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Managing Non-Governmental Organizations Worldwide: Mapping the Knowledge Base of
Nonprofit Management in the Human Services

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Abstract

This article reviews the literature on managing the rapidly expanding number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide. The structures of NGOs vary from country to country based on a diverse set of activities that are designed to respond to unique social, economic, cultural and political conditions. The literature is categorized in terms of the strategies for managing and leading, financing and evaluating, managing human resources, and managing different types of services. The literature captures the growing demands for diverse funding streams, the development and maintenance of inter-organizational relationships, and managing internal operations. Globalization has created additional challenges by requiring managers to oversee multiple sites, often in different countries. This review of the knowledge base of international non-governmental organizations concludes with implications for future research.

KEY WORDS: International nonprofits; nonprofit management

Managing Non-Governmental Organizations Worldwide

Introduction

The nonprofit sector has experienced significant changes over the past thirty years in relation to political, social, and economic environmental forces that have altered how nonprofit agencies finance and deliver human services. The restructuring of the nonprofit sector has made it essential for nonprofit leaders to develop new systems of management and governance that build organizational capacity to develop and manage a diverse funding base, respond to the accountability requirements of multiple funders, manage employees and volunteers, market the organization and oversee inter-organizational relationships and partnerships, manage daily operations, and monitor service delivery. These changes are widely reflected in the literature addressing the management of the United States nonprofit sector.

The literature suggests that non-governmental organizations in other countries have undergone sector changes that parallel those that have occurred in the United States. The literature on international nonprofits indicates that the researchers and scholars have given attention to the management of non-governmental organizations, specifically nonprofit management and leadership, nonprofit financing and evaluation, managing human resources and managing different types of nonprofit organizations. This suggests that the changes witnessed in the United States actually reflect parallel shifts to those in the management of the voluntary sector globally.

To better understand these changes, it is helpful to review the articles published on the management of organizations in three major journals over the past thirty years. This analysis, one of five in this edition, addresses the topic of the management of nonprofits throughout the world and identifies implications for research and practice.

Methods

The review presented in this paper is based on a thorough search of articles published in *Administration in Social Work* (first published in 1977), *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* (first published in 1990), and *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (first published in 1971). These three nationally recognized journals were selected based on their history of focusing on nonprofit management in the human services. The University of California's library internet search engine was used to identify all of the articles published on nonprofit management in these three journals since their inception until 2008. In the fall of 2007 two independent raters conducted an initial sort of the total sample of 2013 article abstracts to identify major categories that would facilitate the mapping of the knowledge base of nonprofit management in the human services. Once the initial sorts were completed, the categories were compared and a set of 23 categories was agreed upon.

The 23 categories were then used to sort the 2013 abstracts, resulting in a 79% inter-rater reliability. Disagreements during the sorting process were primarily a result of different interpretations and definitions associated with similar topics. For example, one reviewer placed all of the university education abstracts in the education and training category while the other researcher placed these same abstracts in the personnel category. Once these differences were identified and discussed, full agreement was easily obtained for the remainder of the abstracts and the categorization process was completed.

The categories were then clustered into five overarching themes that are illustrated in *Figure 1*.

[Insert *Figure 1*]

The five major themes are defined as:

- *Leading and Managing Nonprofits* includes organizational history and theory, leadership, management, governance, communications and marketing, and managing inter-organizational relationships including the external environment (e.g., the law, public policy, professional associations, and the community at large) (638 article abstracts).
- *Financing and Evaluating Nonprofits* includes the financial management of nonprofits, fundraising and philanthropic sources of revenue, social enterprise, accountability requirements, program evaluation, and management information systems (328 article abstracts).
- *Managing Human Resources* includes the management of personnel (including supervision and performance appraisal), employee wellbeing, workforce diversity, employee education and training, and volunteer workforces (436 article abstracts).
- *Managing Different Types of Nonprofits* includes nonprofit classification and research, membership associations, citizen/political participation, community development nonprofits and nonprofit service sectors (419 article abstracts).
- *Managing NGOs Worldwide* includes the management of nonprofits in different countries around the world related to managing and leading, financing and evaluating, human resource management, and service sectors. (192 article abstracts).

