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Organizations and
Local Development

Michael M. Cernea

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Michael M. Cernea

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A B S T R A C T

Recent years have witnessed the explosive emergence of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as a major collective actor in development activities. Although NGOs are not a novel social phenomenon, the proportions, scale and pace at which NGOs have been multiplying and expanding, the new functions and roles they are taking up, and their increased sophistication and mobilization capabilities represent new and significant trends.

Social development at the local level is the broadest arena within which NGOs provide their contribution. This paper discusses five sets of issues relevant to NGO's contribution and strategic issues for NGOs' future development.

The first part identifies three characteristics of current NGO growth: expansion of their numbers and constituencies; broadening functions; and more complex internal institutional structures.

Section two deals with international resource transfer through NGOs for development purposes. It is argued, however, that despite the growing flow of financial resources for development that is channeled through NGOs, the mainstay of NGOs' contribution to development is not financial, but organizational. The essence of the NGOs' approach is not to financially induce development, but to organize people into structures for group action.

The paper's third section discusses the nature, functions and types of NGOs vis-a-vis the local government and the state. A category of "economic NGOs" is identified within the typology of grassroot organizations, as being most closely related to the economic/productive activities of their membership and their needs for various kinds of services.

The fourth section analyzes the main patterns of NGO strengths and weaknesses in working for local development. NGOs' capacity for outreach to the poor is emphasized, and such constraints as the limited replicability of NGO activities, limited self-sustainability, limited capacity for technical analysis and lack of a broad programming strategy are discussed. Several substantive areas of NGO activity at the local level are delineated and their potential roles in natural resources management are emphasized. The dilemma between the small scale of NGO activities and the need for large scale impact is discussed.

The fifth section discusses how international and bilateral development agencies can work with NGOs and strengthen

their role, in light of the World Bank's recent experiences in cooperating with them. Four main areas are delineated: operational collaboration; development education; policy dialogue; and public policy frameworks for NGOs. The recent (August 1988) policy guidelines issued by the World Bank to direct its work and collaboration with nongovernmental organizations are summarized here.

The final section outlines two strategic issues for further NGOs development: organizational build-up and the need for favorable policy and administrative environments.

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NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

"The vast majority of the [NGO] bodies are national or local in nature, and a successful transition to sustainable development will require substantial strengthening of their capacities. To an increasing extent, national NGOs draw strength from association with their counterparts in other countries and from participation in international programmes and consultations. NGOs in developing countries are particularly in need of international support - professional and moral as well as financial - to carry out their roles effectively...

Governments should establish or strengthen procedures for official consultation and more meaningful participation by NGOs in all relevant intergovernmental organizations."

OUR COMMON FUTURE: The Bruntland Report.
World Commission on Environment
and Development (1987)

I. THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF NGOS GROWTH: INTRODUCTION

The historical period we live in is one in which the dominant role of government agencies in the planning of development activities is firmly established, and growing. Yet in recent years we have witnessed the explosive emergence of nongovernment organizations (NGOs) as a major collective actor in development activities and on the public agenda in general. This is a significant political, social and economic, trend. Within the traditional areas of encounter between the state and the people, this new actor is asserting himself with increasing force.

NGOs are by no means a novel social formation, a "product" of the 70's or the 80's. Such organizations have

existed for longer than most governments, even if NGOs were then known by other names.

Taking a closer look, however, there are at least three characteristics of the recent NGO development that are new:

First, the scale and pace with which organizations of such nature have been multiplying and expanding during the last 10-15 years, both in numbers and membership, have no match in past development. Numerous NGOs have come to life in both developed and developing countries in virtually all areas of public endeavor and are active on either local or national interests;

Second, old nongovernmental organizations have taken up functions that are new for them, adding development-oriented and production-support activities to their traditional concern for relief and welfare (e.g., agricultural development work by charity organizations; religious groups militating for secular causes; new environmental concerns; etc.). Thus, NGOs assert themselves powerfully much beyond their zone of traditional specialization, including domains conventionally regarded as the exclusive prerogative of the government;

Third, NGOs, in particular the poor people's organizations, have become internally more sophisticated and better organized, more aware of their power, and thus have increased their militancy and mobilization capabilities. This strengthening of their internal organization has been complemented by a trend towards establishing linkage systems among NGOs. Webs and networks of NGOs are being created where before only discrete NGOs existed, and coordinating bodies or NGO councils and federations have been established at national levels, particularly in the countries of the South.

The recent explosive growth of nongovernmental organizations^{1/} does not mean, however, that their potential has already peaked, the same way, for instance, the community development movement in India reached its apogee in the 50's and 60's. The NGO curve is still rising.

Nongovernmental organizations can be arrayed along a broad spectrum that ranges from strong to very fragile and weak; from international and central to local and peripheral; from very large and federated to small and isolated, from durable and growing to ephemeral and short-lived. Twin processes are at work now: an inner-oriented one by which NGOs are striving to overcome structural weakness, dispersion and amorphousness within their own house, and a parallel outer-oriented process, by which NGOs are learning to contribute more effectively to the broader societal goals they pursue.

