in the country. The church assumed much of the responsibility for health and education services, well before the state moved into these areas. Church based NGOs continue to form an important section of the non-governmental movement in the country. The government’s attitude to these NGOs was always been ambivalent: on one hand because missions relieved it of some of it’s responsibilities through the services they offered especially in rural and inaccessible areas. On the other hand, the diffusion of some of these services fostered the emergence of nationalist movements, which in turn, spawned non-governmental voluntary associations with a clear political agenda-the urban associations, trade unions and co-operatives which spearheaded political opposition to colonialism Riddell 1995

In the 1960s the relative prosperity of newly independent Uganda favoured a rapid development of NGOs: church based organisations found their work increasingly aided not only by the funds available to their parent congregations in Europe and the USA. But also by a new breed of NGOs which developed funding relations with them. Thus the early activities of Oxfam and other NGOs for instance, were almost exclusively linked with various churches whose expatriate priests and administrators seemed to provide non-governmental funders with a measure of accountability and social familiarity. Simultaneously, however, increased public revenues allowed the state to extend it’s role in the provision of services. Even if, during it’s golden era, the government had little choice but to leave the expansion of these services to NGOs, including churches especially in the more remote rural areas, here to note is that the assumption that NGO involvement would be transitional, pending state take over once resources allowed never materialised.

In the 1970s under the prolonged dictatorship regime, there was a gradual isolation of Uganda from the international NGO movement at the time when the spectacular world-wide growth of the 1980s was being laid. As the economic crisis was accompanied by gross abuse of human rights, most NGOs withdrew support or simply kept away. Meanwhile, and contrary to development in a number of neighbouring countries for example Kenya and Tanzania, the regime in Uganda could not allow indigenous NGOs to evolve. Largely by default therefore the church continued to play a prominent role in non-governmental movement in Uganda because it was then the only considered means to reach the general population. The advent of the NRM government in 1986, and the return of a degree of political stability in most of the country, constitutes the current phase of NGO activity thus rendering this movement pretty recent when compared to other African countries. Besides the more obvious division into local and expatriate or north-south setting and putting aside their sectoral interests Riddell grouped NGOs in Uganda as follows;
Localised indigenous organisations include the large number of self help voluntary associations known to exist and small usually unregistered small groups working in one or two villages doing a wide range of communal activities.

Larger local agencies normally have their own staff; they often work at regional or even national levels and sometimes receive funds from external sources. A number of these have the capacity to work in emergency situations for example the Uganda Red Cross.

Non-operational expatriate agencies have usually established funding relations with local NGOs but generally do not maintain representation in the country.

Operational expatriate agencies maintain an office with their own staff in the country. Though they may fund local structures as well, they generally implement their own programmes which may be of a short term rehabilitative, or disaster relief nature, as well as long term development work. These have the largest budgets within the NGO sector of the country.

No complete record of NGOs in Uganda is available, but it is estimated that there are more than 1000 registered NGOs operating in the country (Gariyo, 1996). NGOs disburse an estimated 25% of all Official Aid to Uganda. (NGO Task Force, 1991). The role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Rural development in Uganda has been so far termed positive when it comes to service delivery Matembe (1996) but a lot has to be done in terms of policy. Voluntary agency intervention has been dominated by relief work. In some parts of the country development work is still difficult, in others it had to be abandoned or halted as new emergencies have arisen. But with emergencies becoming an almost permanent feature in many parts of Africa, the selection of Uganda for a study of NGOs in rural development of particular interest shows some of the range of constraints under which NGOs struggling to promote development have to operate. The part, with the use of literature from different case studies, illustrates the difficulty of reaching target groups and enhancing local participation without government intervention but it also presents possibilities that can be utilised.

4.3. Reviewed case studies

In this chapter reviews literature on case studies carried in Uganda by different authors. Each study has characteristic points of view ranging from political to economic perspectives. The studies indicated an interest in substitution of government failure with both internal and external initiatives for development. On the other hand also the studies represent a big fraction of the general characteristic of the NGO sector in Uganda including dependency, management shortcomings, lack of co-ordination and participation, political control.

4.2.1. The Uganda Rehabilitation and Development Foundation (URDF)

URDF is an indigenous NGO that focuses primarily on rural Ugandans. It is predominantly a development, skills and training oriented indigenous NGO that fills up the gaps in social and economic spaces that the state has withdrawn from. It acts as a middleman to rural self help organisations in that it filters funding and loans to rural local groups from external donors.

10 Quoted as second reference from Dicklitch Susan 1998, pg 23
Origins and objectives

The origins of URDF are outside Uganda with foundations from two groups of Ugandan exiles in Germany called Uganda German Group for Relief and Rehabilitation (UGGRR) and Austria called Evidenz. Both groups were composed of supporters of NRM (National Resistance Movement). The initial objective was to collect medicine and send it to wartorn Uganda. With the end of the war both groups formed the URDF and joined the government to rebuild the country. However the organisation claims that it is not political though most of it's top officials are now government ministers as of 1997. Today it's objectives are broadly service provision oriented including a) support of social and welfare services, b) aiding in rehabilitation of infrastructure, c) encouraging formation of co-operatives. The organisation gets its funding from AWO (Arbeiterwolfahrt Bundesverband) the German Workers Union and IZZ (International Institute for Co-operation).

Decision making structure

URDF has an expatriate advisor from the German AWO who oversees the technical and financial support, the National Board of Directors is composed of ten executive members and decision making and policy is made of executives from district headquarters. The main headquarters branch is composed of staff with an executive secretary, accountant and other junior staff including drivers. There are two district branches of URDF one in Masaka and another in Luwero that have existed since 1987. Each district head quarter has it's staff on place which keep the day to day running of activities. The decision making structure is decentralised though with a partentialistic relation between the top officials and staff plus the groups it works with.

