Centre for Development, Environment and Policy

PII2

NGO Management

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This is the fifth version of this module to be produced by CeDEP (the Centre for Development, Environment and Policy), with each version drawing on the previous versions. The original version was prepared by INTRAC (International NGO Training and Research Centre), with subsequent revisions by (1) Janet Haddock and Jon Gregson with assistance from Rick James and Janice Giffen, (2) Ivan Kent and Jon Gregson, and (3) Jerry Adams with assistance from Colin Poulton.
ABOUT THIS MODULE

The latter part of the 20th century saw explosive growth in the number and size of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in almost all regions and in many spheres of human activity. NGOs have become highly visible components of civil society, and are recognised as significant players in the fields of human rights, the environment and social development, at local, national and international levels.

Although they share some characteristics with state and private-sector organisations, NGOs are in a category of their own; they have particular organisational features, maintain relationships with a broad range of different actors, and face a number of special challenges. NGO management has evolved as a distinctive practice and field of study that differs in content and perspective from business management and public sector administration.

This module draws on the growing body of theoretical work and practical experiences to provide an outline of the most significant management challenges facing NGOs today, and introduces practical tools and approaches which NGO managers can use. It also provides a critical perspective on major issues in NGO management, with particular reference to the question of whether NGOs should address the underlying causes of poverty and inequality, or concentrate solely on providing humanitarian aid. The idea of ‘civil society’ is used as a framework for the discussion of the political role of NGOs: different conceptions of civil society are set out, which lead to different perspectives on what NGOs can and should seek to do.

This module is aimed primarily at NGO staff with management responsibilities, or those who wish to develop their knowledge and skills in preparation for moving into such positions. NGOs come in many shapes and sizes: in this module the focus is generally on the management of medium-sized NGOs that work at regional or national levels. Employees in large national or international NGOs may also find it useful, particularly those who work closely with national or local partners and wish to understand some of the organisational challenges involved.

The module has been revised several times since it was originally written, and different authors have brought different experiences and emphases to the material. The diverse authorship may be evident in some places, and students may note some contrast in the way topics are tackled from section to section. The module authors hope this diversity will be a benefit. NGO management has many facets, and many key debates are ongoing and unresolved. It is hoped that students will find herein an approach to the material which complements their own backgrounds, while also introducing new ways of thinking about NGO management which deepen their understanding.
STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE

This module aims to develop management skills and a critical theoretical approach to the topic of NGO management, through readings, examples and practical exercises. The ten units are grouped into four parts, each with a particular theme.

Part I: Understanding NGOs (Units 1–3) begins by setting out a fundamental tension concerning the role of NGOs in development. It then introduces frameworks for understanding NGOs, concentrating in particular on the history of the NGO sector since the 1970s, and the idea of ‘civil society’. It describes the issues faced by NGOs as a result of their distinctive position in the international aid architecture, and studies the crucial question of accountability (to government, NGO partners and beneficiaries). It concludes with an examination of the functions of management, leadership and governance as they relate to NGOs.

Part II: Strategy, Structures and Systems (Units 4–5) describes the process by which an NGO develops its strategy. The need to maintain a responsive and flexible approach in the context of a complex development arena is highlighted, and students are encouraged to adopt a critical perspective on NGO strategy development, in particular on its tendency towards ‘single-issue’ campaigning. It concludes by introducing some of the principles and models that can be used by an NGO to develop structures and systems according to its mission, vision and values.

Part III: Managing People and Finance (Units 6–8) first highlights the serious problem of staff turnover in the NGO sector, and examines what an NGO can and should do to recruit, develop and retain the commitment of its people. The use of competency-based approaches in NGOs is an important thread running through Unit 6. Units 7 and 8 provide an overview of the major sources of income available to NGOs, the challenges created by dependency on official aid donors, the increasing importance of foundations as funders of NGOs, and the importance for NGOs of developing a resource mobilisation strategy. It then moves on to outline a strategic approach to financial sustainability, and summarises the main elements of financial information available to NGO managers and how this should be interpreted.

Part IV: Managing for Effective Impact (Units 9–10) discusses approaches to monitoring and evaluating NGO work. NGO managers have to manage, monitor and evaluate increasingly complex programmes in the context of an intensified focus on effectiveness. Unit 10 then returns to the key concern, introduced at the start of the module, of whether NGOs should seek structural change which addresses the underlying causes of poverty and inequality. This concern is set out by reference to the idea of civil society, and the unit discusses two authors who have sceptical views on the capacity of NGOs to seek structural change. The unit then emphasises the importance of NGOs being learning organisations that are able to adapt and change, and concludes with a short speculative section on the strategic issues facing the NGO sector in the medium term.
WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Module Aims

- To outline the distinctive characteristics of NGOs.
- To provide an overview of the issues facing NGOs as development organisations and the influences that have shaped their place within the structures for international development.
- To provide a range of tools, techniques and skills for the effective management of NGOs, including personnel management, organisational learning, strategy development and resource mobilisation.
- To encourage students to adopt a critical perspective on NGO management, and in particular to reflect on the role of NGOs in challenging the underlying causes of poverty and inequality.

Module Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, students should be able to:

- summarise the development of the NGO sector from the 1970s to the era after the 2008 financial crash
- set out the tensions between the idea that NGOs should concentrate on the relief of poverty, versus seeking structural change to the underlying causes of poverty
- critically analyse and understand the key issues and challenges facing NGOs as development organisations, with particular reference to the idea of 'civil society'
- apply a range of tools to the development of NGO structure, systems and strategy, personnel management, and other key areas in NGO management
- recognise the broad range of resources available to NGOs, evaluate their potential contribution to financial sustainability, and identify and interpret the key elements of financial management information
- adopt a critical perspective on core aspects of NGO management, recognising the ways in which what seem to be purely managerial decisions can impact on the wider goals of the NGO sector.
ASSessment

This module is assessed by:

- an examined assignment (EA) worth 40%
- a written examination worth 60%.

Since the EA is an element of the formal examination process, please note the following:

(a) The EA questions and submission date will be available on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

(b) The EA is submitted by uploading it to the VLE.

(c) The EA is marked by the module tutor and students will receive a percentage mark and feedback.

(d) Answers submitted must be entirely the student’s own work and not a product of collaboration.

(e) Plagiarism is a breach of regulations. To ensure compliance with the specific University of London regulations, all students are advised to read the guidelines on referencing the work of other people. For more detailed information, see the FAQ on the VLE.
The textbook for this module is:


This provides a comprehensive and critical review of the literature relating to both NGOs and development management as applied to the sector. Individual units of the module (though not all) make reference to specific sections of the textbook as key readings, but students are encouraged to read the book in its entirety.

For each of the module units, the following are provided.

**Key Study Materials**

Key readings are drawn mainly from the textbooks, relevant academic journals and internationally respected reports. They are provided to add breadth and depth to the unit materials and are required reading as they contain material on which you may be examined. Readings are supplied as digital copies and ebooks via the SOAS Online Library. For information on how to access the Library, please see the VLE.

For some units, multimedia links have also been provided. You will be invited to access these as part of an exercise or activity within the unit, and to discuss their implications with other students and the tutor.

**Further Study Materials**

These texts and multimedia are not provided in hard copy, but weblinks have been included where possible. Further Resources are **NOT** examinable and are provided to enable students to pursue their own areas of interest.

In addition to these, there is a wealth of information on NGO management available on the Internet, including manuals and guidelines developed by NGOs and donors, news bulletins, and discussion groups on the key topics and concerns of NGO practitioners.

**References**

Each unit contains a full list of all material cited in the text. All references cited in the unit text are listed in the relevant units. However, this is primarily a matter of good academic practice: to show where points made in the text can be substantiated. Students are not expected to consult these references as part of their study of this module.

**Self-Assessment Questions**

Often, you will find a set of **Self-Assessment Questions** at the end of each section within a unit. It is important that you work through all of these. Their purpose is threefold:
• to check your understanding of basic concepts and ideas
• to verify your ability to execute technical procedures in practice
• to develop your skills in interpreting the results of empirical analysis.

Also, you will find additional Unit Self-Assessment Questions at the end of each unit, which aim to help you assess your broader understanding of the unit material. Answers to the self-assessment questions are provided in the Answer Booklet.

In-text Questions

This icon invites you to answer a question for which an answer is provided. Try not to look at the answer immediately; first write down what you think is a reasonable answer to the question before reading on. This is equivalent to lecturers asking a question of their class and using the answers as a springboard for further explanation.

In-text Activities

This symbol invites you to halt and consider an issue or engage in a practical activity. Throughout the module there are a number of exercises which ask you to apply your learning to real-life situations. In completing these, it will be particularly useful if you can draw on your experiences of management in an NGO with which you work or know well.

Key Terms and Concepts

At the end of each unit you are provided with a list of Key Terms and Concepts which have been introduced in the unit. The first time these appear in the text guide they are Bold Italicised. Some key words are very likely to be used in examination questions, and an explanation of the meaning of relevant key words will nearly always attract credit in your answers.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

As you progress through the module you may need to check unfamiliar acronyms that are used. A full list of these is provided for you in your study guide.