A widening international discussion about their prospects, constraints, weaknesses and strategic objectives is being fuelled by the very growth of NGOs. Where to go now? How can their fragility, small scale, and lack of replicability be overcome? How can their voluntary nature be reinforced and how can voluntarism as a major resource be expanded? Which are the areas of comparative advantage for NGO activities? How can they confront and overcome political obstacles? How can new relationships with international development organizations be formed?

Some of these widely discussed questions will be touched upon in this paper.

Local level social development is the broadest arena within which NGOs provide their contribution. The present paper will address several key issues relevant to NGO's local contribution, as well as strategic questions pertinent to future NGO

development. The paper's next section will deal with international resource transfers through NGOs for development purposes and the relationship between NGOs' financial and organizational contributions; the third chapter will discuss the nature of NGOs as grassroots organizations, particularly the production-related and economic NGOs, and their function vis-a-vis the state and local governments; the fourth will analyze the main patterns of NGO strengths and weaknesses for local development; the fifth section will explore how international and bilateral development agencies can work with NGOs and strengthen their role, in light of the World Bank's recent experiences in, and new guidelines for, cooperating with NGOs; finally, the sixth section will outline some strategic areas and issues for expanding the organizational capacity of NGOs and their impact on development.

II. INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE TRANSFERS THROUGH NGOS

A key factor, but definitely not the only one, that has contributed to the enhanced recognition given to the NGO movement is the increased role played by international and national NGOs in raising private funds for development and channelling them to developing countries.

Financial Flows

Table 1 shows that over the 1970-1985 period, NGO yearly disbursements for development in the third world increased from an estimated \$0.9 billion US\$ in 1970 to \$1.4 billion in 1975 and to \$4 billion in 1985. The bulk of this amount (about three quarters) represents private funds raised by the NGOs themselves, due to their development information and education work in advocating private voluntary contributions.

In an era of declining financial resources available for development purposes in most debt burdened third world countries, the incremental resources supplied by NGOs are particularly valuable. At present, over 2,200 NGOs mobilize financial and human resources in DAC member countries^{2/} for projects they operate directly or in partnership with countless associations and groups in developing countries (OECD, p. 72).

At the same time, the major donor governments of OECD countries have allocated a fraction of their official development assistance (ODA) to NGOs for use in NGO-initiated activities. This fraction has increased eleven times between 1975 and 1985 to a total of \$1.1 billion, although in 1985 this amount decreased in both absolute and relative terms, compared to the prior year (1984). We will discuss further in this paper the significance of the increased allocations of official aid funds for NGO use. But it is to be noted that even without counting the government

allocations, the private funds raised and used by NGOs came to represent in 1985 a full 10 percent of the ODA funds provided by OECD countries.

Table 1

The Financial Contribution of Nongovernmental Organizations
to Development Assistance 1970-85

(US\$ billion, at current prices and exchange rates)

	1970	1975	1980	1983	1985
Flows through NGOs					
Private grants	0.9	1.3	2.4	2.3	2.9
ODA contributions	<u>N.A.</u>	<u>0.1</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>1.3</u>	<u>1.1</u>
Total disbursements	N.A.	1.4	3.4	3.6	4.0
Development assistance					
DAC ODA - net	6.9	13.8	27.3	27.5	29.6
Private grants - net	<u>0.9</u>	<u>1.3</u>	<u>2.4</u>	<u>2.3</u>	<u>2.9</u>
Total	7.8	15.1	29.7	29.8	32.5
Percentage of GNP:					
ODA	0.34	0.36	0.38	0.36	0.35
Private grants	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.04
Other:					
Developing countries' current account deficit (US\$ billion)	N.A.	57.1	129.3	97.5	80.0
NGO disbursements as percentage of current account deficit	N.A.	2.5	2.6	3.7	5.0
ODA contributions to NGO as a percentage of NGO distributions	N.A.	7.1	29.4	36.1	27.5
ODA contributions to NGOs as a percentage of ODA	N.A.	0.7	3.6.	4.7	3.6

Source: DAC/OECD (1987) Paris/van der Heijden

Increased financial resources did not come without problems; on the contrary, difficult questions started to be raised about NGO independence, about geographical allocation of resources, about interference in the NGOs own agenda and approaches, about priorities, etc. These are important questions (see, in this respect: Dreesmann, 1987; Smith, 1987; van der Heijden, 1987; Hellinger, 1988; Gordon-Drabek, 1987) but they are not the object of the present paper; various sections of the NGO community are currently engaged in re-examination and discussion to provide their own answers to these often difficult questions.

Organizational Capacity Building: Putting People First

Despite the considerable increase in the volume of financial flows channeled through NGOs, it is, however, beyond any doubt that the mainstay of NGOs contribution to development is not financial, but organizational.

The organizational capacity that comes to life through NGOs and becomes engaged in development action represents its fundamental strategic resource and crucial contribution. While important, financial resources in themselves are not everything. Often they are quite a secondary factor in triggering genuine development.

The essence of the NGO approach is not to induce development financially, but to mobilize people into organized structures of voluntary group action for self-reliance and self-development. NGOs themselves are one expression of such voluntarism incorporated into organized structures. In turn, NGOs mobilize voluntarism further, thus amplifying the social energy put in the service of people's self-development.