The major limitations of this method include the following: 1) inter-rater reliability would have been enhanced by the involvement of additional raters, 2) the rating process could have been enhanced by reviewing the entire articles rather than relying solely on the published abstracts (a very costly alternative), and 3) while it is assumed that the majority of articles on nonprofit management related to the human services appear in these three journals, it is well-

known that other journals publish articles on nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Managing NGOS Worldwide

The analysis of 192 article abstracts on the theme of international nonprofits reflects the changing roles played by nonprofit organizations in the international arena during the last three decades. The researchers are focused on nonprofits organizations throughout the world, including developing and emerging countries. The literature suggests that in the 1970s and 1980s research on the voluntary sector addressed the structures and changing functions of nonprofits. In the 1990s, the literature reflects increased attention to the relationship between the state and the voluntary sector and the impact of globalization. In the 2000s, the focus shifted to the management of nonprofit organizations.

Leading and Managing Nonprofits

The literature pays some attention to the history, structure and processes of non-governmental organizations. The historical roots and evolution of the non-governmental sector in several countries are described (Eisenstadt, 1972; Hegland, 1980; Lanfant, 1976; Archambault, 2001; Fletcher, 1985; Wagner, 2000) along with the landscape of non-governmental social welfare organizations (Graycar, 1984) and the characteristics and structures of these agencies (Douglas, 1972; Koldewyn, 1984). Special attention is given to the characteristics of the voluntary sector and the range of services in Russia (Leitch, 1997), Sweden (Grassman & Svedberg, 1996), Ghana (Gray, 1976a) Italy (Pasquinelli, 1989), and Mexico (Koldewyn, 1986). Similar attention is given to the development of the Urban Industrial Missions of the Korean churches (Choe, 1980), the European Commission's regulation of human service organizations (Lange, 2003), the role of voluntary social action in post-war Britain

(Webb, 1979), and the role of voluntary welfare associations during the Nazi period in Germany (Bauer, 1990).

The multiple roles played by non-governmental organizations are explored, including the development of for-profit enterprises (Abzug & Webb, 1996), parliamentary campaigns (Berg-Schlosser, 1980), the need to address gaps in service delivery (Reiner, 1991), and the preparation of communities for self-government and political independence (Loewenberg, 1991). The literature features the issues confronting nonprofit leaders and managers (Parvey, 1972; Perlmutter, 1995), the development of leadership skills (James, 2008) and the impact of for-profit management techniques on the nonprofit sector (Dart, 2004; Klausen, 1995). Attention also is given to organizational developmental stages (Strichman, Bickel, & Marshood, 2008), the size of an organization and its relationship with governing board performance (Cornforth, Simpson, 2002; Nelson, 1997), the relationships between organizational leaders (Hoye, 2004; Hoye, 2006), supervisors and staff (Tsui, Ho, Lam, 2005; Wan, 2007), and service providers and recipients (Macarov, 1982). The influence of organizational and personal characteristics on strategic planning also is noted (Boehm & Litwin, 1997; Friedmann, Florin, Wandersman & Meier, 1988).

Globalization has created an environment that has greatly influenced the management of nonprofit organizations (Dichter, 1999; Lindenberg, 1999) and produced new challenges such as financing, technology, and the transition to global governance structures (Cinnéide, 1998; Dehne, Friedrich, Nam, & Parsche, 2008; Foreman, 1999; Henry, 1999; Laidler-Kylander, Quelch, & Simonin, 2007; Sahm, 1999). Particular attention is given to the strategies needed to manage the changing context of international non-governmental organizations, particularly in relation to change management, developing new funding relationships, building inter-

organizational relationships, and implementing effective advocacy strategies (Biberson & Jean, 1999; Bryer & Magrath, 1999; Edwards, 1999; Gnaerig & MacCormack, 1999; Lindenberg, 2001; Lindenberg & Patrick, 1999; Offenheiser, Holcombe, Hopkins, 1999; Padilla & Daigle, 1998; Phillips, 2002). Also addressed is the impact of decentralization on NGOs, especially between field offices and headquarters (Hudson & Bielefeld, 1997; McPeak, 2001; McPeak, 1999) and the diffusion of social services across a region (Kelley, 1984). Communication plays a crucial role in the success of any organization; however, the literature suggests that there has been a slow acceptance of networking technologies among non-governmental organizations (Burt & Taylor, 2000). There is a new emphasis on the information-sharing challenges between NGOs and their key international funders and stakeholders (Ebrahim, 2002; Seshadri & Carstenson, 2007).