Activities and achievements

In Masaka the organisation is rehabilitating the major missionary hospital and set up a carpentry workshop where youth who have fallen out of school get trained in different skills and then given equipment after finishing their training so that they set up their own work in villages where they come from. As of 1997 they had trained 200 boys who are now independent. They have an income generating programme for girls in Masaka dealing with production of handicrafts that are then exported to other countries. Other activities include poultry, seasonal crop production, fish farming, bee keeping and brick making. Through the promotion of co-operatives, the organisation focuses on organising women in villages in a bid to create income generating jobs, improvement of nutrition and health. In total URDF has 16 youth groups and 14 women groups with a variety of activities. Out of the groups they have 12 well-established co-operatives that produce goods and sell them to members and other people from the villages. In Masaka URDF has been credited with having a successful participatory approach both in service delivery and local participation in the end result activities. (Masaka District Development Report 1997).

11 Kasule Remmy on Interview by Dicklitch 1993
The Luwero project includes a low cost housing project, a carpentry workshop, a health centre, income generating and skills training activities. The Luwero branch has not been functional for many years because this was the 'death' triangle for many years it is therefore sparsely populated and has a high infestation of tsetse flies. Worse still the branch officials were claimed to be incompetent and corrupt so much funding had been withdrawn except for the running of office activities and other planning issues. It was not until 1993 that field activities were resumed and not much success has been registered so far.

Potential for empowerment

Since URDF activities tend to be localised, the impact and potential for empowerment and economic development is likewise limited. The heavy dependence on external donations and subsequent top-down approach it takes resulted into greater dependence than self-help initiatives. Though some target groups have been more productive than others, they are much dependent on external funding in many cases the groups can not get out of the debt circle which undermines the confessed self-help component of the organisation. Practically there is little interaction between decision makers and beneficiaries. The target groups have little or no effective impact on what on what URDF decides to do with them and only answerable to the bosses for their activities thus URDF functions more like a grant loan making organisation that a developmental NGO.

URDF characteristics are representative of the gap filler NGOs in Uganda and illuminates some of the weaknesses in the NGO sector. Instead of empowering grassroots organisations this service provision oriented NGO tends to foster local dependency on external funding. In a country with high levels of rural poverty however, most grassroots organisations have no alternatives but to take up what has been provided by NGOs who seem to be more concerned than the state. It's activities will therefore favour the few fortunate who are able to get reasonable assistance from it and hence increasing the gap between the poor and rich in the society where it operates.

4.2.2. PEOPLES' ORGANISATION ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT (ACFODE)

Is an indigenous NGO which is concerned with women's advocacy and attempts to link rural and urban women via 'networking', and functions for both it's members and the wider community. Although it's initial composition reflected a Makerere University community focus (the really educated ones), over time it's membership broadened to represent a wider cross section of women in Uganda. ACFODE's donors include the Konrad Adenaur Foundation, SIDA- the Swedish International Development Agency, DANIDA- the Danish International Development Agency and the Ford Foundation. It has to be put in mind that though the organisation was founded by Ugandans it has more that 80% of it's funding from foreign donors.

Objectives

ACFODE was formed to address a gap that existed in the society. Although there were many women organisations that existed in the country, these organisations tended to exclude other women on the basis of marital status, religion, politics and
profession. ACFODE seeks to bridge the gap between rural and urban women, rich and poor, the elite and illiterate. Matembe 1990 summarises the objectives as 'To uplift the status of women in all spheres of public life; politically, socially, economically and spiritually and to integrate them into National Development.

In order to achieve its broad objectives, ACFODE devised specific objectives which can be grouped into two categories: Education and Advocacy. ACFODE advocates for women representation and participation at all levels of decision making; advocates for law reform for improvement and enforcement of women's rights. Its roles though meant for women, it educates the wider population through research and dissemination of information to policy makers and implementers.

Decision making structure

The secretariat is composed of staff paid by ACFODE to essentially run the organisation. The structure was changed in 1993 as a result a distinct drop in voluntarism and participation within the general membership and some committees. The current structure is summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE FOR ACFODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAIR PERSON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAFF COMMITTEE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The role of the advisory committee is to promote, ensure, cultivate and maintain the mission, ideology, principles and philosophy with which the organisation was formed.

The programme focus was narrowed to cover four areas including: information, documentation, research and legal education, training and health.

Programmes and achievements

For ACFODE, Education is one of the key means of uplifting women. The organisation adopts two prolonged strategies for empowering women. They have a broad-based approach where ACFODE focuses on lobbying the power brokers, raising the awareness of women's position in society and co-operating with other organisations to improve the potential role of women in society. The organisation like many others in the country has to break through many cultural barriers that inhibit Ugandan women's progress. Through networking the organisation has managed to share a lot of information with other women in many parts of the country and establish 17 regional offices where training can take place. Since the organisation
has a reputation of being 'noisy' in politics, it has managed to get more of its members in the local political groups and National decision making bodies especially in the ministries of Justice and Education. Matembe 1996

Of all the indigenous intermediate NGOs operating in ACFODE is probably the most successful in achieving it’s stated objectives. In the study carried out by Dicklitch, it is ranked as the most active NGO involved in rural population and government. Through it’s extensive awareness campaigns Dicklitch argues that it has the potential to provide a foundation for a democratic society and polity.

ACFODE and the current regime

The organisation utilises the LC (Local Council) system in order to mobilise people for it’s networking and meetings which has helped to link it’s work with the government, allowing for greater input in decision making at various LC levels. The founding members of the organisation however are (NRC National Resistance Council) members and LC officials at the local levels Which was one of the reasons for the popularity of ACFODE in the political arena.