A note on acronyms

Different writers and organisations use different acronyms for an NGO, sometimes differentiating between NGOs located in the north (NNGOs) and the south (SNGOs) or by type. In order to keep terms simple and consistent across the materials in all units, the term ‘NGO’ is used. Where there is a need to differentiate between international and local NGOs then the terms ‘INGO’ (international NGO) and ‘local NGO’ will be used. If there is a need to specify a different type or grouping of NGOs the full name will be given and not an acronym.
### Indicative Study Calendar

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**Examined Assignment**  
Check the VLE for submission deadline  
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**Examination entry**  
July

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Unit One: NGOs and NGO Management

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**UNIT INFORMATION**

**Unit Overview**
This unit introduces key underlying themes and ideas which are relevant to the topic of non-governmental organisation (NGO) management. It sets out a fundamental tension in understanding the role of NGOs, then describes the rapid growth of the NGO sector in the 1980s and 1990s, and provides some explanations for this growth. It explains different understandings of the idea of civil society, with which NGOs are normally connected. It discusses the goals and ethos of NGOs, and introduces the topic of NGO management.

**Unit Aims**
- To introduce a fundamental tension in understanding the goals of NGOs.
- To describe the evolution of the NGO sector, and provide some explanations for this growth.
- To define the concept of civil society, and explain different understandings of this term.
- To explain what NGOs generally mean when they talk of seeking political solutions to the causes of poverty.
- To introduce what is distinctive about the ethos of NGOs, and link this to questions of NGO management.

**Unit Learning Outcomes**
By the end of this unit, students should be able to:
- describe the evolution of the NGO sector since the 1980s
- list the top-down and bottom-up factors which contributed to the growth of the NGO sector, and say which were most important
- explain the liberal and radical understandings of civil society
- set out the goals of NGO work, and indicate the limits of the sorts of political changes which NGOs seek
- explain the link between staff retention and NGO management.
KEY STUDY MATERIALS

  Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.09.028
  Read with Section 1. A critical account of the modern NGO sector. The ideas in this article met with an irritated response from an NGO strategic adviser, as you will see!

  Read with Section 2. An engaging, critical account of the emergence and development of the modern idea of civil society and the NGO sector.

  Read with Section 3. An introduction to what is unique and distinctive about NGO management.
1.0 THE GROWTH OF THE NGO SECTOR

Section Overview
Non-governmental organisations (NGO) have become highly visible throughout the world and play a significant role in international development. This section introduces a key institutional tension that must be faced in NGO management, and describes the growth and development of the NGO sector.

Section Learning Outcomes
By the end of this section, students should be able to:

- describe and critically engage with a key tension in NGO management
- explain trends in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) funding channelled to and through NGOs
- explain the difference between top-down and bottom-up causes of the growth of the NGO sector
- describe the 'aid effectiveness' agenda.

1.1 Introduction: tensions in managing development

An academic paper published in 2014 claimed that NGOs have drifted away from their original goals.

‘NGOs face significant constraints and contradictions in their ability to strengthen civil society given the pressures they face to be non-political, their weak roots in society, the pressures they face to be accountable “upward” to donors rather than “downward” to beneficiaries, and their focus on short-term projects rather than long-term structural change.’


‘The gradual erosion of their civil society roots and their inability to secure “development alternatives” at any scale means that NGOs remain unable to engage with transformative agendas that seek large-scale redistribution and the re-ordering of wealth and privilege.’


The paper concluded that NGOs need to ‘return to their roots’ (p. 715), and in particular that they should rebuild links with grassroots civil society organisations, providing them with support and advice, but not obscuring or co-opting their political agendas. In this way, the authors argued, NGOs could become genuine ‘bridges to the future’.

In a blog post entitled ‘What can we learn from a really annoying paper on NGOs and development?’, a strategic adviser for Oxfam reacted angrily to these claims, saying that they were based on sweeping generalisations, restated the ‘blindingly obvious’, provided no supportive case studies or statistics, and that the authors apparently had not spoken to anyone who worked for an NGO before drawing their conclusions.
In fact, it was an earlier manuscript (Banks & Hulme, 2012) that was picked up on the Oxfam blog, which was posted in 2012. The paper cited in this unit (Banks et al, 2015) develops the themes of the manuscript, while addressing some of the issues raised in the blog. However, the Oxfam adviser’s response still applies.

‘I could go on – ubiquitous aunt sallies, lazy use of the passive tense (“it is argued that …”) – but you get the picture. As far as I can tell, they have not solicited, or read, any internal or published NGO work on these issues (and boy, there’s plenty of it – we agonize constantly about effectiveness, accountability etc.).’

Source: Green (2012)

This exchange was then covered on The Guardian newspaper’s Poverty Matters blog. Quoting the director of a radical development campaigning group in the UK, the blog author said the exchange reflected a tension within the NGO community about whether development work should focus simply on providing aid, or try to address the underlying political causes of poverty and underdevelopment.

‘John Hilary, executive director of War on Want, the anti-poverty group, is highly critical of this focus. “Far too many NGOs have lost sight of the long-term, transformative goals of international development, and are instead following a donor-led agenda of aid and service delivery,” he said. “British NGOs are especially guilty of this – often highly professional and efficient, but lacking the political drive that should be the lifeblood of the sector. If we are to play our proper role in civil society, NGOs need to learn from grassroots movements and embrace a far more radical vision of change.”’

Source: Tran (2012)

This exchange might seem odd. It seems clear enough that there could be a tension over whether NGOs should concentrate on humanitarian work, or try to adopt a more political approach. Yet, from the quotations above, it seems like the two sides are talking at cross-purposes. On the one hand, the Oxfam adviser dismisses the complaints, saying that the NGOs are all well aware of this problem; yet what he says they agonise over – ‘effectiveness, accountability etc.’ – is not quite what the academics say they are missing. Meanwhile, the academics conclude that NGOs should distance themselves from governments and donors, and join with grassroots civil society organisations to become ‘partners in the transformation of society’ (Banks et al, 2015: p. 715); yet, for most NGOs, the suggestion that they should cut themselves off from state donors will not seem realistic. Where would they get the funds to operate on a large scale? And who will then respond to humanitarian crises which are genuine and urgent? It seems the academics are overlooking the demonstrable good done by NGOs in favour of an idea of ‘structural change’ which itself is apparently left vague.

Perhaps one reason why the two sides seem to be talking across each other is that the supposed dilemma between the humanitarian and political approaches is really not so difficult to resolve after all. As NGO managers, we might think that the solution is simple: NGOs should indeed seek to provide development and humanitarian aid, but at the same time ensure that they do not obscure or divert attention away from projects
which also address the structural causes of poverty and inequality. And NGOs may also be able to address the deeper political issues, to some extent, through their research and campaigns. None of this is to deny the academics’ point that NGOs are constantly having to reconcile the demands of beneficiaries, funders and other stakeholders: but effective management practice should precisely be about finding the best way to operate in the face of these competing demands, and this is exactly where the study of NGO management can be helpful.

However, we might worry that we have been too quick in proposing this resolution of the tension between development and political work. Well-managed development work, we have suggested, should be able to produce valuable humanitarian outcomes while leaving the deeper political issues to one side: not addressing them, but not obscuring them either. Yet, what if the tools and practices of NGO management in themselves had deeper political consequences, so that the very fact of being an effective manager did indeed tend to obscure the political issues? Or, at worst, what if effective management was itself one of the causes of poverty and inequality?

This is a disquieting possibility to which we will return, without necessarily resolving definitively. The principal aim of this module is to provide that combination of contextual knowledge and practical tools which is essential to effective NGO management; but we will remain sensitive, as best we can, to the ways in which management practices are shaped by political ideologies, social practices and economic theories which are actively involved in creating global poverty and inequality.

**What are NGOs?**

Before moving to questions of management, there is another important question to consider: When we talk about NGOs, which organisations are we really talking about? For day-to-day management purposes, this might not matter, although there can be occasions where defining the term is important – one of the module authors, for instance, found it exceptionally difficult to register a new NGO that was seeking to build capacity for the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) among NGOs working in Nepal, as ICT work fell outside the list of criteria used to define NGOs by the Social Welfare Council. More importantly, however, asking ‘what are NGOs?’ might reveal things which will be relevant to questions of management.

NGOs are an extremely diverse category of different organisations across a wide spectrum from small loose-knit voluntary groups to multi-million-dollar organisations employing thousands of people; from village groups to national federations to international networks that span continents.

> ‘NGO is a broad term encompassing a wide array of diverse organisations. NGOs do not comprise a tight community but a broad spectrum – too broad perhaps to leave the term with much meaning’.


NGOs are organisationally distinct from both private sector and public sector organisations and as such they involve unique management issues and challenges.
The distinctive features of most NGOs can be summarised as:

- having a non-profit purpose and an underlying theory of development
- having staff motivated by values and volunteer principles
- having no easy measure of performance
- being an intermediary between donors and beneficiaries.

There are many ways in which NGOs differ from each other. There are differences in:

- legal registration
- ideology and understanding of development
- functions – roles and purposes
- activities
- funding base
- constituency and ownership.

The huge diversity of organisations within the NGO sector has led to a number of different definitions for the term. The term 'non-governmental organisation' itself first appeared in the UN Charter of 1945 (see 1.1.1), although here it seems to have a negative meaning, opening up the scope of consultation outside the purely governmental without suggesting the existence of a distinct category of organisations called ‘NGOs’.

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**1.1.1 Article 71 of the UN Charter (1945)**

‘The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned’.

Source: UN (n.d.)