A profound shift has taken place in the roles played by the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. Governmental bodies around the world are developing relationships with non-governmental organizations, with particular attention to the interactions between public, private and nonprofit organizations (Fuertes-Fuertes & Maset-Llaudes, 2007; Neal, 2008; Pickvance, 1987; Wilson, 1992; Suda, 2006), the relationships between government and citizen associations (Kabalo, 2006), and the relationships between governments and voluntary agencies (Andreassen, 2008; Keeny, 1973).

Governments may choose to deliver human services through organizations located in their domain, through the market, or by means of voluntary nonprofit organizations. This array can be reflected as a continuum of organizations from public to private as in Germany (Schuppert, 1991), as a pattern of consultation processes between private authorities, local governments, and voluntary associations (Stringer, 1981), as a partnership in policy

implementation between the state and civil society (Brinkerhoff, 1999), or as a monitoring of financial arrangements underlying the public-nonprofit partnerships (Gjems-Onstad, 1990; Gorsky & Mohan, 2001). Intermediary bodies also play a role between the voluntary sector and government (Lansley, 1996) along with the progressive blurring of boundaries between the government and voluntary sector (Billis, 1993). Partnerships with intermediary bodies also impact the building of non-governmental organization capacity (Sanyal, 2006).

The relationship between the non-governmental sector and its external environment and societal structures represents a major theme in the literature (Bode, 2003; Drake, 1972; Douglas, 1980; York & Zychlinski, 1996). The relationship also includes the multiple issues, opportunities, and obstacles associated with inter-agency relationships and agency collaboration (Judge, 1972; Lewis, 1998; Sokolowski, 1998) as well as the challenges of cross-border cooperation as in Ireland (Birrell & Hayes, 2004). Changes in public policy can have considerable impact on the growth and management of voluntary agencies (Harris, 2000; Qiusha, 2002), the way that the nonprofit sector responds to political and environmental changes (Meinhard & Foster, 2003; Wolch & Rocha, 1993), and the role that voluntary welfare agencies can play in the development and implementation of public policy (Gray, 1977a; Thornton & Stringer, 1979; Yishai, 1990). The relationships between non-governmental organizations and their governments in the areas of social and economic activity can be captured in case studies (Hsia & White, 2002) as well as the role of non-governmental organizations in promoting population control (Kyong-Dong, 1975).

Financing and Evaluating Non-Governmental Organizations

In addition to the management of daily operations and interactions with other organizations, managers of non-governmental organizations are also responsible for ensuring the

financial security of their agency. This requires putting systems into place that monitor income generation, management, and responses to funders.

Considerable attention is given to the financial challenges confronting non-governmental organizations across the world, ranging from charitable organizations in Britain (Osborne & Hems, 1995) to the role of government in financing non-governmental organizations in other parts of the world (Miller, 1984). The changing global economy and an increasingly competitive funding environment have impacted the sector over the last three decades. For example, the turbulent economic climate of the non-governmental arts community in the 1990s contributed to many management challenges (Palmer, 1993). Revenue diversification has become an effective response to the policy changes that have threatened the financial stability of non-governmental organizations (Foster & Meinhard, 2005).

The philanthropic community can play an important role in facilitating financial diversification, especially the link between the donor's trust in a non-governmental organization and their giving behavior (Bekkers, 2003; Sargeant & Lee, 2004). The organizational characteristics and methods used to generate income are linked to different forms of philanthropy (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Passey & Lyons, 2006) that range from corporate philanthropy (Dunn, 2004; Lombardo, 1991; Weinblatt, 1992) to the role of social enterprise (Mancino & Thomas, 2005). While there is considerable emphasis on government and philanthropic funding, only limited attention is given to the accountability requirements that are built into government contracts (McDonald, 1997).

Managing Human Resources

The management of non-governmental organizations also involves the recruitment, management and retention of a paid and volunteer workforce. Non-governmental organizations

rely heavily on human resources that provide significant employment opportunities but pay little attention to employee work conditions and well-being. Today managing human resources is a central function of nonprofit management with increased attention to career development (Almond & Kendall, 2000; Onyx & Maclean, 1996) and career preferences (Weiss & Gal, 2004).

The organizational environment plays an important role in worker well-being and organizational effectiveness. The relationship between managerial style and organizational climate (Sala, 2003; Hansson, 2006) and the effect that organizational climate can have on agency decision-making (Prager & Shnit, 1985/86) and departmental cooperation (MacKeith, 1994) also have received increased attention. There is also evidence that diversity and inclusion are critical predictors of organizational commitment and performance (Cho & Mor Barak, 2008; Findler, Wind, & Mor Barak, 2007).