4.2.3. DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF VOLUNTARY INDEGINOUS ASSOCIATIONS (DENIVA)

The development network of voluntary indigenous organisations was formed by Ugandan working in rural areas with NGOs. The major aim was to establishing an umbrella organisation under which NGOs could have a more co-ordinated network.

Table 1. Summarised representation of DENIVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Created</th>
<th>February, 1988</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Strengthening of an NGO sector capable of participating in and influencing socio-economic and political transformation for sustainable national development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
<td>General Assembly, Board of Directors, and Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Member Organizations</td>
<td>421 NGOs and CBOs (community based organisations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Coverage/Countries</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Affiliations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Sources</td>
<td>Membership fees, NOVIB, SNV Uganda, and the Ford Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectors</td>
<td>- Gender - Governance and advocacy - Information management and exchange - Poverty elimination - Resource mobilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Networking and advocacy; skills development and information sharing; and strengthening the working relationship with the government and other development agencies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MWENGO, ELCI, ICSW, WSSD - Social Watch

Future Plans
Continue with and enhance current activities

Achievements

DENIVA has managed to provide a common ground for NGOs in Uganda. Together with ACFODE the organisations put up a CODE for operation of local organisations which was discussed by parliament and was passed in 1993. Lukyamuzi and Matembe 1996. The organisation has a reliable research department that is able to disseminate much of it’s findings to local communities making it possible for NGOs to learn from each other across lines of ethnicity, religion and class. Through it’s empowerment scheme the organisation was able to discuss the land bill together with politicians from various parts of the country so that women who are heads of families could have access to land from their husbands’ families by law which was a big breakthrough for women.

VI AGROFORESTRY PROJECT (VIAP)

Vi. Agroforestry Project is an NGO that receives its funding from the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA) and from Charity organisations in Sweden. The organisation whose activities are regionally based in the three East African countries, has been functioning in Uganda since 1991 it covers two districts in the southern part of the country.

Objectives

The main objective originally was to help improve the living standards of resource poor farmers in particular rural women through agroforestry technology. Initially this was to be achieved by establishing tree nurseries in different parts of the operational area, and give them free of charge to the farmers. Secondly the project had a land rehabilitation programme for recovering some badly eroded hilly parts of the operational area and other soil conservation systems. Though the stated goals in documents provided by Vi. Year Reports from 1992-1996 indicate that the main interest was in improving lives of the poor people, Paul Ilg 1998\textsuperscript{12} notes that the biggest dream of the first project planners was to make a green belt around L. Victoria.

Working approach

Much of the original structure of the project has undergone changes as the project moves from offering products to offering knowledge. I looked at both the new and old structure to be able to compare the two. Since evaluation is in it’s infancy, it is too early to tell which approach will be more effective in “improving” the living standards of resource poor farmers.

\textsuperscript{12} Worked as expatriate with the project from 1992-1996. Personal Interview by Author
From 1992 - 1996 more than 30 large-scale nurseries were established at various locations. Each of these were meant to serve 500 farmers and the tree species to be produced were decided by the project management. It was project policy that nursery staffs are local residents assisted by project expatriates.

Each department has a Head officer who are all agriculture and forestry graduates and they are responsible for planning activities, recruiting and training staff and supervising daily field work. The field staff comprise of two different sections. The extension section was responsible for teaching farmers and school children through seminars and on-farm practice during the dry season. When the rains set in, the extension staff would stay at the stations and give advice to people coming for seedlings. The production section was in charge of raising seedlings, managing the demonstration plots and advising farmers in the neighbourhood. Another department for land rehabilitation was concerned with reclaiming land that had been eroded due to overgrazing in some parts of the working area.

Decentralisation of seedling production

Many NGOs have adopted methods which can ensure that the people in rural areas get knowledge instead of products. In 1997 the project management decided to phase out the large-scale nurseries and the production activities moved to home nurseries which were to be situated at the farmer’s home. The farmer who had chosen to have a home nursery would then get seeds from the extension agent and regular farm visits during the period of seedling production. The extension department then turned to a participatory approach where villagers were called in on occasions and try to draw up village plans and noting people who had to do more work on their farms.

Monitoring and evaluation

This is rather new system the project adopted after having demand from the donors that they should access results in the field. In 1996 monitoring of activities started to be carried out. The number of training sessions for examples, the quantity of material distributed and the number of farmers who adopted agroforestry and have home nurseries are monitored surveys are frequently helped for this purpose.

Since the monitoring system is generally in its infant evaluating the level of agroforestry activities in the area is not yet a success story. Documentation does not offer much that can be analysed. However through out its existence follow up of seedling survival has been done and results from the 1994 - 1995 Vi. Follow up report showed that over 60% of the 300,000 seedlings planted from central nurseries had survived and were performing well. An attempt to establish the extent to which tree growing is a product of project activities or a result of traditional practices carried out in the area revealed that farmers had been planting certain tree species with crops even before the project but also that tree management and other practices were common.

Implications

The studies indicated an interest in substitution of government failure with both internal and external initiatives for development. The above cases can not be used as representative of the NGO sector in Uganda but have represent the general characteristic of the NGO sector in Uganda including dependency, management
shortcomings, lack of co-ordination and participation, political control. There is a lack of participation by local people in decision making and hence no indication that these activities can be sustained either. The information that is provided by NGOs is not enough to tell the impact of their activities on the general civil society and no significant information is collected from the local people hence peoples opinions are not represented.