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Today the term ‘NGO’ is used to cover hundreds of types of organisations, and there is wide variation in how the term is used. See 1.1.2 for a range of different definitions.

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What sort of organisations are you thinking of when you use the term NGO? Can you identify any particular examples of a typical NGO? What are their characteristics? How do these organisations describe themselves?

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**1.1.2 NGO definitions**

‘[T]hose organisations in civil society which are either: formed to assist the needy or disadvantaged [...] or those which are formed to pursue a common interest in and/or to take action on a particular subject or issue which causes disadvantage or is detrimental to the well-being of people or society as a whole ...’

Source: Ball and Dunn (1995) p. 11.
‘A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens’ group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens’ concerns to Governments, monitor policies and encourage political participation at the community level. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, the environment or health.’

Source: United Nations Department of Public Information (n.d.)

‘NGOs are formal (professionalized) independent societal organizations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level.’


‘NGOs are the larger and more professionalized civil society organizations that offer benefits to those outside their membership.’


‘NGOs are groups of individuals, organised for the myriad of reasons that engage human imagination and admiration.’


‘[S]elf-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared to improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people.’


Rather than try to list distinctive features which all NGOs have in common, this unit approaches the question 'What are NGOs?' from three different perspectives. Each perspective will reveal aspects of NGOs which will be relevant to questions of management.

One way to answer the question would be to define NGOs using the concepts of political economy. On this approach, they are typically defined by contrast with the state (or government) and the market. Section 2 considers this kind of answer.

Another way to answer the question would be by looking inside NGOs, to see what features they all have in common. Section 3 looks at the distinctive ethos and management style that is characteristic of NGOs.

A third way to answer the question 'What are NGOs?' is by looking at the circumstances in which they arose, the stages through which NGOs as a group have evolved, and what underlying factors may have driven it. The remainder of this section traces this history.

### 1.2 The history of the NGO sector

In early 1919, Eglantyne Jebb was arrested in London’s Trafalgar Square for distributing leaflets bearing the headline ‘Our Blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death’. The leaflets showed pictures of sick and starving children, victims of a famine caused by Britain’s post-war blockade of Germany. In court, the prosecutor was so impressed by Jebb that he offered to pay her £5 fine himself. Not long afterwards, she and others set up a fund to provide aid directly to
children in Germany. Jebb’s £5 fine, which the prosecuting counsel paid, was the first donation. The fund was named Save the Children (Save the Children, n.d.).

NGOs, or organisations like them, have a long history. The International Committee of the Red Cross, an organisation with a special status enshrined in international law, was set up in 1863. Precursors of the modern NGO can perhaps be seen in monastic or Sufi orders of pre-modern times, the Quakers who ran the safe houses of the Underground Railroad, and many others (Global Journal, 2013).

Yet, despite these historical roots, the modern NGO has an identity of its own, and the management tools studied in this module are characteristic of a type of organisation which has exploded onto the world scene in the last four decades. The expansion began in the late 1970s, with the late 1980s and 1990s characterised by the rapid spread of the sector in almost all parts of the globe. Agg (2006: p. 9) cites the number of organisations registered with the Union of International Associations (UIA) as a proxy for the rise in number of international NGOs (ie NGOs working in more than one country). From 1909 to 1972 the number of registered international NGOs stayed roughly stable at under 5000; but after 1972 registrations increased rapidly, rising to nearly 25 000 by 1987, and nearly 45 000 in 1999.

The number of registrations with the UIA is not representative of the actual number of NGOs in the world, however. Counting both national and international NGOs, the actual number is vastly higher: India alone has been estimated to have 2 million (Shukla, 2010); and a figure of 10 million worldwide is repeated on the internet, although the methodology underpinning this figure is hard to find.

This reflects a wider difficulty in gathering reliable data on NGOs, which is due to a number of factors: NGOs are diverse organisations, there are different definitions of the term, and consistent records are lacking. The number of NGOs active at any one time also changes rapidly: while NGOs can be set up relatively quickly, many are short-lived and up-to-date figures are therefore difficult to find.

So, how else can we measure the growth of the modern NGO sector? The level of NGO income can be used as an indicator, but comprehensive data from the NGO sector itself is not easy to find. An alternative approach is to look at sources of NGO funding. Every year, the statistical division of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) records the level of financial support to NGOs made by states that are members of its Development Assistance Committee (DAC), as part of their official development assistance. This can give us a rough indication of the size of the NGO sector and growth trends.

In the figure in 1.2.1, aid to NGOs means official contributions to programmes and activities which NGOs have developed themselves, and which they implement on their own authority and responsibility. Aid through NGOs means payments by the official sector for NGOs to implement projects and programmes that the official sector has developed, and for which it is ultimately responsible. The latter includes joint financing schemes where government agencies and NGOs consult about activities, jointly approve them and/or share their funding.

In the period 2001–2009, OECD DAC members tripled the aid they channelled through NGOs, from US$ 2.0 billion to 6.3 billion; meanwhile, aid provided directly to NGOs remained roughly stable at US$ 2.7 billion throughout the period. Note that the graph in 1.2.1 thus suggests that around 2001, governments began to see NGOs as a good means
of disbursing aid: prior to 2001, aid channelled to NGOs was greater than the aid channelled through them.

This trend has continued. In 2009–2013, overseas development aid channelled to or through NGOs increased by about US$ 1.5 billion, roughly the same rate as in the previous period, although most of that increase was due to the UK and the institutions of the European Union (OECD, 2015: table 1, p. 7). Direct comparison of figures between the two periods is complicated by the fact that the United States is only included in DAC statistics after 2009.

1.2.1 Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided to and channelled through NGOs by DAC members, 2001-2009, USD billion (2008 constant prices)

Again, these figures do not by themselves gives us a clear numerical grasp of the rising numbers of NGOs in the world: but since much of the aid channelled through NGOs comprises funds sent to partner NGOs in the Global South, it certainly indicates the scale of growth.

It is clear, then, that the number of NGOs has vastly increased since the late 1970s (see 1.2.2 for some examples). There were some signs that the rate of growth had begun to slow in some countries at the turn of the 21st century (see the chart reprinted in Agg (2006: p. 9), showing rate of registrations of international NGOs slightly slowing after 1997), yet growth remained strong in the following decades, especially in South and East Asia.

What explains this rapid growth? This is the topic of the next section.

1.2.2 The phenomenal growth of NGOs: examples

- By 2002, BRAC, a Bangladesh NGO, had become the largest organisation in the country aside from the government, with a core staff of 28 000 and an additional 200 000 employed on projects that included a university, a bank, an internet service provider and several financing organisations.
By the turn of the millennium, a handful of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) such as Oxfam, Plan International and Save the Children had expanded to become very large transnational organisations, with levels of activity and influence rivalling those of government departments and large corporations.

According to data from the Department of Social Development, the number of registered NGOs in South Africa more than trebled in the five years from 2000 to 2005, from 13,282 to 36,981 [1].

An article in The Guardian Weekly in 2011 [2] said that in Asia the Western aid gap is being filled by thriving NGOs, which apply business techniques to charitable ends. It cited examples of NGOs in Taiwan and Korea, such as the Buddhist NGO Tzu Chi, which has grown from a group of 30 housewives, to Asia’s largest charitable NGO. Today the foundation has branches in 52 countries. It can call on more than 7 million members and donors worldwide, and has provided humanitarian relief in 72 countries.

At the end of 2017, the number of NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) had increased to 4862 — having more than doubled in little over a decade [3].


1.3 Explaining the growth of the NGO sector

The proliferation of NGOs during the 1980s and 1990s was due to a number of interrelated factors. Below we will look at whether any one factor played a particularly key role, but first we survey a range of possible contributors:

- The perceived failure of national governments to deliver lasting development benefits. Critics regarded the model of state-led centrally planned development as over-bureaucratised and unresponsive, particularly in newly independent states (this sort of state scepticism is very old, a prominent example being Friedrich von Hayek’s ‘The Road to Serfdom’ (1944)). As dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of state-run programmes increased, donors turned their attention to alternative development actors.

- The impact of structural adjustment. After the ‘Third World Debt’ crisis began in the early 1980s, developing countries were dependent on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund for additional loans to help them service the interest on their existing debts. These ‘roll-over’ loans were granted on condition that the recipient government implement ‘structural adjustment programmes’, which involved privatising state enterprises, opening their markets to international competition, and restricting domestic expenditure on health and education services. (President Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso set out the problem in a 1987 speech to the Organization of African Unity (Sankara, 1987); Susan George gave an influential analysis of the debt crisis in her ‘A Fate Worse Than Debt’ (1988).) NGOs gained both popular appeal and donor support, and attempted to fill the gaps left by decreasing government service provision. Furthermore, as government civil service posts were being scaled down, NGOs became an obvious employment choice both for redundant civil servants and for the expanded pool of new graduates that had emerged in many parts of the world.
The expansion of liberal democratic models of governance. The end of the cold war and the break-up of the Soviet Union were accompanied by increased attention on the process of democratisation. At the same time, the search for a middle or third way as an alternative to market and state mechanisms to meet the social, economic and environmental challenges of the time found increasing expression in civil society institutions such as NGOs and faith-based organisations. NGOs were seen as key civil society actors for articulating people’s interests and providing an opposing force against the autocratic tendencies of the state and the excesses of market forces. The existence of a vibrant civil society in itself began to be seen as a key indicator of development, and donors formalised their support by expanding their funding relationships with NGOs.