The first and foremost NGO emphasis is on purposively organizing people for reaching their common objectives. This

way, NGOs are "putting people first" in their work as a methodology and as a goal (Cernea, 1985, 1987b), particularly the poor groups, and are themselves an embodiment of this principle. They organize people to make better use of their own local productive resources, to create new resources and services, to promote equity and alleviate poverty, to influence government actions towards these same objectives and to establish new institutional frameworks that will sustain people-centered or actor-centered development.

The NGO priority on first organizing the people embodies a philosophy that recognizes the centrality of people in development policies and action programs and the importance of self-organization. This is often tantamount to a reversal of the conventional approaches that focus on technology alone, or on financial resources alone, and deal with people virtually as an afterthought. Putting people first is a reversal because it means taking a social-capacity building starting point in the very thinking, planning for, and organizing of development activities.

The remainder of this paper will therefore explore, in more detail, the various issues and requirements related to NGOs' role and growth as builders of organizational capacity and as social (rather than financial) mobilizers in development work.

III. NGOs AS GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS

In considering NGOs potential as capacity building agents for local development, it is necessary to understand their origin and nature as forms of social organization.

Location, Origin and Content

At first, the term "nongovernmental organizations" seems deceptively simple. But the residual nature of the term itself offers such a broad umbrella for a kaleidoscopic collection of organizations, that attempts at simple definitions are quickly rendered meaningless. It is necessary to recognize that existing NGOs are of several different categories and that their characteristics only partly overlap. The collection is sufficiently heterogeneous to require internal analytical distinctions by various criteria.

By location of NGO activities, a distinction is usually made between international, national and local NGOs. International NGOs are those which represent either a federation of national organizations or a nationally-based organization which defines its area of work as encompassing countries other than the home country. These are often powerful and influential agencies in their own right. National NGOs represent an intermediate level, best understood flexibly as supra-local organizations grouping together a number of local NGO units more or less similar in their objectives, even if they achieve only partial -- rather than full national -- coverage. The immense majority of NGOs, however, are grassroots organizations, that grow out of local communities and are committed to having an impact on their constituents' lives. Making a rather rough approximation, these are usually organizations whose territorial radius stays within the subdistrict level. The local or grassroots NGOs are the main subject of this paper.

By origin, and by activity content, NGOs are again very different and hardly lend themselves to analytical common denominators. They are often typologized as "development", "environmental", "philanthropic", "vocational training", "research", "advocacy", or "emergency aid" nongovernmental organizations. But these compartmentalizations are abstractions and real life bursts out: if one is what one does, the same NGO may fall in several categories at the same time.

Many, probably most, international NGOs did not start as explicit development organizations at all: they were often drawn to development goals after first providing relief in emergency situations, and came to understand that in developing countries relief was not enough. In moving towards new development goals, they do not necessarily have to give up relief or welfare goals. Moreover, there are new NGOs being established these days purposively for relief work, for circumstances that make such work imperative and urgent; such NGOs are as legitimate and deserving of respect as any others, even if they do not inscribe the word "development" on their flag.

While the large majority of NGOs have been created with the objective of asserting the interests of their own memberships, there are also NGOs established by groups of activists who support a certain cause and who create their organization with the explicit goal of helping people other than their own membership. These later NGOs are sometimes called "professional" NGOs, in the sense that working in such activist organizations becomes a full time professional commitment and specialized activity for their animators. Such organizations are often built around various environmental objectives, protection from hunger, help to vulnerable groups, etc.

A significant phenomenon over the recent two decades, now occurring in both developed and developing countries, is the voluntary entry of a growing number of young and technically well-trained specialists, researchers, lawyers, economists, etc.,

into development-related NGO activities. Their professional expertise sharpens the capabilities and impact of these NGOs and is a good expression of what Chambers (1987) calls "the new professionalism" in putting the "poor rural people first" in development thinking. Such expertise and thinking gives added weight and voice to NGOs in their interaction (including their confrontations) with official agencies. Motivated by moral, philosophical, religious, or political values, such skilled professionals either form relatively small but specialized NGO (e.g., a research NGO or an advocacy NGO), or join a large membership NGO. Overall, the recent emergence of such professionals in large numbers within the arena of voluntary action has strengthened NGO work areas like the protection of natural resources and the environment, the promotion of low-cost technologies affordable by the poorer groups, resettlement, the policy dialogue on economic issues between NGOs and the industry or the government, etc.

Altogether, the picture emerging for the overall NGO movement is one of a growing stream which gradually gathers its waters from innumerable affluents of various origin, location, and content, at every turn running into barriers or being constrained by straits, but nevertheless converging into an ever wider flow with multifaceted strength.

NGOs as Actors in Local Development

The two fundamental actors in local development processes are the local governments and the local communities. But "community and bureaucracy are two evidently antithetical styles of social organization" (Robertson, 1984), which serve to distinguish the two major protagonists in planned development: the people and the state. In the interaction between these two actors, NGOs insert themselves not as a third and different/independent actor, but as an emanation and representation of the community (or of a community subgroup).^{3/} Beyond

their various differences, they appear as an organizational response, most often instrumental and sometimes political, of the community or its subgroups, in pursuit of alternative strategies (Padungkarn, 1987) for local social development.