4.4. NGOs Relations with the Government in Uganda

Although African regimes welcome the flood of money and development aid introduced into African economies by international NGOs, they are hesitant to embrace overly political or advocacy oriented NGOs. They have embraced NGOs as partners in development but also seek to control NGOs through some form of legislation. Fowler (1991). This reflects World Bank and IMF policies towards NGOs; they are supposed to fit into the broader governmental development schemes which mirror gap filling and service provision roles. The NRM regime has been for the last 10 years the promising example of the SAPs required by the World Bank Dicklitch 1998 however we have to realise that most of the success is in books not much of it has been realised on the ground.

The central role of the state in the evolution of Uganda’s political economy, its traditional authoritarian nature and its specific desire to control development have had an important influence on the characteristics and development of the non-governmental movement. Riddell et al, 1995. During years of political instability in the country most NGOs left and did not return until 1979. Since then NGOs have benefited from almost complete freedom of action, so long as the perceived basic interests of the state are not threatened. Riddell et al 1995. The NRM’s LC pyramidal structure is argued by some developmental agencies to be an ideal tool for developmental work at the local level. LCs are said to articulate local interests and needs allocate resources equitably and be held accountable by constituents. However studies and findings, Dicklitch 1998, argues that NGOs in Uganda are fundamentally constrained by the political environment in which they operate. The NRM system has characteristics that encourage peoples participation in political decision making procedures but at the same time has some of the strongest anchors to power which one would relate to autocracy. The voting procedures can be broad based but decision making is still in the top-down fashion.

4.4.1. Political control

Though the NRM regime recognises its need for the NGOs to provide basic services and poverty alleviation in the country, it, at the same time resent it’s dependency on these organisations. It is willing to tolerate them, however, as long as they do not step out of political bounds. The regime therefore attempts to balance its need for aid and it’s need for controlling the political and economic climate. (Riddell 1995 and Dicklitch 1998) In Uganda the climate between the government and NGOs has been fairly unconfrontational and apolitical filling a complementary role.

The NGO registration board which regulates and controls NGOs in Uganda has the main object of providing for registration, considering applications, monitoring and guiding the programmes and actions of NGOs in the country. (Memorandum NGO registration Bill 1989). This board has the power to reject applications and deny renewal or approval of operations and used it’s power to the legal registration of
some NGOs which it deems too controversial. For example the board perceived
DENIVA (Development Network of Voluntary Associations), a co-ordinating NGO
body as a potential rival body to the board itself consequently DENIVA was
considerably delayed in obtaining formal registration. For the most part Dicklitch
notes that the board’s powers have been de jure rather than de facto because they
have not reflected the reality of implementation; the government simply does not
have the resources to adequately monitor and control NGOs. Regulation and control
tends to be haphazard and not effective. Riddell 1995.

4.4.2. Co-option

The registration Board also stipulates that NGOs must make a report to the District
Administrator DA seven day before contacting people. In all the message is quite
clear that NGOs should not be agents of democracy; the LC system at least at the
very local level is supposed to be 'according to the NRM way' and as long as this is
the case, NGOs will be sidelined as facilitators of foreign and state agendas, not
peoples agendas. Through this board the government can oversee any type of
political interference. In Uganda unlike countries like Eritrea, government intervention
has to a large extent been indirect to foreign NGOs however many indigenous NGOs
with policies that contradict those of the government have in some occasions been
terminated in fear that they become political parties. Dicklitch 1998.

The recent thrust towards liberalisation and privatisation of the economy has helped
to bolster the role of NGOs in national development, with donors benefiting from
large-scale support from bilateral and multilateral agencies. This has however not
improved conditions for foreign investors. As Riddell notes there has been far less
NGO impact on public policy than growth in number might suggest. For its part the
government has provided little guidance, assistance or encouragement to NGOs and
declared freedom of operation to them. However this freedom of action has now
been questioned by the NRM government for two major reasons, the rapid growth of
NGOs has led the authorities to demand a measure of control ( from an
administrative and security perspective rather than a developmental one). Secondly
the new administrative and political initiatives are intended to reach down to the local
level where NGOs are predominantly working. One result was the 1989 NGO
registration act, created a registration to register NGOs and monitor their work. This,
Riddell argues was an attempt to control their access to the local population. Today
NGO movement does not present a challenge to the political authorities and the main
local NGOs remain urban-based western-type agencies. Government attempts to
control are also severely hampered by limited administrative capacity.

Chapter 6

Assessing NGOs in Uganda

Any assessment of NGOs in Uganda has to be based on fragmented data and
anecdotal evidence Riddell et al 1995. One of the results of civil strife and economic
chaos is the absence of reliable information on most aspects of social and economic
life. The world of NGOs is no exceptional and this impairs an attempt to evaluate
their general contribution to rural development. Generalisations are complicated by
the diversity of NGO activity and by problems of definition. In many regions of
Uganda forms of voluntary and reciprocal exchanges within different localities, collective and co-operative Labour practices continue to flourish and adapt to change. It is only in a handful of instances that NGOs have themselves tried to evaluate the impact of their activities. On the other hand however the presence of the NGO sector has indicated changes that were not visible at the times when the State was the sole actor in development. These changes are interesting to study since they represent people’s involvement in some issues as opposed to State monopoly.

The numerous local organisations in the country have little or no documentation about their activities. This can be attributed to the tradition of verbal communication where information is in a lineal flow from one generation to another which may be ignored in the academic world and hence deemed insignificant or unacceptable. High ethnic, religious and cultural diversity is also a factor that brings about stratification and divisions that weaken the common platform for the local NGO sector. It is in this category that there is a high potential for long term impact that very little is yet known.