The globalisation of political structures and institutions. During the second half of the 20th century, the number of international bodies, programmes and agreements between states greatly increased in order to handle new global issues. NGOs became much more connected with each other and with these international institutions. International bodies sought cooperation from the NGO sector in service provision, to lobby and pressurise states to reach and ratify agreements, and to mobilise public opinion and media attention in order to further their mandates. Donors and international organisations also played an important role in the promotion of the NGO sector at national levels by persuading states to adopt more liberal legal and fiscal regulations.

The integration of the world economy. Global media systems and information and communication technology infrastructures have made it easier to share information and participate in discussion and political action. The dramatic breakthroughs in information technology and literacy have led to a realisation that change is possible, while making it easier to form the organisations that can translate these sentiments into effective social action. These trends have continued apace in the early 21st century.

A wide range of factors have thus contributed to the growth of the NGO sector. Is it possible to pick out any of these causes as particularly key, or is rise of NGOs a result of the accidental coincidence of a number of unconnected processes and events?

In an insightful article, Reimann (2006) distinguishes between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' explanations of the growth of the NGO sector. 'Bottom-up' explanations, she says, typically depict NGO formation ‘as a societal response to socio-economic factors, the new information revolution and/or the decline of the state’ (2006: p. 45) – that is, they see the growth of the NGO sector as a relatively spontaneous event which happens in reaction to wider circumstances (such as a combination of the factors listed above). In contrast, ‘top-down’ explanations emphasise the actions of governments in bringing about the growth of the NGO sector.

The bulleted list above contains a mixture of bottom-up and top-down factors. Before you continue, review the list and identify the top-down and bottom-up factors which may have contributed to the growth of the NGO sector. What other factors can you think of?
In Reimann’s view, there has been an overemphasis on bottom-up factors, and this has obscured the role of states and international governance organisations in actively and deliberately bringing the modern NGO sector into existence.

‘I argue that it is impossible to understand the explosive growth of NGOs in the past several decades without taking into account the ways in which states, international organizations, and other structures have actively stimulated and promoted NGOs from above. Rather than simply emerging as the result of bottom-up sociological and technological forces, INGOs and NGOs have also emerged and grown in large part because of top-down processes of political globalization, i.e., the globalization of political structures, institutions, and Western liberal democratic values.’


As key top-down factors in the growth of NGOs, Reimann stresses the increase in funding for NGOs from states and multilateral organisations, and the increased opportunities for NGOs to participate in international conferences. Since the 1980s, the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union have dramatically increased their funding for NGOs, as have rich country donors, quasi-governmental organisations and private foundations. At the same time, the institutions that collectively make up the system of global governance have expanded in number, and multiplied the official opportunities for NGOs to participate. As the institutions of global governance expanded, they fostered the creation of an NGO sector which would be a means for citizens to participate in shaping policy on issues such as human rights, food and nutrition, refugees, women’s rights, global trade and many more (see Reimann, 2006: table 3, pp. 56–57).

At the same time, the international institutions supported the spread of Western NGOs in the developing world by fostering a new ‘pro-NGO norm’ which ‘depicted NGOs as a crucial “partner” in development as well as an enforcer of good governance whose very existence was required as evidence that a state was democratic, accountable, and in some way open to the participation of citizens’ (Reimann, 2006: p. 59). To this end, the international institutions exerted pressure on states to adopt legal and fiscal frameworks which were more favourable to NGOs (p. 61).

On this view, although a wide range of factors did contribute to the growth of the NGO sector, at the core is a deliberate effort by the international community to create a system of global governance, in which NGOs would play a crucial role as agents of development and a means for people to interact with the international institutions.

There is clearly validity to Reimann’s emphasis on top-down factors. Yet, as she also points out, top-down explanations need not exclude other factors as well. New actors were being sought towards the end of the 20th century, which could support people-centred or participatory approaches. NGOs showed an apparent strength in giving a voice to people, which could influence policy on a range of issues including environment, gender and social development. While NGOs appeared to fit the neoliberal agenda of ‘rolling back the state’, they also had an appeal for the grassroots Left because of their focus on empowerment and their potential for influencing change in social structures.
Consider some NGOs with which you are familiar. How much of their activity is prompted by, or concerned with influencing, international conferences and multinational agreements?

1.4 The emphasis on aid effectiveness

As the expansion of the NGO sector gathered pace in the 1990s, critics began to draw attention to its apparent weaknesses and negative impacts. NGOs were criticised for their lack of accountability and their increasing competition with governments for a declining pool of donor resources. The Left highlighted the way that NGOs appeared to be marginalising other forms of social activism such as people's movements and trade unions. While some NGOs formed alliances with grassroots community-based organisations, others seemed to take little notice of them. As they expanded deep within countries across the globe, some branded INGOs as a new form of colonialism. At the close of the 1990s, articles in the mainstream press and influential international journals began to question NGOs for their dependency on government funds, increasingly competitive outlook and apparent self-interest.

Over the first decade of the 21st century, two distinct strands to the effectiveness debate began to emerge. The first saw NGOs become more engaged in the debates on aid effectiveness in the High Level Forum meetings, from the first in Rome in 2002, the Paris Declaration (2005), through the Accra Agenda for Action on Aid Effectiveness (2008) to the most recent High Level Forum in Busan in 2011 (see 1.4.1). The second strand saw the spotlight on effectiveness moving more onto INGOs, with increasing demands for them to demonstrate their effectiveness.

1.4.1 The Busan High Level Forum, 2011

Four High Level Forum meetings have been organised by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Originally including only representatives of the major donor agencies (both multilateral and bilateral) and aid recipients, they have broadened to include NGOs and civil society representatives. The first High Level Forum in 2002 outlined the principles for aid effectiveness. Subsequent meetings have had the objectives of holding participants to account and monitoring progress.

The fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan in 2011, was very different from the first meeting and reflected the change in the global role of NGOs even since 2002. What started as a small elite gathering of major OECD donors had grown to an all-encompassing gathering of developed and developing countries, international and regional civil society representatives. Civil society organisations had moved from being outsiders at the first High Level Forum in 2002 to taking a seat at the negotiating table and becoming increasingly included and involved. Civil society organisation (CSO) voices at Busan were led by big INGOs and it became clear to many that these were now firmly established participants. At the same time, developing country civil society voices, especially from Africa, were also present.

Since 2002, the global context has also changed — economically, politically and socially. The lines between developed and developing countries have blurred, and new forms of cooperation are taking hold. The aid effectiveness agenda emerged at a time when OECD DAC donors dominated the aid landscape. They were able to set an agenda based on their vision and priorities for development. That dominance by a few major
actors has now changed. The Busan Partnership document recognises this, stating that North–South cooperation remains the dominant mode of development cooperation, but that emerging development actors and new forms of cooperation are increasingly important.

While INGOs were prominent at Busan, the Forum also marked a real change in the recognition of local Southern NGOs as important partners — thereby helping to support them in their work and strengthen their ability to access funding locally. At the same time, they will face increased competition from INGOs as well as other local actors for donor funding that is disbursed at country level.

The Busan High Level Forum provided clear evidence for CSOs that their voices had been heard and that their concerns alongside the priorities of many developing countries had not been ignored. The Busan Partnership embraces diversity in development cooperation. However, there is also a clear cost to NGOs and other CSOs of inclusion in such deliberations. In particular, whereas some NGOs had previously sought to criticise aid practice from the outside their inclusion now means that they themselves are held to account and must show aid effectiveness. Furthermore, while there is recognition of the value of a rights-based approach to development, of democratic ownership and of gender equality, the challenge for CSOs will be to emphasise the importance of sustainability and accountability and not to let a simple growth model dominate aid and development practice.

Source: unit author (with reference to Hayman (2012))

The MDGs and the SDGs

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed in 2000, and defined specific areas for concerted development efforts, with a deadline for achieving the goals by 2015. With their focus on achieving change in a number of critical areas, the MDGs helped to build a consensus about addressing world poverty, while also binding NGOs more closely into the formal systems of global governance, and developing a stricter framework for aid effectiveness, specifically the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The MDGs offered NGOs greater funding, and a greater public profile for world development issues, backed up by official donor recognition, but at the same time they weakened their links with grassroots and radical campaigns.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, also known as the Global Goals) were agreed in September 2015 as a framework for extending the MDG agenda to 2030. Whereas the MDGs were criticised for having been decided through a closed and non-transparent process, the SDGs were the outcome of wide consultation with developing countries, communities and NGOs (indeed, developed countries now criticised the process for having been too open; The Economist (2015)). In part, they reflected the rise in prosperity and influence of developing countries, particularly the ‘BRICS’ (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). The SDGs also have implications for the Aid Effectiveness agenda, primarily through goal 17, ‘Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development’. The strategy for funding the SDGs reaffirmed the importance of providing data on aid effectiveness, with progress on this to be assessed over the 15-year lifespan of the SDGs.