A key question in the developing world is the degree of intervention and control that central governments can and should exercise over development planning in general. This, of course, includes local development planning and administration. As the nation-state is being built and strengthened, and as the power of the center asserts itself ever more strongly over the peripheries, the need to decentralize is in turn felt with increasing force.

Decentralization takes several typical forms: (a) deconcentration; (b) delegation to semi-autonomous or parastatal agencies; (c) devolution to local governments; and (d) transfer of functions from public to nongovernment institutions or joint exercise of such functions (Rondinelli, 1981; Cheema, 1983). Against this background, it is clear that the natural evolution of the state and local government in the developing world creates room and indeed calls for increasing the role played by nongovernment bodies in local development, local planning, local service delivery and local administration.

Over the last 10-15 years, Third World countries have become the central stage on which new nongovernmental organizations have appeared the fastest. They join other, traditional forms of local associations that still survive. Their organizational cohesion varies, but strong or loose, formal or informal, as they may be, they represent an organizational response to the needs of their constituents and to the governmental patterns of managing or servicing development and administrative requirements. Whether or not they will be able to parcel out new territory for themselves within such decentralization processes depends on their strength and skills, on the way their own

genesis has stamped their nature and goals, as well as on the political attitude of governments.

In tracing the genesis of this new kind of organization, NGO representatives point to causes that are quite different in nature: (a) societal conflict and tension; (b) the need to respond more effectively to crisis situations or new demands when traditional structures break down or become unresponsive; (c) ideological and value differences with the powers-that-be in development planning and implementation; (d) the realization that neither government nor the private business sector has the will or capacity to deal with certain acute socioeconomic problems; or (e) the determination to help people at the grassroots to get organized and involved in ongoing governmental development programs. (Garilao, 1987; Padron, 1987)

Many such associations are also organized as adaptive mechanisms for people transplanted from one social context to another, such as migration from rural to urban areas. This adaptive role is, for example, widely documented in the anthropological literature for Asia and Africa.

Keeping in mind the many different causes for NGOs' birth helps explain the differences in their nature and organizational behaviors, as well as the different patterns of government reactions to NGOs.

Some definitions currently in circulation about NGOs are narrow and sectarian. They overlook an outstanding aspect of NGOs: their enormous variety and the differential capabilities of the extended NGO family. Third World NGOs (sometimes also called Southern NGOs) are not a mirror image of First World NGOs (sometimes called Northern NGOs). Voluntarism in association is a key organizational characteristic of all NGOs, but many NGOs, particularly those that pursue a special interest of their own membership, do not describe themselves simply and only as voluntary agencies. This fact makes the concept of "private

voluntary organizations" (PVOs), that is often used in the United States as a synonym, somehow more restrictive than the broad term NGOs. The voluntarism that is a cornerstone of such nongovernmental organizations is not in conflict with the fact that they pursue a specific general interest or a group interest of their membership.

Economic NGOs

The sociological concept of "voluntary associations" applies to NGOs in developing countries, but sometimes this concept is defined by sociologists in a narrow manner, so as to include the "not-for-profit" characteristic. This restriction is disputable. For some voluntary organizations created with the purpose of helping constituencies that are largely outside the organization, the "not-for-profit" characteristic may be regarded as definitional. However, for nongovernmental voluntary organizations that aim to provide a service to their own group membership, -- often a production related economic service -- the "not-for-profit" characteristic is inadequate and exclusionary. In fact, a strong tradition in the anthropological/sociological literature defines voluntary associations as "common-interest associations" (Kerri, 1976). The definitions that I call narrow (and the international agencies which are using them) inadvertently leave out the grassroots economic associations of people on the grounds that these cannot be described as "not-for-profit" because they pursue an economic interest of their membership. Some studies of voluntary organizations similarly exclude⁴/ many voluntary economic associations of people from their purview on the grounds that they pursue economic objectives. Those definitions that I regard as narrow would also not consider peoples' cooperatives (e.g., marketing co-ops, credit co-ops, etc.) as NGOs because they are set up to protect and generate economic benefits for their members.

In my view, because these and similar types of service-oriented and production-related organizations are clearly

nongovernmental they should not be defined out of the concept. As a generic name, they could be called economic NGOs, in the sense that they directly support people's productive activities. These economic or production related NGOs include the water users societies found in many countries, grazing/pastoral associations, credit and consumer cooperatives, milk collection and processing co-ops, farm equipment purchase or lease associations, tree-grower associations, fishermen cooperatives, and so forth. These organizations are probably more crucial for local development, for promoting "self-reliance as a strategy for development" (Galtunig and assoc., 1980) or for facilitating "assisted self-reliance" (see Uphoff, 1988) than the charitable associations (important as these undoubtedly are); they are more instrumental in generating economies of scale, in engendering collective concerted actions, in resource mobilization, more adequate for receiving outside support/assistance and for channeling and distributing it equitably, as well as for cultivating group awareness and solidarity. Institutionally, such NGOs perform not just "delivery" functions but mainly "enabling" activities (Vyas, 1988).

The pursuit of an economic goal is a powerful incentive for people to organize themselves for coordinated action. The resulting organization, caeteris paribus, may be as legitimate an NGO as is one which pursues noneconomic objectives.