The intermediary NGOs and umbrella organisations that help in the co-ordination of the numerous small scale member organisations are impended by the chronic dependency on external funding. According to the World Bank report (1992 a) and studies done by de Conick 1990 and Riddell, such NGOs stop functioning as soon as funding is withdrawn. They never mature why? There are of course many reasons ranging from mismanagement and corruption to the lack of voluntary participation in the activities. It is my opinion that somewhere in planning for such activity organisations may underestimate or completely ignore what people want and what type of activities people have been involved in that suites their locality and environment. This group also is known for it’s academic inclinations and pursue of selfish goals as opposed to community needs.

### 6.1. Achievements of the NGO sector in Uganda

One of the most prominent areas that NGOs have succeeded in Uganda has been remote places where government interest and access is limited. In such places NGOs have been and still are the providers of services like health and education. Though according to the studies carried out in the country 80% of foreign funded NGOs have their headquarters in the capital city, for purposes of security and easy access to the airport in case of emergency plus the relatively comfortable lifestyle, most of them delivered services to rural areas. Riddell 1995. Many NGOs in Uganda have earned themselves trust from the local population in remote places one would agree about with Matembe (1996) who summarised it by saying ‘people like them simply because they never promise but fulfil’.

Historically much of the service sector was dominated by missionaries or the church which is still the largest actor in the NGO/state relation improvement. Over 50% of hospitals and 72% of schools and other education institutions are run by the church. Those that were taken over by the state suffered extensive mismanagement and are in stagnant positions a situation that can be explained by the long tradition of employing relatives and friends even if they have no qualifications in handling or management of such facilities a sickness that NGOs have not yet contaminated. From the state requirement perspective, those that are not directly in confrontation with the NRM principles have managed to produce tangible results however the lack of significant evaluation information limits the possibility of a comprehensive study. It
is evident that these organisations have contributed to the war torn parts of the country and exposed the acts of bandits and the less caring government in this context we have the Uganda Red Cross and other UNHCR organisations.

They have been able to influence policy in specific cases for example large women organisations ACFODE, UWESO etc. who have sensitised women in politics have so much support in rural areas but now they are being used by government to sway votes from women and in such negotiations such groups have been able to push in their ideas through the representative they voted for however this is not always the case. Much of the available literature on NGOs in development in Uganda has pointed to a promise to the forgotten citizens and sincerely there is evidence on the ground that some improvement has been achieved. Riddell 1990 de Coninck 1986, Matembe 1990 and Dicklitch 1998 all agree with that. This on the other hand is not enough to lead one to conclude that NGOs are the magic answer to development problems.

Apart form the traditional beliefs about nature and it's behaviour, most of the work in the area of environment is dominated by NGOs normally of external origin. The main area of NGO involvement with the environment has concentrated mainly on conservation work. This includes places that were gazetted for wildlife, National parks, Game and forest reserves. After the UNCED 1992, there has been an increase in environmental awareness especially at the local level in connection with Agenda 21. Today as sustainability and environmental concern have become prerequisites for donor agents many NGOs have an environmental component in their activities. (Uganda Country Report on Agenda 21) Compared to the State which can not monitor implementation of the agreements it signed on behalf of the people, NGOs are said to be in position to follow up this kind of work since they operate normally on small scale. Other work has been in the area of water resource conservation and soil erosion control where NGOs are largely involved together with the concerned government departments.

Following the course of events in the development arena, in 1970s the state after independence seemed to be the answer to the underdevelopment problems. This however proved to be wrong and in fact the country was deepened in absolute poverty and its associated evils followed by civil unrest and wars. The market and NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s still looks not to be the answer. Though economic liberalisation may seem to be proceeding successfully according to the World Bank report 1996, this is not accompanied by development in rural areas. Just because there is a proliferation of NGOs and other civil actors this does not mean that civil society will be granted more power as opposed to the state. It is my opinion that the development issue in third world countries be looked at from yet another angle concentrating more on the people than to concentrate on how to get to them. Much research has been done on state and their behaviour towards NGOs and vice-versa, NGOs and civil society and state/ donor relations. Almost always the same old stale complaints like good governance, corruption and mismanagement, the powerless women and the poor etc. are repeated and no convincing results are shown.

There is no doubt that people in third world countries need help especially in freeing them from their dictatorship regimes. But the truth is that not much is known about the social structures of the victims which is very important if one is to help them fit in
the current economically globalised world\textsuperscript{13}. Though in today’s definition of development intends increase people’s living standards by developing the human resource it is easy to lose truck when one does not understand the basic determining factors. In the development process, it takes time before messages are passed on from one generation to another, it might look a slow and painful way of getting to ‘development’ but it might be the path that developing countries have to take.

Discussing the effects of economic adjustments of the 1980s, Atampuruge 1994 argues that the reduction in size of the state in Africa has left foreign NGOs assuming the responsibility for the provision of social services which led some to perceive them as countervailing institutions of the state where the state is weakened while the civil society is strengthened. For the Northern NGOs which are advocating for democracy this is the desired goal however this might not be as easy as it may seem to many Clearly 1997 reminds us that ‘authoritarian regimes seek control of the populations which are unsettled because of the changes introduced in their societies’ any form of diversion of the population from the state/ government wishes can be a point of suspicion and this can lead to termination of an NGOs activities in a country.

6.2. Limitations to the NGO sector

There are many determinants of NGO work. Under the structural component we look at two: the vision to be accomplished in this case rural development and environmental conservation. The resource base, where finances play a major role.