The adoption of the MDGs had led to a shift in the approach of international donors to both the state and civil society, with a reaffirmation of the central role of the state, but now acting in partnership with the private sector and civil society. The SDGs widened the range of supporting actors yet further, with greater acknowledgement of the
importance of South–South cooperation and alternative development models. The consultation process which established the SDGs was open and participatory, framing the development agenda in a way which differed from the familiar Northern conception (as expressed most notoriously in the ‘Washington Consensus’). In parallel with the framing of the SDGs themselves, however, the Conference on Financing for Development agreed on the financing framework (the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; see UNFFD (2015)), and here the role of the private sector seemed to be emerging as a key site of contestation. Civil society critics claimed that the Financing for Development conference had been dominated by Northern actors who insisted on notions of development through growth (Esquivel, 2016; Bidegain Ponte & Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016), while the proposed multi-stakeholder partnerships centring on particular SDGs were criticised for being a means to pursue the neoliberal transfer of political power from the state to market actors. The SDG process therefore seemed poised to express the tension between the Northern neoliberal development model and Southern alternatives in an acute way – a conflict which the more technocratic MDG process had suppressed.
Section 1 Self-Assessment Questions

1. How many NGOs are there in the world today?
   (a) 45 000.
   (b) Ten million.
   (c) No one really knows.

2. In what ways did states and international governmental institutions deliberately stimulate the growth of the NGO sector in the 1980s and 1990s? (Tick all that apply.)
   (a) States increased their funding and investment in computers and the internet, facilitating international communications between development organisations.
   (b) States and multilateral organisations increased their funding for NGOs.
   (c) The debt crisis in the developing world created a need for NGOs to fill gaps in public services.
   (d) The number of multilateral conferences and agreements increased, opening more opportunities for NGOs to participate in global governance.
   (e) A pro-NGO norm was promoted in the developing world.

3. After the financial crash of 2008, what happened to funding for NGOs from members of the OECD DAC?
   (a) Funds channelled both to and through NGOs were reduced to zero.
   (b) Funding channelled through NGOs was reduced by about 50%, but funding channelled to NGOs was largely unaffected.
   (c) Funding channelled to NGOs was reduced by about 50%, but funding channelled through NGOs was largely unaffected.
   (d) Funds channelled both through and to NGOs was largely unaffected.
2.0 **NGOs IN CONTEXT**

**Section Overview**

In this section we look at NGOs in terms of their relationship with civil society. We introduce the idea of civil society and look at two different understandings of it. We discuss advantages and shortcomings of the two approaches, and ask in what sense NGOs are also CSOs. We also look at the idea of the ‘third sector’ which has been used as a way to characterise NGOs.

**Section Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this section, students should be able to:

- explain different views about what civil society is and how it can contribute to development
- describe the relationship between NGOs and civil society, according to both the ‘liberal’ and the ‘radical’ perspectives
- explain the idea of the ‘third sector’.

2.1 **NGOs and the theory of civil society**

NGOs are often associated with civil society, and indeed these two terms are sometimes treated as interchangeable. Yet although reference to civil society is extremely common in development discourse, the concept has a complex history, and is interpreted in different ways within different theories of political change. In this section, we explore the concept of civil society, explain some key differences in the way it is interpreted, and locate NGOs with respect to it.

**The idea of civil society**

In its modern usage, the concept of civil society refers to a part of society which includes voluntary associations, people's movements, citizens’ groups, youth clubs, church groups, trade unions, cooperatives and many more. What all these groups have in common is that they are not directly controlled by the government, they are not profit-making, and they are relatively impersonal (their main reason for existing is to get something done, not to bring people together). Lewis expresses a widely used definition when he writes: ‘Civil society is usually taken to mean a realm or space in which there exists a set of organisational actors which are not part of the household, the state or the market’ (Lewis, 2014: p. 66).

Lewis (2014: pp. 62–75) sketches the evolution of the idea of civil society, observing that the term has a history which stretches back to the Scottish Enlightenment (see also Chandoke (2007) for a helpful overview). But although Lewis is right that it has a long history, we should not overlook that today it is used in a very different way to its historical roots. Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History on Civil Society* (1767), for instance, is about the nature of human society in general, not about a subsection of society called ‘civil society’. In ‘a civil society’, individuals interact spontaneously in...
pursuit of their interests, guided by feelings of sympathy for each other; purely
economic interests have a rather equivocal place; and political decisions are apparently
decided by consensus, gaining the agreement of the totality even though the decisions
themselves are in fact made only by a select few (this summary is drawn from Michel
Foucault's commentary on Ferguson, in Foucault (2008, pp. 298–308)).

Ferguson's understanding of civil society is rich and normative, being embedded in his
theory of the way societies evolve from 'barbarism' to 'civilisation', and making
recommendations about the best form of government. By contrast, the modern
definition of civil society as a realm of actors 'which are not part of the household, the
state or the market' is deliberately thin. It is meant to identify a core definition on
which everyone can agree, irrespective of what role they think civil society should have
within the process of development (see the list of CSOs in 2.1.1). Within modern
development discourse the term 'civil society' is generally meant as an uncontroversial
technical term, which is to say that it is considered obvious that there is a 'realm of
actors' which meets the definition given, and that by accepting that there is such a
'realm' we do not commit to any political theory. Contrast this with the idea of class,
which in its Marxian sense refers to a theory of economic conflict in society, and has
strong implications for social justice: the term 'class', in this sense, is not an
uncontroversial technical term.

However, although the idea of civil society is intended to be uncontroversial, the
apparent consensus on what it means begins to break down as soon as we ask what is
supposed to be distinctive about the organisations which make up civil society, and
what role they play in development and political change. Studying this issue has
implications for the way we understand NGOs.

Lewis distinguishes two traditions of thought which have contributed to the modern
idea of civil society; one liberal, associated with the 19th-century philosopher Alexis de
Tocqueville, and one radical, associated with the early-20th-century writings of the
Marxist intellectual Antonio Gramsci (see Lewis, 2014, pp. 70–71). These relate to
different accounts of what role civil society can play in social and political development.
The liberal tradition sees civil society as underpinning democratic values and
institutions, while the radical tradition sees it as a means for different groups to
struggle over what is considered 'normal' in economic, social and political life.

The liberal approach draws on de Tocqueville's 'Democracy in America' (de Tocqueville,
1838), a record of his travels in the United States, where he was impressed by the
quantity of American civil associations, seeing them as a defence against the potential
tyrranny of the democratic majority. On the liberal view, civil society institutions are
seen as 'schools of democracy', places where civic democratic values can be learned and
upheld; a thriving civil society is seen as an essential feature of a well-functioning
democracy. In the 1990s this view was further developed by Robert Putnam by
drawing on the notion of 'social capital', defined as 'features of social organization such
as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for
mutual benefit' (Putnam, 1995: p. 67). Social capital is thought to be generated within
civil society, and strengthening civil society is thus seen as a way of encouraging
democratisation.

The basis of the liberal conception of civil society received a powerful blow in a 1997
article by Sheri Berman. Berman describes the role of civil society in the rise of Nazism,
arguing that the segmentation of Weimar society into civil society associations gave Nazism a framework within which to spread and influence attitudes long before it emerged into full public view.

‘During the interwar period in particular, Germans threw themselves into their clubs, voluntary associations, and professional organizations out of frustration with the failures of the national government and political parties, thereby helping to undermine the Weimar Republic and facilitate Hitler’s rise to power. In addition, Weimar’s rich associational life provided a critical training ground for eventual Nazi cadres and a base from which the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP) could launch its Machtergreifung (seizure of power). Had German civil society been weaker, the Nazis would never have been able to capture so many citizens for their cause or eviscerate their opponents so swiftly.’


Despite Berman’s argument, however, the assumption that a strong civil society is a prerequisite of democracy remains widespread. In general terms, we may say that the weakness of the liberal approach is that it tries to explain how civil society benefits democracy in purely procedural terms: it is the style of interaction within civil society – trusting, participatory – which is supposed to be a basis for democratic virtues. But, as Berman’s study shows, a trusting, participatory style of interaction can characterise a group with almost any sort of political aim, including that of destroying democracy and imposing totalitarian rule.

The radical approach draws on Gramsci’s theory of ‘hegemony’, which he developed in order to explain why communist revolution had been successful in Russia, but not in Western Europe. Workers in the Western capitalist democracies, Gramsci argued, are just as exploited as they were in Tsarist Russia, but the capitalist democracies are able gain the consent of the working class via the structures of civil society. Through the church, media and schools, capitalists persuade the working class that capitalist society is normal, and that any alternative is unimaginable. This control of the public imagination is called hegemony. Before revolution can happen, Gramsci argued, revolutionaries must first work within civil society and change the hegemony so that capitalist exploitation is no longer seen as normal, alternatives become conceivable, and the working class can see the value of organising for revolution. The long process of altering the hegemony Gramsci refers to as a ‘war of position’.