The above distinction, far from being just a conceptual subtlety, leads to another consequential conclusion: the relationships to be established between government agencies or international aid agencies, on the one hand, and the various categories of local/indigenous or international NGOs on the other hand, must vary accordingly and must be built on what each type of NGOs can do best.

It is correctly emphasized (Annis, 1987a; Padron, 1987) that the diversity of NGOs found within developing countries warrants other, more refined distinctions as well. For instance,

as suggested in the previous section, some researchers make a distinction between the organizations they call NGDOs (nongovernmental development organizations), that in third world countries cater to the needs of the grassroots sectors, and the GROs (grassroots organizations) which actually comprise the people at the grassroots; others (Uphoff, 1986; Esman and Uphoff, 1984) suggest a distinction between "membership organizations" and "service organizations".^{5/} Together all these various attempts to categorize such organizational forms in light of their manifest functions point to their common essence: the underlying advance in the degree and specialization of people's social organization.

The self-aggregation of people into economic NGOs magnifies their capability to reject paternalistic interventions, to act for their own development and to assert themselves as organized and power wielding groups in the dialogue with local governments. In the post-colonial situation of most third world countries, the massive appearance of grassroots economic NGOs is such a significant trend on their social landscape because it follows or parallels the establishment of local (elected or appointed) government and of local branches of central-state agencies in these countries. The obvious implication is that local government bodies are not seen as the only, or necessarily the best, exponents of the local people. NGOs are germane to the issues involved in local (and general) development because they articulate and multiply the capacities of mostly powerless rank and file individuals and slowly but gradually increase their bargaining power as groups.

A key question for the post-colonial situation is who is extracting the surplus from rural areas, from whom, and how. The growth of grassroots NGOs may still be an incipient process, but it reflects a shift in power articulations. They can only lightly, if at all, influence the outcome of current resource allocation and surplus extraction processes, but they may gradually put their membership in a more favorable position to do so.

IV. PATTERNS OF NGO STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

How effective can NGOs be as a patterned alternative to government intervention in development activities? What are their comparative advantages? Answering these questions in an empirical, rather than in a conceptual/hypothetical manner is important for both approaching immediate tasks in local development and defining strategic orientations for strengthening NGOs.

While skepticism about NGO effectiveness is gradually decreasing, there are many contradictory views about the comparative advantages or weaknesses of NGOs. These views range from quasi-denial of NGO effectiveness to hyperbolic exaggeration. An empirical assessment study sponsored by AID (Hursh-Cesar and assoc.) on the development effectiveness of private voluntary organizations (PVOs) in four sectors (health; nutrition; water supply; sanitation) has derived two sets of conclusions about the typical "strengths" and "weaknesses" of these organizations as a program vehicle for development work.

Comparative Advantages

The main NGO strengths identified are the following:

- (a) Capacity to reach the rural poor and outreach to remote areas. Although NGOs work in both urban and rural areas, they tend to focus on poorer communities that have few basic resources or infrastructure, often located in hardly accessible places, where government programs either are limited, don't exist, or are ineffective.
- (b) Capacity to promote local participation. NGOs are often themselves part of the population whose involvement is sought. If they come as outsiders

to the given area, they tend to develop bonds with the people they serve: they work with community groups as partners, emphasizing local self-help initiatives and local control of programs.

- (c) Capacity to operate on low costs. The largely voluntary nature of NGO activities, their commitment to use low cost technologies and streamlined services, and low staff costs, enable them to operate efficiently on low budgets.

- (d) Capacity to innovate and adapt. Being rooted in the communities they serve and oriented towards promoting initiatives, NGOs have a comparative advantage in identifying needs and building upon existing resources. More flexibly than government services, they can transfer technologies developed elsewhere and adapt them to local conditions, as well as work out innovative responses to these local needs.

Comparative Limitations

The main weaknesses identified by the same empirical study in NGO activities are:

- (a) Limited replicability. Many NGO sponsored activities are too small and localized to have important regional or national impact. NGO activities depend on a highly motivated and culturally sensitive staff, and where staff intensity and motivation cannot be replicated, the activities themselves cannot be replicated.

- (b) Limited self-sustainability. Many NGO sponsored projects are not designed so that in the future they can sustain themselves with little or no outside aid to the beneficiary communities.
- (c) Limited technical capacity. Local NGO projects are still often initiated with insufficient limited technical feasibility analyses and weak data bases. This is often the result of their lack of sufficient managerial or economic staff/skills, which is understandable given the circumstances of many NGOs, yet affects their overall results.
- (d) Lack of broad programming context. Although it may vary by region or sector, NGO projects often are implemented individually, not as part of a broader programming strategy for a region or a sector. Often NGOs carry out their initiatives and projects individually and relatively or completely unconnected with other NGOs or programs, a tendency that hinders the establishment of country-wide or region-wide programs.

The very nature of NGOs as voluntary organizations is both a source of strength and of certain limitations; and the activities for which they are best fitted must be selected with a realistic sociological understanding of what can be best accomplished through voluntary endeavor. It is important, and not belittling to analyze the weaknesses of NGOs, precisely because altogether they are going through a period of impressive organizational growth which they could steer towards overcoming these problems. Insightful observers have noted that NGOs are so frequently lost in self-admiration that they fail to see that even the strengths for which they are acclaimed can also be serious weaknesses (Annis, 1987): for instance, in the face of pervasive poverty, "small scale" can merely mean "insignificant";

"politically independent" can mean "powerless" or "disconnected"; "low cost" can mean "underfinanced" or "poor quality"; "innovative" can mean simply "temporary" or "unsustainable".