While the actual goals of NGOs are not always clearly articulated, they frequently focus on importance of change in policy, behaviour, values and seeking change not only institutional priorities but also social perspectives. In the first case, development education facilitates the dialogue between the NGOs and the community in so doing this helps both ends to meet their vision. NGOs as an entity in Uganda are hampered the problem of being unorganised, locally focused and issue oriented which limits the scale and efficiency in operation. In her study Dicklitch found that the indigenous intermediate NGOs which have the capacity to co-ordinate other NGO activities for example ACFODE and DENIVA are handicapped by internal deficiencies for example the lack of interest for voluntary participation.

Most NGOs in Uganda are service oriented and focus on provision of basic services their interests be it political or economic. Much as service delivery has registered positive results the ultimate question hangs on the possibility of NGOs to offer long term and sustainable solutions to the places where they operate.

\textsuperscript{13} People tend to forget that there are very few static things in nature if any, for illustration, literature about the migration routes of nomads in northern Uganda from 1998 for example will be outdated if those people have to go raiding cattle in July instead of waiting for the rains in October this then might imply that if you are setting up a training camp in their locality say from Russia you will already have gone wrong because all men who meet foreigner first are on mission and the women at home are protecting the homestead.
Since it is not possible to empower the powerless when the state retains all power concerning their destiny. Good governance policies that are one of the intentions of the northern NGOs can be seen as intended to be a threat to Third World governments who abuse human rights, or are corrupt and undemocratic. Using aid to counter these tendencies may threaten governments, but can help those who suffer under them donors argue. However, even those who favour democracy and respect for human rights are wary of donor intentions. While donors are promoting a particular type of government - multi-party democracy one wonders what right have they to interfere in the internal politics of countries by prescribing this form of government?. If we assume that they have this ‘right’, how effective is multiparty democracy going to be given the fact that it has proven a norm that those who lose the elections will go to the ‘bush’ and fight. It is like always that poor people are the victims of the backfiring democratic principles. One of the clear benefits of good government pressures is that they are helping to shift the debate in Uganda and may be within other Third World countries. People are hearing terms such as accountability, transparency, anti-corruption, and beginning to use them themselves to raise questions. Are government organs doing their job? Why is the press not able to investigate allegations of high level corruption? People feel more confident about raising these kind of questions when their governments are also under international pressure to take these issue seriously. If positive rather than punitive measures become the norm in future, then recipients may feel less threatened. But critics remain suspicious that donors are using good government arguments as a convenient excuse to cut aid budgets, keep control over countries’ economies in a bid to create markets for the excess of their goods and so on about this issue one can come up with ones theory since the whole picture has been rendered unclear for the common person.

Government as hindrance to NGOs work

In Uganda the most evident aspect in this relationship is the general lack of official support for the NGO sector. Dicklitch 1998. Where the government has supported some NGO activity, it has been blamed of being biased to areas where government officials come from or stay in other words where they feel they have an interest. Since the reduction of the Official Development Aid (ODA), government control over funding is also declining likewise.

As discussed earlier, there is no proper co-ordination by government on NGO activities. This can to a large extent be attributed to shortage of resources. It has also been claimed by Dicklitch and Riddell that there is a shortage of personnel for monitoring activities. This is applicable in a handful of instances but generally the country has enough people even in the public service. There is however a lack of collaboration between NGOs and the government departments. Matembe 1996 writes that the government does not offer any kind of guidance with project identification, design, appraisal or implementation even in cases where it might have significant information.

The legal framework that regulates NGO activity especially registration and reporting requirements can hinder NGO growth since issues and details that contradict government policies may not be reported anyway. On the other hand the government controls the way NGOs should behave when dealing with communities hence though they are said to have freedom it is not always possible to act freely. Dicklitch 1998.
Do donors practise what they preach?

Aid agencies have been justly criticised for failing to apply good government principles to their own operations. For example failing to consult properly with recipients; Many of the foreign funded NGOs have already set goals for instance agroforestry, nature, water, wildlife and soil conservation. In many cases they have with them 'expatriates' who have been working with such issues in different parts of the world this normally makes them underestimate the small differences within societies and localities that may be significant to the overall outcome of a project. Chambers (1995). The participatory approach earlier mentioned has helped in solving part of this problem but it also brings with it other issues like faded expectations from the people conducting such work in rural areas.

Being less than 'transparent' in their own dealings with recipients for example many people in rural areas questioned why Word Vision Uganda paid school dues for their children and could not believe that this was completely free of charge since the government was telling them that every one has a debt to pay to the World Bank. For people who do not know the difference between all these organisations (after all they are the same people at least they 'look' so) how then do they give us free education while we still have their debt? Matembe 1996. The situation can illustrate what happens when NGOs are not wholly transparent with their recipients right from the beginning.

Being hypocritical - advocating good government on one hand, while at the same time funding dubious aid projects, such as dam schemes that leave thousands displaced without proper compensation, funding an opposition sector to fight the government they are not in favour with. When this is done for example by the world's strongest democracy then people are right to say that this is the mother of all hypocrisy something one finds hard to oppose. The World Bank, which pioneered the notion of connecting aid with good government, very quickly found the tables being turned against it. The fact that it has recently opened its operations to greater public scrutiny is due in part to creative use of good government arguments by its critics.