On the radical view, civil society is seen as ‘constituting an arena in which hegemonic ideas concerning the organization of economic and social life are both established and contested’ (Bebbington et al, 2008: p. 7). The radical view of civil society is influential within some NGO circles, but here the ‘war of position’ is not considered as a prelude to revolution, but as an end in itself: that is, radical NGOs do not think that challenging the hegemony is a way to unleash violent revolution, but as actually constituting the political change which they seek. Gramsci, who died in prison in fascist Italy, did not think that a peaceful transition away from capitalism was possible (Gramsci, 2003: p. 235).
2.1.1 Types of units that can be included and excluded from civil society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Included</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Freedom of expression, press, association, assembly, etc.</td>
<td>– Civil society organisations (CSOs)</td>
<td>– Activists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Rule of law</td>
<td>– Voluntary associations</td>
<td>– Volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Legislative process</td>
<td>– Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)</td>
<td>– Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Human rights</td>
<td>– Non-profit service providers</td>
<td>– Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Democratic process</td>
<td>– Foundations</td>
<td>– Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Philanthropy; charity</td>
<td>– Advocacy groups</td>
<td>– Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Accountability and transparency</td>
<td>– Social movement organisations</td>
<td>– Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Citizenship</td>
<td>– Coalitions and networks among CSOs</td>
<td>– Users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Independent media</td>
<td>– Community groups</td>
<td>– Beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>– Self-help groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Institutions not directly related to civil society (e.g. market exchange; political process and elections; family forms; etc)</td>
<td>– Corporate responsibility programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Non-members</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Non-participants etc</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Individuals outside of the realm of civic rules and values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The modern history of civil society

The idea of civil society gained its modern popularity during the 1980s, when it was used to describe attempts by dissidents living under authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe and South America to carve out a free zone of independent association and expression (for a brief history of civil society in Eastern Europe, see Chandoke (2007 pp. 609–611)).

Strengthening civil society then became a major aim of donors in Eastern Europe in the 1980s and early 1990s as they tried to support the development of a counter-force to state socialism. The liberal idea of civil society as a check on undemocratic states emerged as the dominant understanding of the term. Yet, as Chandoke (2007: p. 611) remarks, what had happened in Eastern Europe seemed better described in terms of Gramsci’s ideas: the communist states had sought to rule by coercion and propaganda, not by framing a hegemony which captured the imagination of their citizens, and this left them vulnerable to revolution.

After the fall of the USSR, donors sought to promote civil society specifically by funding NGOs. Yet many of the people who then formed NGOs were attracted by the idea of gaining control of the hegemony, and so doing for the Western capitalist states, or for autocratic states in the Third World, what civil society had done for the communists.
However, in being expressed through NGOs, this new emphasis on civil society tended to crowd out other civil society actors such as people’s movements, citizens’ groups, small producer associations, women’s organisations, and community and religious groups.

‘Witness the tragedy that has befallen the proponents of the concept: people struggling against authoritarian regimes had demanded civil society; what they got instead was NGOs’!


2.2 NGOs as second, third or fourth sector organisations

Before we close this section, we should note some alternative structural definitions of NGOs. Alongside the concept of civil society, NGOs are often also seen as belonging to a ‘third sector’. Some identify this third sector simply as civil society – often in fact it is just taken as synonymous – but originally the idea of third sector organisations was meant to pick out something distinctive in terms of structure and motivation from government and private sector organisations. According to this perspective (which is more common in the United States), third sector organisations are distinctive because they are held together by values and commitment, and apart from remuneration, symbolic reward is very important. (See Lewis, (2014): pp. 76–80).

Some analysts have reserved the third sector as the exclusive domain of cooperatives and membership organisations because of their distinctive qualities of accountability and decision-making, which generally do not hold for NGOs. Cooperatives and membership organisations are orientated towards self-help and are responsible to their members, unlike NGOs which deal with clients or beneficiaries. This view places NGOs instead as a subset of the private (or second) sector. Unlike membership organisations, ‘clients and beneficiaries are in a ‘take it or leave it’ relationship that is similar to that of the customers and employees of private firms’ (Uphoff, 1995: p. 19).

Looking at the issue from an alternative viewpoint, Fowler (2002) suggests that what he calls non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) share different characteristics from state, market or civil society, and emphasises their interaction with all three sectors. This leads him to describe them as occupying a ‘fourth’ position. An NGDO ‘belongs in’ and is anchored to civil society, but is not solely ‘of’ civil society because it purposefully inhabits and works in the space and interaction between civil society, state and market.

‘The essential idea is to move beyond a too-simple view of society, to a more complex understanding of an NGO’s grounding, principles of operation, roles and embedding in society, a “fourth position”. In other words, while bonded to civil society, they use their value base as a “springboard” to interact with state, market and civil society itself – which is far from homogeneous and is not inherently civil or conflict free’.

2.3 Conclusion

Whether NGOs count as part of civil society depends on what underlying theory of civil society is being assumed. From the perspective of the definition of civil society simply as a realm of actors which are not governmental, profit-making or familial, NGOs do count as part of civil society. However, once we acknowledge the different traditions on which the idea of civil society rests, things become more complicated. (For a critical perspective on the history of the idea of civil society, see the summary of Michel Foucault’s ideas in 2.3.1.)

The liberal perspective certainly views NGOs as part of civil society. Development policy assigns NGOs an essential role in empowering community groups to hold dysfunctional governments to account (see Lewis, 2014: pp. 66–67), and sees them as organisations in which people can acquire the attitudes and skills which are essential to liberal democracy. However, the liberal view of civil society finds it hard to distinguish between NGOs which have a genuine pro-development agenda, and groups which adopt the form of an NGO in order to pursue a far-right or corporate agenda. It is easy for well-funded or confident individuals to create the appearance of an NGO through a website, to use NGO-like language couched as reasonable concern for the public good, and so influence public debate. To take just one example out of a multitude, in November 2017, a group called ‘Sense about Science’ was able to block media coverage of a study of deaths attributable to UK austerity policies, by presenting itself as a concerned NGO and arbitrarily questioning the reliability of the study (Small, 2017). (The role of industry-funded NGO-like groups in spreading disinformation within public debate is discussed in the modern study of ‘the science of ignorance’, or ‘agnotology’: a key reference is Conway and Oreskes (2010); see also Mirowski (2013: pp. 227-28).) Since the liberal view does not take into account the wider social and political aims of the organisations classed as part of civil society, it cannot give any grounds to exclude particular organisations from public debate.

By contrast, the radical view does take the political aims of organisations into account: civil society is the realm in which hegemonic ideas are defended and opposed. William Carroll (2016) studied a group of radical NGO think tanks (what he calls ‘transnational alternative policy groups’) which explicitly adopt a Gramscian perspective by conducting research and engaging in campaigns which contest the hegemony. The tendency among these organisations is to say that NGOs which do not contest the hegemony – NGOs which are too closely tied to state funders, or whose staff are primarily concerned with their careers – are not part of civil society. However, from a properly Gramscian perspective, this might not be quite the right conclusion to draw. For Gramsci, civil society is the place where hegemony is both contest and defended: it may therefore be that NGOs which do not contest the hegemony are in fact engaged in defending it, whether actively (such as the group ‘Sense about Science’ mentioned above) or passively. Such NGOs would therefore fall within the definition of civil society, but the radical perspective does have a clear way of conceptualising their activities with respect to political change: as for or against the hegemony.

The radical notion of civil society has been sustained through the development of global networks that maintain a more transformative agenda. Flexible, dynamic groupings of activists gained increasing prominence throughout the 1990s and 2000s at regional social forums and the World Social Forum, and in protests during meetings of international institutions and the Davos World Economic Forum. Although NGOs have
played a role in these events and networks, they tend to operate more as a link between
the radical groups and the formal sphere of international governance or, where
possible, the mainstream media.

Think of a group which seems to fall on the margins of the definition of civil
society. (Draw an example from your own context, or take one of the following
examples: the UK campaigning group Momentum; the website Breitbart News;
the mafia; Wikileaks; the Occupy movement; a workers’ cooperative growing
and selling organic vegetables.) Consider whether the liberal or radical
definitions would class them as part of civil society, and why/why not.

2.3.1 Michel Foucault on civil society and the foundations of liberal democracy

It can seem very natural to think that liberal democratic society can be divided up into
the three independent ‘realms’ of state, civil society and market. But where did this
idea come from? The philosopher Michel Foucault sought to uncover its history. His
work combines history and philosophy and is intended to make us question ideas that
we normally take for granted. (What follows, apart from the last paragraph, is a
selective summary of Foucault, 2008: pp. 267—317.)

An essential part of the idea of liberal democracy, Foucault says, is the assumption that
economics and commerce are governed by scientific laws: economics is seen as a
science which describes an independently existing and objective realm of economic
relationships. The state cannot change the laws of economics, and there is a
widespread belief that any economic intervention by the state will only bring about a
worse economic result overall. (Foucault justifies this claim by looking at what was
written about political economy in the 17th and 18th centuries.)

Since it cannot change matters of economics, a liberal democratic government’s
policies are judged as good or bad depending on whether they serve the non-economic
interests of the population, and these are the interests which people express through
the structures of civil society: they concern matters of health, education, religion,
recreation, identity, etc. The state’s functions become bound up with civil society, and
civil society becomes an extension of and an expression of state power (Foucault, 2008:
pp. 286, 308—313).

Within this very broad description, there are many ways of understanding exactly what
the laws of economics are (different theories of economics come and go, but there are
rarely any serious doubts that economics is an objective science), how government
should best fulfil its obligation not to interfere in the market, how the government
conceives of its populations and the nature of their interests, and how the state relates
to civil society. As these parameters change, different styles of government — what
Foucault calls ‘governmentalities’ — come to prominence, accompanied by changes in
the organisation of society and in what citizens consider to be normal and rational, but
all falling under the general heading of ‘liberal democracy’.