Not everybody agrees in regarding the strengths and weaknesses indicated above as general. Indeed, some specific NGOs, or some of their projects, may already have overcome those general weaknesses and are no longer prone to them. It can be also argued that the contribution of NGOs should not even be expected to come from unlimited replicability, since the NGOs themselves are so different in nature, structure, size and purpose that they must not carry out similar activities; rather, the contribution of NGOs may come primarily from the multiplicity of their activities, from their ubiquity and ability to trigger many individual, albeit idiosyncratic, initiatives, which exert influence in a cumulative manner. This, too, is a valid, factual argument.

On the other hand, competent evaluators point out that in many projects NGOs, despite their efforts, do not or will not reach the poor majority. Upon inspection, many NGO projects turn out not to be participatory despite their rhetoric, and involve "enlightened" top-down control by the NGOs themselves, sometimes along with control of decisions by local elites (Tendler, 1982). But these are not intractable problems either.

The essential conclusion, in my view, is that the recognition of the key contribution that NGOs can and do make should not be accompanied by the mistake of idealizing them. NGOs have great potential, but they are not the ultimate panacea to the contradictions and difficulties of planned change and induced development. An objective approach to the limitations and weaknesses of NGOs is required for strengthening their own structures and performance, as well as for making their activities technically and economically sounder, and more replicable.

Substantive Areas for NGO Activities

At the local development level, the areas in which NGOs could make their strongest contributions are specifically the areas in which either local government intervention is weak or nonexistent, or is present but done in a manner that dissatisfies the local population or some of its subgroups. There are three basic types of small scale projects that NGOs can undertake:

- (a) small production oriented projects (e.g., the establishment of a tree nursery by a women group; or the construction of a small tank irrigation system, etc.);
- (b) production support service projects (e.g., building village/group storage facility or a road, setting up a village to market transportation service, etc.); and
- (c) social service projects (e.g., a health room or community hall, creating an ambulance service, building a sports terrain or a house for a teacher, etc.)

Another way of classifying the key activity areas at the local level into which NGO can make their contributions selectively, was suggested by Uphoff (1986), who distinguished five domains: (a) natural resource management; (b) rural infrastructure; (c) human resource development; (d) agricultural development; and (e) nonagricultural enterprise. These all are areas requiring local institutional development both in terms of government decentralized structures and agencies, and in terms of people's nongovernmental associations. NGOs may carve out for themselves a distinct "niche" by establishing themselves as an alternative to the role of government institutions -- either as a complementary organization, or as a substitute organization. Of course, this depends also on how the planners of local development, i.e. the local governments, see the NGOs, and whether or not they are ready and receptive to work with the NGOs.

A telling example of what NGOs can do for local development by initiating [one or another type of] such projects

are the accomplishments of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP), an NGO guided by a charismatic leader and experienced organizer, Akhter Hameed Khan, that works among the people of Orangi, Pakistan. Orangi is the name of a large suburb of Karachi, within which settlement begun spontaneously and rather anarchically in 1965; it grew rapidly after 1972 to more than 100,000 families, and continues to expand. The settlers built their houses without any government help. Most municipal services have been lacking or supplied in an unsatisfactory manner.

As a nongovernmental organization, OPP has chosen not to itself set up welfare clinics or schools or economic enterprises, but to take a "capacity building approach", by concentrating on model building and stimulating community participation (Khan, 1986). OPP considers itself primarily a research NGO; first it studies and analyzes the outstanding problems of Orangi and then, through prolonged action research and extension education, proposes solutions to them. An integral part of their research and education work is to enable people to organize themselves for implementing these solutions (Khan, 1986; Ghafoor, 1987).

OPP has undertaken several model building programs, which touch upon the social services for Orangi and the people's production/income generation activities. These are (a) the program for introducing low cost sanitation; (b) the low cost housing program; (c) the women work centers; (d) the women welfare program; and (e) school education. Low cost sanitation is OPP's oldest project. Started in 1981, the objective was to improve the dismal sanitation and drainage of Orangi neighborhoods, which were the causes of recurrent epidemics, high child-morbidity rates, waterlogging, low house values, etc. OPP's research discovered four "barriers" which explained people's relative passivity and resignation in spite of the abysmal sanitation conditions: the "psychological barrier"; the "economic barrier"; the "technical barrier" and the "sociological barrier" (Khan, 1986). The perceptive understanding of these obstacles led OPP to identify appropriate solutions to energize

the community, to lower the costs of constructing improved sanitation, to carry out surveys and provide the residents with designs, maps, plans, and to carry out training and information activities. OPP worked systematically to remove each of the "four barriers", set up a team of social organizers and a team of technicians, identified the social units (the "lanes" of inhabitants) which would sponsor the construction work and carried out many other "social engineering" arrangements (Ghafoor, 1987; Khan, 1987).