There is increased interest in the individual characteristics of those who work for or volunteer in non-governmental organizations (Ahmad, 2007; Garcia-Mainar & Marcuello, 2007; Gustafson, Booth, Johnson, 1979; Handy, Kassam, Ranade, 2002; Handy, Ranadee, & Kassam, 2007) along with the characteristics of activists in non-governmental organizations (Heunks, 1991). In addition, emphasis is being given to employee roles and responsibilities as they relate to worker well-being and organizational functioning along with a focus on paraprofessional social service workers (Sherer, 1986), the establishment of job descriptions (Bargal & Shamir, 1984), attitudes across professions (Mannheim & Papo, 2000), organizational development practices (James, 2004), employee creativity (Jaskyte, 2008) and management skills (Harrow & Mole, 2005). The formal educational backgrounds and training needs of nonprofit employees and managers are also considered (Meijs, Ten Hoorn, & Brudney, 2007; Mirabella, Gemelli,

Malcolm, & Berger, 2007; Neville & Murray, 2008; Palmer & Bogdanova, 2008; Savaya, Packer, Stange, & Namir, 2008).

Volunteers make up a significant portion of the workforce in non-governmental organizations and can be examined in the context of sociological modernization theories (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2004) and socio-economic development (Smith, 1973). Particular attention is given to the reasons for volunteering (Boz & Palaz, 2007; Sherer, 2004; Zeldin, 1980), volunteer characteristics (Yeung, 2004), the roles played by volunteers (Sarpellon, 1974), strategies for managing female volunteers (Leonard, Onyx & Hayward-Brown, 2004), cross-cultural demographics of male volunteers (Palisi & Palisi, 1984), and the relationship between volunteers and professionals in social service organizations (Lowy, 1982).

Managing Different Types of Nonprofits

In addition to managing human and financial issues, specialized management capacities are needed in different service sectors. The different sectors include service delivery, advocacy, and charity. However, an international nonprofit classification method may help map the knowledge base of the global non-governmental community (Smith, 1996). This typology could enhance research priorities and themes (Anheier, 1990; Lewis, 2002; Moyer, 1985), the development of appropriate research methodologies, (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2006; Vandenberg & Fear, 1983), and specification of the types of data to be collected and analyzed (Selle & Oymyr, 1992).

Research studies focus on the underlying structures of voluntary agencies in Britain (Billis & Harris, 1992), cross-cultural patterns of voluntary behavior (Palisi, 1986), shifts in the status of nonprofits in France and Japan (Moore, 2001), voluntary associations in Paris and Geneva (Meister, 1972), causes of dissolution among Spanish nonprofit associations (Fernandez,

2008), and barriers to effective partnership between the United States nonprofit sector and African non-governmental organizations (Ashman, 2001).

Membership associations comprise one type of non-governmental organization with unique membership characteristics and ways that members influence the organization (Torpe, 2003; Wollebaek & Stromsnes, 2008) as well as differences in how members in different countries can influence international associations (Kriesberg, 1974). The governance of professional associations is also unique (Friedman & Phillips, 2004).

The participatory roles that citizens play in their involvement with non-governmental organizations represent another sector (Barker, 1979; Xu, 2007). Citizen participation generally focuses on local issues (Helm, 1981; Wroblewski & Zawadski, 1979), including nuclear energy policy in Holland (Ernst, 1980), government-promoted citizen participation (Nanetti, 1980), neighborhood involvement in community development (Cnaan & Katan, 1986), and community development programs in developing societies (Diaz-Albertini, 1993; Kirby, 1973).

Non-governmental organizations also deliver specific services such as education programs (Nordhaug, 1990), substance abuse services (Butschi & Cattacin, 1995), health services (Prentice, 2008), youth services (Pedersen, 1973), services for the physically and emotionally disabled (Kramer, 1979) and advocacy related to environmental issues (Desai & Snavely, 1998; Vernon, 1980). Self-help associations also provide opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making and policies that influence the services that they receive from government (Gidron & Bargal, 1986; Trojan, Halves, Wetendorf, 1986; Van Harberden & Raymakers, 1986).