A recent shift, which Foucault describes at length, was the change from the welfare
state capitalism which characterised the post-war period up to the late 1970s, to the
neoliberal form of capitalism which is still current. This involved a change in what is
thought to be the rational way of governing, and a change in how the citizen was
conceived. According to the ‘neoliberal governmentalities’, human beings are seen as
rational, calculating creatures driven by self-interest. The market is seen not simply as
a sphere of free economic activity, but as a standard against which every personal and
governmental act should be measured. Although neoliberal philosophy says that the
government should not intervene in the market, in fact this idea of what a market is
requires constant government intervention to keep it stable, as well as to persuade the
population that neoliberal market forces are in the best interests of everyone—
despite evidence to the contrary. Under neoliberal governmentality, social policy
involves the extension of markets into public administration, and individuals should
relate on the basis of competition.

Foucault’s description of the nature of liberal democracy has implications for how we
understand the idea that state, market and civil society comprise three autonomous
realms. From Foucault’s perspective, this division of society into three ‘realms’ is not
an observational fact that we can discover through looking at society, but a tacit
assumption that we bring to it.

Under the heading of ‘governmentality’, many recent authors have sought to apply
Foucault’s ideas to studying NGOs (see for example Sending and Neumann (2006);
Joseph (2010)). An underlying idea in these studies is that the expansion of the NGO
sector was a product of the change from classical liberal to neoliberal governmentality
in the late 1970s. On this view, roughly speaking, NGOs were a means for governments
to promote the idea of market-based competition around the world, and NGOs which
accepted the market philosophy gained access to funds and were given new
opportunities to participate in international development conferences. (Finally, note
that many authors think that Foucault’s idea of ‘governmentality’ is a composite of
‘government’ and ‘mentality’, and so means something like ‘adopting the mindset of a
government’. The editor of Foucault’s lectures on governmentality says that this is a
misunderstanding, and that really the word relates to ‘governmental’ as ‘musicality’
relates to ‘musical’, and means a general style of approaching the art of government’. See Michel Senellart, in Foucault (2007: Note 126 on pp. 399—400).

Source: cited in text
Section 2 Self-Assessment Questions

4 Which of the following have been suggested as characteristic of CSOs? (Tick all that apply.)
   (a) They are places where citizens acquire skills and attitudes that are fundamental to democracy.
   (b) They divide their profits equally between all members.
   (c) They are institutions through which the state persuades the citizens that there is no alternative to the status quo.
   (d) They are organisations which foster close, familial ties between their members.
   (e) They are organisations which are not part of the state, the market or the family.

5 How, according to Sheri Berman, did a strong civil society help the Nazis rise to power? (Tick one.)
   (a) It gave the Nazis a high media profile.
   (b) It was a source of funds for the Nazi party.
   (c) It divided society up into small groups which did not communicate with each other, allowing fascist attitudes to spread piecemeal through society.
   (d) It provided the Nazi party with experienced staff.

6 Which of the following could be considered part of civil society? (Tick all that apply.)
   (a) a children's outdoor activity group
   (b) the office of the commissioner for freedom of information
   (c) the Catholic church
   (d) a management consultancy firm
   (e) The Trades Union Congress
   (f) a firm selling wind-up radios in sub-Saharan Africa
   (g) Oxfam
3.0 NGO ETHOS AND MANAGEMENT

Section Overview

In this section, we look inside NGOs to get a better idea of the sort of organisations they are, the sorts of goals they set themselves, and the distinctive challenges for the NGO manager.

Section Learning Outcomes

By the end of this section, students should be able to:

- describe common features of NGOs as seen from 'within'
- explain the complexities of the idea of 'seeking structural change', proposed as the broadest and most ambitious goal for NGOs.

3.1 The view from the inside

In this section, we turn to look at NGOs from within: having considered their history, and how they might be located within a theory of society, we now look at the actual experience of being inside an NGO.

Before you continue, write down four or five prominent features that you have observed within an NGO you know quite well. Think about these features based on your actual experience and observations, not from a theoretical point of view. What are NGOs actually like, from within?

What do people working in NGOs actually experience? We might think of things like the following:

Use of acronyms. It sometimes seems like every noun phrase has to be abbreviated to its initial letters, even if it is never used again. NGO staff laugh about this – ‘jargon bingo’ is a common game – even as they reproduce it.

Proliferating policies. NGOs are constantly writing or updating policy documents to formalise their operations. Sometimes this is done pre-emptively for fear that the authorities might audit a point of compliance; sometimes it reflects a tension with the board, which sees policy documents as a way of meeting governance responsibilities.

The office atmosphere. Among the people working in NGO offices, the atmosphere is often a particular mixture of friendliness and tension: staff tend to be generous and open-minded, but often stressed and under pressure. There may be little general chatting about TV programmes or irrelevant current affairs; on the other hand, staff may meet up after work with colleagues from their own or allied NGOs, and continue planning or sharing information. Banter is common, and when staff are alone together they might be shockingly irreverent about allies and issues. The staff in Western NGOs also tend to be homogenous, predominantly white, middle class and left wing, with degrees in humanities or social sciences.
The ethos. Alongside the aforementioned quirks, NGO offices are also places where informed and earnest discussions of crucial world issues can suddenly break out. In daily public life (at least in the West), discussion of global justice or environmental issues can be vaguely taboo; yet such conversations regularly take place within NGO offices, sparked by a new report, a visit from an overseas partner, current events, etc.

These remarks about some NGOs within the author’s experience are not intended as scientific observations, and there may be many NGOs which they don’t fit (with the exception of the use of acronyms, no doubt). However, they serve to introduce two ways of approaching NGOs ‘from the inside’: first, as regards their ethos and mission; second, as regards specific management issues. The next section addresses questions of ethos, and we close this unit by introducing the general issue of NGO management.

3.2 NGO goals

All NGOs set themselves ethical goals. These goals express themselves through the institutional aims of the NGO itself, and are also reflected in the sorts of people who put themselves forward to work for them. We’ll consider both facets of the ethos in turn.

Institutional goals

The majority of NGOs provide services which are connected with essential human well-being, notably education and health, or which help people gain a livelihood. For some NGOs, their humanitarian goals are expressed through campaigns and raising public awareness (Amnesty International, for example, is concerned with the human rights of political prisoners and oppressed groups, but pursues these through public campaigns and political pressure, not by sending humanitarian aid). A moderate number of large humanitarian NGOs have campaigning and education departments which frame their goals in terms of seeking global justice or structural change.

A small number of NGOs focus exclusively on campaigning and research. William Carroll (2016), as we have seen, has studied some of these NGOs which he terms ‘transnational alternative policy groups’. There are also NGOs which campaign against the policies of the developed world which are causes of global injustice: a number of countries, for instance, have campaigns against developing world debt, such as Erlassjahr in Germany, SLUG in Norway, the Comité pour l’abolition des dettes illégitime in Belgium, Jubilee Debt Campaign in England, Jubilee South in the Philippines, etc. These organisations may describe their aim as the reduction of poverty, but their means to do this are entirely political.

As we saw in Section 1 of this unit, there is a tension within the NGO sector concerning whether NGOs should concentrate on addressing humanitarian crises, or campaign on the political causes of poverty. This review of institutional goals gives us a clearer picture of what NGOs mean when they talk of seeking political change.

In particular, it is worth noting that even among the most radical political NGOs, there is an absence of revolutionary goals or calls for the dissolution of international institutions seen as causing poverty. Such goals are universally considered to be outside the scope of what an NGO can demand. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, for instance, have been blamed for creating poverty through their lending and conditionality policies (see among many others Easterly, 2005), and among
activists and academics there have been calls to close down these institutions. But such strong positions are very rarely reflected in NGO campaigns, which limit themselves to calls for specific reforms. Even the respected research NGO the Bretton Woods Project describes itself as a ‘watchdog and an advocate’ which ‘challenges’ the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank – which is to say, it exists in symbiotic relationship with the institutions it critiques. If questioned about this, NGOs would no doubt respond that it is unrealistic to call for the closure of an establishment like the World Bank, and that anyone who did so would lose credibility.

The idea of ‘seeking structural change’ is thus translated into projects to lobby the international financial and governmental institutions. Perhaps the most ambitious ‘structural change’ project in recent history was the 2005 Make Poverty History campaign, framed around the G8 Summit in the UK. The campaign had three aims: ‘Make trade fair’, which was understood as lobbying the G8 countries to make changes to the policies of the World Trade Organization; ‘Drop the Debt’, which was understood as lobbying for changes in the policies of the IMF and World Bank; and ‘More and better aid’, which was a request that the G8 increase development aid, coordinated by the OECD.

Thus, even at their most radical, NGOs’ calls for structural change are framed as modifications or reforms of the international political architecture. This is consistent with Reimann’s argument (in Section 1.3, above) that the NGO sector was fostered by states in order to be a means for people to engage with the institutions of global governance.

Recall the irritated comment by the NGO adviser with which we started this unit, implying, contrary to the academics, that NGOs were already deeply concerned with questions of structural change. Once we recognise that for NGOs ‘structural change’ is interpreted as promoting policy change within governments and international governance institutions, we can better understand the sense to which the parties to that debate were speaking at cross-purposes. The academics were calling for a ‘transformation of society’, but did not explain what they meant; an NGO would reply that in lobbying, say, the World Bank for an extension of its debt relief policy for impoverished countries, it is indeed seeking transformational change – at least, in the only sense that could have any credibility. The reader may be now be wondering: ‘credibility for whom?’ For the present, we must set this question aside.