The achievements have been outstanding: between 1981-86 about 28,000 families joined the low cost sanitation program, constructed underground lane sewerage lines with a total of over 426,000 feet, built secondary drains, introduced over 28,400 sanitary latrines, and have themselves invested close to 30 mil. rupees in this development. Whole sectors of Orangi have improved their sanitation dramatically and the demonstration effects are so powerful that the program is being continued in the remaining lanes through the same self-managed and self-financed approach.

Thus, a well guided NGO has succeeded in an area in which the municipality government and agencies simply were not able, organizationally and financially, to provide the needed services. It has had a profound impact on improving the quality of life of the Orangi population. The other programs, particularly the housing program and women's work centers, are achieving comparable results. The lessons of Orangi deserve to be studied in detail: they hold much wisdom and hope for replication in other similar NGO initiatives for local and regional development.

Social Organization for Resource Management

Another priority domain for both NGOs and local governments is the area of natural resources management -- one of

the five domains mentioned above. NGOs can and must support the unorganized or weakly organized poor or small users struggling to acquire control over productive resources.

Poverty eliminates many opportunities for individual farmers acting alone; jointly organized use is not just a virtuous bit of cooperation but an economic necessity. The management of natural resources (e.g., rangelands, forests, lakes with fishery resources, etc.) requires strong social organization capable of enforcing incentives and penalties in order to elicit rational and equitable behavior by individual users. Absence of such patterns of social organization allows open access, which almost always leads to resource destruction and environmental degradation. Technocratic development programs that attempt to stop such degradation only by financing a new "technology" but without putting in place a pattern of social articulation apt to organize people according to the demands of that technology are inevitably doomed to fail. Much too often, management of such common resources by government bodies has not been effective and has left a huge "organizational vacuum" which may be filled effectively by the people themselves, constituting themselves into an NGO.

Discussing the concept of resources for local social planning, Conyers (1986) has observed that the very identification of something as a resource depends not only on that thing itself, but also on the attributes of the potential users, including their knowledge, skills, their status, their access to other complementary resources. Natural resources are only potential resources until a certain form of social organization transforms them from parts of nature into parts of the social production process. Nongovernmental organizations may be an appropriate form of social/economic organization for enhancing people's ability to identify, gain access to, appropriate, or use and manage natural resources such as rangeland, water, trees, fish, etc.

It is, in turn, incumbent upon local development planners, -- in other words, upon the planners acting on behalf of the government -- to include in such plans not only the physical resources for the available capital, but to be equally concerned with the social capacity for managing these resources. In practice, however, local planners rarely recognize the centrality of people in planning, -- in other words, they do not put people first -- are little aware of the critical socio-cultural attributes of the local population (e.g., its stratification, organization, etc.), and take as their starting point the capital and physical resources or constraints.

The Small Scale-Large Scale Dilemma

Probably the most important question that persists about the effectiveness of NGOs is the one regarding the limited replicability of their activities and the intrinsic smallness of their interventions. Can this limitation be overcome? Can micro-level interventions be aggregated on large scale?

It is recognized even by the strongest NGO supporters that the breadth of NGOs' impact is necessarily limited by the location-specific nature of their interventions and the nonstandard, idiosyncratic character of NGOs as organizations. Two strategic options (or perhaps only one option with two complementary sides to it) are available to break out of this dilemma:

- one is that small scale NGO activities could, conceivably, proliferate on such a vast scale as to gain macro significance (i.e., significantly affect development at the regional or national scale) by aggregation, rather than remain a scattering of limited, isolated initiatives. In this scenario, it is further hypothesized that the grassroots NGOs would not only multiply independently of each other, but also interlock into systems and webs of organizations capable of influencing macro-scale processes, affect state policies, mobilize large human resources, develop alliances and networks and

thus wield more power. Based on a study of NGOs in Latin America, Annis (1987b) has argued that such a process is already occurring; his argument starts with asking "how large can small become, ultimately?" and contends that, as a result of the expansion of "webs" of grassroots organizations that have "thickened" and entered in relationships with the public sector, small interventions tend to become institutionalized, reach a larger number of people, transfer more political power to the poor, and create the premises for making small scale change into a development policy for large scale;

- another strategic option for achieving replication of NGOs' small scale initiatives, rather than leaving them confined to their initial locations only, is a gradual linking of NGO activities with administrative or international organizations including (in one form or another) government bodies; this approach can also facilitate and promote some micro-policy reforms (Korten, 1987) with support from official government agencies. Hidden within this option are the risks and trappings of NGO co-optation; yet if linkages are built from a position of NGOs strength and growth, NGO independence might be protected at the same time with increased influence over state policies and administrative environments.

Are such strategic orientations realistic, or simply instances of wishful thinking? Are there other alternatives for breaking out of the small scale-large scale dilemma? These are crucial questions for the future of NGOs and they invite the examination of ongoing actual experiences.

Two areas are particularly propitious for such examination: (a) the interaction of developing country NGOs with the government bodies (national and local) which they attempt to influence, and (b) the interaction of NGOs with large international development agencies and organizations.

In this paper I chose to address mainly area (b), by examining the interaction between NGOs and a large agency as the World Bank. Indeed, if NGOs could influence the policies and actual programs of large scale international organizations like the World Bank, then their contribution and impact can gain a significant multiplier.