Chapter 7
Analysis and Conclusion

7.1. Analysis

Development promotion is indeed a challenging aspect. Since the attempts for defining what development is are also a mystery, it explains why even parties involved in the area are also hard to define. Some of the big problems that makes the NGO movement unique and impossible to deal with in one unit is their diverse properties of activity, origin, interests, philosophy and hence how they can be evaluated. This is even made worse since most of the time donors do not belong to the same country either, they also have their set priorities and may be goals which of course is governed by what they consider problems of concern. On the side of what are called indigenous NGOs, much is known about their existence but not accomplishment and sustainability since many have been formed in a bid to tap financial resources from donors and political influence.
It is true that NGOs have an important role to play in development. One however should be more critical when addressing them as the solution to such problems like improper governance and economic failures. Though developed countries have advocated good governance as the prerequisite medicine, the question that remains is whether having good governance is enough to solve the under development problem? Putting in mind that some time the NGO saga has come to an end what happens then? In the short term of course changes in administration procedures, stopping corruption and increasing transparency and accountability will temporarily increase available resources for the public sectors. The gist here is that can the economies of these countries sustain themselves without aid? While I do not attempt to answer that question in this paper it is probable that the so called globalisation of the world economy will favour nations that have already achieve strong economic foundations and that nations below that status will even become worse off. Where should NGOs put their efforts? Fortunately many of them have policies of fish yourself other than providing cooked fish, delivering knowledge is without doubt is the option that can help rural in their survival battle. Providing services was not wasted efforts only if done the right way however I’m convinced that rural people have to “do development” themselves unlike unlike Biblical times, food no longer falls from the sky, this time there has to be a WFP plane after many have died or are somewhere near to that.

In most African countries NGOs have been hampered by many factors but most significant is state intervention which in turn limits people’s participation and hence poor sustainability of NGOs. Like other LDCs factors that prevent a good government - NGO relationship can be seen as

A highly political policy environment. As earlier discussed, the political arrangement in Uganda is a good example of how the government can monopolise and see itself as a sole legitimate voice of the people. Though intervention in NGO activities may not be direct, implementation and participation of the people is limited since some of the NGO activities can be labelled illegal and a threat to the countries development and safety.

The public sector’s capacity. The government’s commitment to improving services, eradicating discrimination and poverty is weak; there is a shortage of competent staff especially at local level; corruption and nepotism are rife. This has rendered the public sector a losing competitor in the development struggle.

Political jealousy. Governments may not want to foster a healthier NGO sector for fear of bolstering the political opposition. How NGOs survive and operate in an adverse policy environment is an important issue for study. In some countries they have been crushed, but elsewhere they have thrive on controversy. In Uganda NGOs have a very isolated nature from the state organs and each other resulting in poor co-ordination but this at the same time can be seen as a strategy to minimise government intervention by keeping a low profile.

Dependence on foreign donors. A government might be more suspicious of NGOs which are highly dependent on foreign funds and therefore might impugne their motives as “guided by a foreign hand”. Conversely, an NGO which derives a considerable proportion of its funding from its members has maximum authenticity. When the NGO sector is dominated by foreign or international NGOs s has been documented by Edwards (1991) and Hanlon (1990), there can be problems between the government and the NGOs. For example in Mozambique in 1990, foreign NGOs
were running programs in complete isolation from the state. Hanlon describes how these “new missionaries” have divided the country into “mini-kingdoms”. Edwards describes how his own NGO Save the Children Fund (U.K.) decided to work closely with the government, providing technical assistance at local and national levels in the fields of health and food security. This has had an important scaling-up effect; for example SCF has helped devise migratory measures to protect vulnerable groups from the decontrol of prices and economic liberalisation under adjustment programs.

Uganda’s dependency to foreign aid has resulted in external actors acquiring significant amount of political influence over the regime. Though they may notice that what ever they are supporting is not democratic and not good for the development of the country, donors seem to be more willing to accept backsliding on promised political reforms than they are on political reforms. We therefore end up in a situation of donor control than help.

Fostering an Enabling Environment. How can governments construct a policy environment conducive to the strengthening of the NGO sector? This will depend significantly on the initial relationship between the two sectors, as describe by Tandon (1991). The first form of relationship is where NGOs are in a dependent-client position vis-a-vis the government; in which NGOs implement state-prepared programs and/or receive funding through the State (a dependency of money, ideas and resources). Examples include, Tanzania, Uganda and Mozambique (especially during the 1980s). The second type of relationship is adversarial in which there are no common starting points and no wish from either side to search out areas of agreement. Examples include, Zaire, Kenya and Pinochet’s Chile. The third and most constructive relationship emerging in certain liberal democracies is a collaborationist one, a genuine partnership to tackle mutually agreed problems, coupled with energetic but constructive debate on areas of disagreement. Examples include, India and Brazil. Each example that has been offered runs the risk of being an over-generalisation. As with companies in the private sector, individual NGOs differ enormously from one another and hence there is a variety of State-NGO relationship. The illustrations here are of national patterns.

The State has various instruments it can use, for good or ill, to influence the health of the NGO sector Brown (1990). The level of response can be non-interventionist, active encouragement, partnership, co-option or control. And the policy instruments used can include among others; Encouraging public debate and consultation, and the right to organise interest groups which is part of the good governance principles and can be a tool in minimising state monopoly and encouraging local participation. These organisations should be allowed to get involved in policy-making serving on committees, assisting with public consultations as a sector with representatives from various member groups. Policy formulation through activating NGO involvement, provision of information to NGOs for dissemination to their constituencies; offering a role to NGOs in public consultations; invitation to NGO leaders to serve on official commissions etc. is argued to be influential in this aspect for example, Bhatnagar 1992 cites the Indian NGO, DISHA, which has been an influential member of the Central Government’s Commission on bonded labour. Public access to information is the key to success in this area.

Governments can also improve on NGO regulations and the legal framework (for example, regarding registration and reporting, auditing and accounting requirements) by making it more reasonable so as not to scare away organisations with good meaning intentions.
NGOs can be allowed incentives including taxation policies on income or local fundraising, duties on imports, subsidies for NGOs this reduces costs in other areas and instead allocate it for development activities. Taxation policies should be intended to provide incentives for activities which conform with State development priorities; to encourage indigenous philanthropy and income generation. This can be very helpful especially to the local organisations which need to be protected from the steep competition.