**Staff motivation**

Alongside the institutional goals just discussed, we should consider the ethos of the people who come to work for NGOs. People can be attracted to work within NGOs for ethical or idealistic reasons, and this may be particularly the case in developed countries where unemployment is relatively low, and competition for NGO jobs is high. This motivation can be overstated, however; in many countries the prospect of Northern government funding, and the lack of many alternatives, can make NGOs highly attractive places to work, and although working for an NGO carries a commitment to a certain set of priorities, there is no guarantee that a member of staff will have ethical concerns in fulfilling their role. In the experience of one of the module authors, the question of who within the NGO sector was *un homme sérieux* was a lively and constant matter of debate among activists in West Africa. In developed countries, working for a charity, especially in a back-office role, can be little different from an administrative role in the private sector, and can attract a similar range of applicants.
Despite these considerations, there is clearly an ethical dimension to who applies for jobs in the NGO sector, and this is reflected in NGOs' abilities to recruit highly skilled and motivated staff – especially graduates – for lower wages. A 2016 study (Binder, 2016) claimed that the satisfaction of working in the UK third sector is equivalent to a notional salary increase of £22,000 per year (by comparison, the average UK wage is around £30,000). This study did not, however, look at how long this motivational boost might be sustained (see the discussion in Pitcher, 2016). In fact, the NGO sector also has a serious problem with burn out, with staff turnover rates estimated at double those of the private sector (Taylor, 2016).

For the module author, the experience of working in a small campaigning NGO was of unsustainable overwork, driven partly by the need to be effective with very few resources and partly by a pervasive feeling that the problem of global poverty – which we were meant to be addressing – was so desperate that nothing we could achieve would ever be meaningful. At the same time, there was no prospect for career advancement except by moving to a larger NGO which had a more corporate structure, and among these there were very few that addressed the issues of global justice which had been the original motivation.

According to a widely repeated (though possibly unreliable) statistic, NGO staff tend to last for two-and-a-half years, before changing jobs or leaving the sector altogether. By contrast, political activists within grassroots (non-NGO) campaigning groups seem to remain engaged for much longer, indeed for their entire lives. A renowned anti-war campaigner in York, UK, for instance, died in 2017 aged 95; she had been political activist and street campaigner up to the last year of her life (Lewis, 2017).

According to recent research, the high turnover of NGO staff is attributed more to poor internal management and weak organisational structures, than to the stresses associated with the types of issues with which NGOs deal. We therefore turn, finally, to the issue of NGO management itself.

3.3 NGO management

Management and MBA courses have become increasingly popular in recent years, and NGO management has some overlap with these more general management studies. However, the context in which NGOs operate, and the ways in which NGOs are distinct from government and business, reveal specific challenges for managers working in this sector. The non-profit motive, discussed in the previous section, brings a different ‘bottom line’ or focus from that of the private sector. Furthermore, the theory and practice of management within NGOs builds on a history of experience which is qualitatively different from that of management in either state or private sector organisations. There is a strong argument for management within the NGO sector to be worthy of study in its own right.

In comparison to the business and government sectors, the interest by NGOs in questions of management has been relatively recent. A culture of action, an attempt to minimise administration costs and a tendency to associate management tools with mainstream business led many early NGOs to distance themselves from the topic.

However, the growth and development of the sector has led to more reflection and a greater interaction of professionals between NGO, government and business. A rapidly
changing political environment and an increasingly competitive funding context means that NGOs are expected to perform better by a wide range of stakeholders. NGOs need to consciously analyse the context in which they operate, to adapt to changes and continually learn from experience. The general increase in funding opportunities for NGOs has meant that many have had to deal with the organisational symptoms of growth. Managing change and organisational development have become critical aspects of NGO management.

In an increasingly competitive environment, where donors more readily question NGO comparative advantages, examples abound of NGOs trying to do too much and ending up by doing nothing well, of poor financial management, or of staff becoming demotivated and frustrated. NGOs are therefore faced with the existential challenge of balancing or otherwise reconciling the following two imperatives:

- continually addressing and developing their management capability, while
- returning regularly to the question of whether developing managerial capability geared towards satisfying donor priorities stands in the way of effecting the more fundamental kinds of change that many NGOs see as their raison d’être.

Their diversity and distinctiveness make it essential for NGOs to:

- clarify their underlying theory of development and change
- focus on their core purpose and strategy
- manage a diverse range of stakeholders without losing the primacy of their clients or beneficiaries
- analyse and adapt to their environment
- manage staff effectively
- develop workable performance indicators despite the absence of a bottom line.

As can be seen from the list above, NGO managers face a range of complex challenges, which taken together provide a different focus from that of the private or public sector. The frameworks for understanding organisations described above suggest that NGO managers need to have a good understanding of the whole organisation and to see how a change in one area will impact on others. It is also clear that different organisations at different stages of their growth will require different leadership styles.
Section 3 Self-Assessment Questions

7 Which of the following might you expect to experience inside an NGO? (Pick all that apply.)
   (a) A highly diverse staff, drawing many of its members from the disadvantaged groups it serves.
   (b) People eating lunch at their desks.
   (c) A hesitation about expressing opinions on global and humanitarian issues.
   (d) Extensive policy documentation covering many aspects of the NGO’s operations.
   (e) A list of commonly used acronyms for new employees.
   (f) Office equipment featuring outdated computers and mismatched second-hand furniture.

8 Which of the following would be likely to be a goal of an NGO? (Pick all that apply.)
   (a) Providing solar panels to a rural community in Africa.
   (b) Providing solar panels to a rural community in Europe.
   (c) Raising funds for an oppressed minority to engage in armed struggle against a racist and authoritarian government.
   (d) Detailing human rights violations by a racist and authoritarian government against an oppressed minority.
   (e) Calling for the abolition of the International Monetary Fund.
   (f) Calling for a change in voting rights on the executive board of the International Monetary Fund.

9 According to a widely repeated statistic, what is the average length of employment of a staff member in an NGO?
   (a) 1.3 years
   (b) 2.5 years
   (c) 4.8 years
   (d) 8.2 years
UNIT SUMMARY

There is a tension in the NGO sector between whether NGOs should concentrate on providing humanitarian aid, or seek political solutions to the causes of poverty. However, there are differences in interpretations of the idea of seeking political solutions to poverty: while academic critics leave this idea undefined, NGOs tend to think that they are already pursuing this goal through their campaigns directed at international governance institutions.

The fact that NGOs identify structural change with policy change at the international governance level is rooted in the history of the development of the NGO sector. The NGO sector exploded in size in the 1980s and 1990s, and this expansion has continued (though more slowly) even after the financial crash of 2008. Although many factors contributed to the growth of the modern NGO sector, at root there was a deliberate effort by states to foster the expansion of NGOs, through providing funding, and creating new international agreements and institutions at which NGOs could focus their lobbying efforts. In recent years there has been an increase in concerns about the effectiveness of NGOs, expressed most prominently through the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

NGOs are considered to be part of civil society, but there are different understandings of what ‘civil society’ means. According to the liberal definition, civil society is a place in which citizens can learn essential democratic virtues, and a strong civil society is essential for a well-functioning democracy. This model lies at the root of much development policy which sees civil society capacity building as supporting the emergence of effective democratic states. However, this model has been challenged.

The alternative view of civil society, which is adopted by many radical NGOs, is that civil society is the set of institutions through which the state seeks to persuade its population that there is no alternative to its form of rule, and radical groups seek to contest this.

NGOs have a distinctive ethos, both in terms of the goals they set themselves and the people who work for them. Even the most radical NGOs, however, which see themselves as challenging the fundamentals of the economic and political system, restrict themselves to campaign for specific policy changes to states and intergovernmental institutions. In this sense, NGOs consider that they are pursuing transformational political change, but they accept limits on what kinds of transformation are credible.

Although NGOs are able to attract competent and principled staff, they have a difficulty in retaining them. Staff burnout is related to failures in NGO management, which is considered to be a separate discipline from business management in general, since it must take account of the non-profit motives of the organisation, and the ethical motivations of the staff.
UNIT SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What factors contributed to the expansion of the NGO sector in the 1980s and 1990s?

2. What is the difference between the liberal and radical conceptions of civil society?

3. Suppose an NGO stated it was seeking radical and fundamental change at the World Bank. What would it be likely to mean by this?
**KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

**civil society**  Normally defined as a realm of actors independent of state, the market and the family. According to the liberal tradition, the function of civil society in theories of political change is to be a foundation of a democratic state; according to the radical tradition, it is the set of institutions through which the state tries to persuade the population that there are no alternatives to the way it governs, and radical groups try to contest this.

**Paris Declaration**  The Second High Level Forum (Paris, 2005) marked the first time that donors and recipients both agreed to commitments and to hold each other accountable for achieving these. The commitments were laid out in a document called ‘the Paris Declaration’.

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**FURTHER STUDY MATERIALS**


The analysis is very helpful and points to changes which are beginning to be seen in the impact of the effectiveness agenda and the relationship between Northern and Southern NGOs.


Available from: https://www.intrac.org/resources/briefing-paper-29-busan-partnership-implications-civil-society/

This paper provides a concise overview of development and changes in the aid effectiveness agenda and the processes leading up to the Busan High Level Forum. Critical points raised focus on the increased voice of Southern NGOs (SNGOs) and emerging influence of new stakeholders such as China and the implications for civil society.


Available from: http://digitalarchive.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1064&context=political_science_facpub

This article which makes a powerful case that states deliberately inculcated the modern NGO sector as part of a project to create a system of globalised governance.
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