Other forms of voluntary organizations are specific to their countries and include community groups in Great Britain (Sills, Butcher, Collis, & Glen, 1980), common-interest

associations in Japan (Norbeck, 1972), political interest groups in Britain (Baer, 1979), a community council in Scotland (Masterson, 1979), voluntary sport organizations in Norway (Enjolras, 2002), intermediary union organizations and Catholic NGOs in Ireland (Besel & Brown, 2007; Bruton & Williamson, 2005), theatre companies in Germany (Boerner & Gebert, 2005) and community centers in Israel (Hasenfeld & Schmid, 1989), political ad hoc groups in Norway (Moren, 1976) and intermediary organizations in Croatia (Coury & Lucanin, 1996).

Implications for Research

The social, economic, cultural and political diversity within the international nonprofit sector has contributed to a unique pattern of voluntary organizations, citizen involvement and philanthropy. Non-governmental organizations have grown rapidly over the past three decades all over the world and face the multiple challenges of leadership and management, finance and evaluation, human resource management, and managing different types of nonprofits.

Leading and Managing Nonprofits: Nonprofit managers are experiencing growing demands that include overseeing a diverse financial base, developing and maintaining inter-organizational relationships, and managing daily operations. Globalization has created additional challenges by requiring managers to oversee multiple sites, often in different countries. Although information technology provides an essential resource for communication and management, the cultural, political, and economic differences constitute significant barriers. Exploring the following questions can help inform future research:

1. What practices can improve the capacity of managing and leading non-governmental organizations throughout the world?
2. What management information structures would make communication more effective and what technological innovations can help facilitate the sharing of information?

Financing and Evaluating Nonprofits: The changing global economy and increased donor involvement has added a demand for greater accountability and transparency of nonprofits. As a result, nonprofits have been challenged to improve their financial management and information systems to respond to greater accountability requirements. Inquiry into the following questions can help inform future research:

1. What are the current accountability requirements and how are they affecting non-governmental organizations throughout the world?
2. What strategies can the international nonprofit community use to develop a diversified funding base and become more entrepreneurial?

Managing Human Resources: The growth of nonprofits has created a greater emphasis on recruiting, managing and retaining a talented and committed workforce. The following questions can help inform future research:

1. What are the socio-demographic characteristics of the non-governmental organizational workforce?
2. What human resource issues are confronting non-governmental organizations and what strategies can be used to respond to these challenges?
3. How has globalization changed the human resource needs of nonprofit organizations?

Managing Different Types of Nonprofits: Different forms of voluntary organizations have emerged to respond to the changing needs of a diverse community. There is limited research on the scope of the sector and best practices in international nonprofits. Inquiry into the following question can help inform future research:

1. What use can be made of efforts to classify non-governmental organizations on a global level?

2. What are the common themes and trends affecting nonprofits across the world?
3. What are the primary challenges to conducting nonprofit research and what strategies and best practices can be used to overcome these challenges?

Building Research Agenda

The structures of non-governmental organizations vary widely in different countries and are involved in diverse activities based on social, cultural, political and economic conditions. While there are similar issues facing nonprofits in the United States and in countries around the world, there are several important differences. For example, there appears to be very little attention to accountability requirements and program evaluation systems in non-governmental organizations around the world. Perhaps this is related to the limited description of financial management issues in the literature on non-governmental organizations, especially in relationship to budget cuts, competition for resources, funding diversification, and the different levels of support that governments provide for their voluntary sector.

The breadth of research summarized in this review of the literature can inform research questions related to the improvement of NGO classification, management strategies, financial management systems, and effectiveness. Inquiry into the following research questions could generate knowledge that could inform research and practice.

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Figure 1: Mapping the Major Topics on Nonprofit Management

Leading and Managing Nonprofits	Financing and Evaluating Nonprofits	Managing Nonprofit Human Resources	Managing Different Types of Nonprofits		Managing NGOs Worldwide
Nonprofit History	Financial Management	Personnel	Research and Classification of Nonprofits		Leading and Managing NGOs
Nonprofit Organizations – Theory	Philanthropy	Workforce Diversity	Membership Associations		Financing and Evaluating NGOs
Governance	Fundraising	Workforce Education and Training	Citizen/Political Nonprofits		Managing NGO Human Resources
Leadership	Social Enterprise	Volunteers	Community Development Nonprofits		Managing Different Types of NGOs
Management	Evaluation and Information Management		Nonprofit Service Sectors		
Managing External Relations					
Marketing Nonprofit Services					
Policy, Law, and Ethics					