Public disclosure of information (NGOs serving as a conduit to inform the public about development schemes which effect them); Government can invest more in management training requirements within the NGO sector; and contribute to direct expenditure, including providing grants, contracts and research benefiting the NGO sector. Providing official support and to give special encouragement to NGO activities in priority areas without undermining NGO's autonomy and independence and consultation with NGO leaders will normally increase openness between the two parties. For example the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (the body which channels government funds to NGOs in India) and the forthcoming Community Action Program (a local government scheme for financing NGOs and community initiatives in Uganda) are illustrations (Bhatnagar 1992).

Project/Policy implementation. Improved communication, State-NGO collaboration with proven NGOs in a way which allows the NGOs to remain true to their agenda and accountable to members or their traditional constituency. This might typically indicate the following roles for NGOs within government programs (Salmen and Eaves 1989): articulation of beneficiaries' needs to project authorities, providing information about the scheme to communities, organising communities to take advantage of the scheme's benefits, delivering services to less accessible populations, serving as intermediaries to other NGOs.

Co-ordination - where the government fosters but does not dominate co-ordination. For example through having NGO Units in relevant line ministries or NGO consultative committees. NGOs would be encouraged to attend to geographic or sectoral gaps, to avoid religious or ethnic bias, to avoid activities which contradict state programs or which make unrealistic promises. The government encourages training of NGO staff, for example, by ensuring that its own training institutions offer course of relevance to NGOs. More attention should be put on improving management skills, strategic planning and sharing of experience within the sector.

The structures that exist for co-ordinating NGO activities should be improved. Governments should be in position to monitor the progress and help when it is called upon. This however requires getting rid of the corrupted state organs and making plans that are a result of consultation from the communities to be included in the development scheme. The Major Policy Issues early sections discussed how the development process is impeded when the State-NGO relationship is an unhealthy one and identified approaches which could contribute to improving the environment for NGOs. Here one should always remember that we are dealing with the same old and static version of the state. This in itself brings a challenge to the NGO sector since in many African countries and may be others, the NGO sector is not a power symbol compared to the State. Many a time NGOs will be used as platforms by the elite to pursue their political careers. However it is not easy to get rid of the state but anyway regulations should be designed to help not hinder, NGO growth, but also to
root out corruption and to foster sound management discipline; eliminate restrictive laws and procedures.

For individual NGOs the most favourable policy setting is when legal restrictions are minimised, when they have the complete freedom to receive funds from whom soever they choose, to speak out as they wish and to associate freely with whoever they select. In such a setting, the NGO sector is likely to grow most rapidly (in particular, the number of NGOs is likely to rise rapidly), but “bigger” does not necessarily mean “better”. Growth of the sector can be a mixed blessing. The structures that exist for co-ordinating NGO activities should be improved. Governments should be in position to monitor the progress and help when it is called upon. This however requires getting rid of the corrupted state organs and making plans that are a result of consultation from the communities to be included in the development scheme. The Major Policy Issues early sections discussed how the development process is impeded when the State-NGO relationship is an unhealthy one and identified approaches which could contribute to improving the environment for NGOs. Here one should always remember that we are dealing with the same old and static version of the state. However it is not easy to get rid of the state but anyway regulations should be designed to help not hinder, NGO growth, but also to root out corruption and to foster sound management discipline; eliminate restrictive laws and procedures.

On the other hand there is a need to set boundaries again by using the legal instruments. Loose regulations and reporting open the door for unhealthy and even corrupt NGO activities which may taint the sector as a whole. Where the expansion of the sector has been most rapid especially in South Asia and certain African countries there is a considerable concern about the rapid ascension of “bogus” NGOs which serve their own interest rather than those of vulnerable groups (McGee and Clark, 1993). An assessment is required as to which regulations are necessary to ensure that incentives provided are used for the intended purpose and which merely hamper the contribution of the NGO sector. Even if it were possible to curb bogus and corrupt NGO activities, a non-interventionist policy environment may not make for the healthiest NGO sector. The individual NGOs may be healthy, but collectively there may be insufficient coordination, duplication of effort, and important gaps left unaddressed. All these problems are illustrated in the World Bank report on the NGO sector in Uganda (World Bank 1992a and 1992b).

With regard to foreign donors, many of them maintain attitudes and actions that must change if development in Africa or other third world countries is ever to occur while they are present on the particular continent. The indirect forces that support those foreign donors who may have paternalistic motives must also change. International relations are structured so that for a donor to effectively change it’s behaviour and goals inter-organisational relations, the fundamental relations between nations must change as well. For relations between nations to change, World systems and World values must change. Basically the entire environment in which donors and organisations exist and function must change. The reason is that organisations are not mere products of themselves; they are products of a larger interconnected political and economic environment. Development therefore must be left to the people for them to guide and for them to be assisted by trained development professionals and not politicians.
Conclusion

The NGO movement as whole has a very short history compared to that of the State. It is therefore too early to tell whether these organisations can be taken as the alternatives to the State. Even those that are International have many limitations that prevent them from being able to act as global policy making institutions. There is however a need to address many of the World problems of environment and development in a more co-operative manner.

NGOs dealing with development issues should be given more access to the policy making forum in order to allow a link between the environment and development and hence sustainability. In this case powers entrusted in sovereign State should be respected but also reduced in areas where such powers have proven inadequate.

Lastly people should be allowed to participate more in issues that concern them and others since it all goes back to the individual.

References


Badshah Akhtar: 1996, Good governance for environmental sustainability. Published by Asia Pacific City Forum.