**V. INTERACTION BETWEEN LOCAL NGOs AND INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES: THE WORLD BANK'S EXPERIENCE**

To be genuinely effective, the development policies and programs to of large international organizations must ultimately be able to cause change at the local level. In this sense, every macro policy and program must by definition be aware of its implications and consequences for local level development. The multilateral or bilateral aid agencies which financially assist such macro programs are therefore bound to interact not only with central governmental agencies but also with the key actors at the local level: local governments, the local communities and, when these exist, their various nongovernmental organizations.

Such cooperation with local NGOs still has a limited record: there are not many fully successful experiences; there are quite a few failures and missed opportunities; and new approaches are ongoing and still being tested. A good deal of the territory is still simply uncharted.

Weaknesses and hesitations have been visible on both sides. The programs supported by international agencies have frequently been conceived and executed in a top-down and paternalistic manner, little informed by an adequate sociological knowledge of the local social fabric. This has proven to be a key reason for failure or underachievement, particularly in poverty alleviation programs. In turn, local NGOs often have not known how, and sometimes did not want, to get involved in joint programs, or how to influence them and contribute to their effectiveness.

It is therefore useful to explore strategies for intensifying such interaction and particularly for enhancing the roles of indigenous NGOs. This is a timely -- maybe even urgent

-- task, since at this moment virtually all multilateral donors, bilateral aid agencies, as well as many international and national NGOs, are expanding their working contacts. Learning processes must be refined at both ends, to overcome past mistakes and carve out new models for cooperation. With a view towards the lessons to be learned, I will briefly review some aspects of the World Bank's interaction with NGOs.

As an international development agency, the World Bank's record in this area is certainly far from optimal. Many Bank-financed development projects have not adequately pursued participatory approaches and the interest in systematically involving NGOs is relatively recent. Empirical evidence of the consequences suffered by Bank-financed projects from not sufficiently involving the grassroots organizations of beneficiaries in these projects has come, inter alia, from the findings of an OED study on 25 Bank-assisted projects which were re-evaluated several years after their completion. The impact evaluations found that 13 out of these 25 projects failed the long-term sustainability test. Among the five main causes that led to lack of sustainability, the one identified by the study as ranking first was failure to involve local grassroots organizations and thus to ensure beneficiaries' participation (Cernea, 1987). Conversely, the same study concluded that when such organizations existed, they acted as enduring structures supporting the project initiated activities long after project completion. They thus became instrumental for long-term project sustainability. Other sociological analyses have corroborated this conclusion with similar findings (Kottak, 1985; Paul, 1987; Uphoff, 1987).

While more or less sporadic cooperation with NGOs took place in the '70s and even earlier (e.g., in urban development projects [Hellinger, et al., 1988]), the World Bank began to develop its relations with NGOs more systematically in the early '80s. In 1982, a World Bank-NGO Committee was established, which

provided a formal coordinating forum and a focal point for the Bank's dealings with NGOs. The multiple activities currently underway can be summed up under four main areas:

- (a) operational collaboration, in projects and programs;
- (b) development education;
- (c) policy dialogue between the World Bank and NGOs, particularly on poverty alleviation and environmental issues; and
- (d) public frameworks for NGOs.

Looking beyond the case of the World Bank's experience, I believe that these four domains may be regarded as key areas (although not the only ones possible) for any general strategy of interaction between official aid agencies and NGOs.

What is the substantive content of these interaction areas, in practical terms? How does this cooperation occur and can it enhance the role of NGOs in development?

Operational Collaboration

The main reason for the Bank's operational interest in NGOs is that NGOs offer a significant and far from fully utilized potential to involve people, particularly the poorest strata, in the processes of development. The Bank's guidelines for project preparation and ex-ante evaluation specifically require that a "sociological appraisal" be carried out at the same time as the economic, technical, and financial appraisal of projects. It must take into account, and rely upon, the local patterns of social organizations (Cernea, 1985; 1987). As discussed in the previous section of this paper, NGOs have a comparative advantage in helping poor people articulate their needs to government officials and to representatives of foreign aid organizations as

well. The programs of foreign agencies can be enhanced by relying on NGOs as sources of local information, inter alia, able to convey people's perceptions, felt needs, priorities.^{6/} NGOs and grassroots organizations are (part of) the people whom the foreign aid-assisted projects attempt to reach. In addition, many NGOs embody considerable general expertise and indigenous knowledge, and a variety of local perspectives on development issues, often with a keen sense of the subtle cultural, economic, moral and environmental aspects.

We will examine below the NGOs' operational contributions in two types of situations: first, within regular Bank-assisted projects in three sectors (health, population, nutrition) which are more usual areas of interaction between the Bank and NGOs; second, within certain less than usual project situations, such as the involuntary resettlement of people dislocated by dam projects from their socio-economic systems. The latter is an area in which NGOs are making an increasingly consequential and welcomed contribution.

(a) Population, Health and Nutrition Projects

Three sectors in which the need for NGO contributions is acute are the programs for population (family planning), health care and nutrition (PHN). While Bank financing flows primarily through public sector channels, the Bank's PHN projects have made significant use of three main alternative resources outside the public sector: mobilization of community support groups; use of community workers; and financing of previously existing NGOs for service delivery.

A systematic review of all Bank-financed PHN projects appraised between 1981 - mid 1987 (Heaver, forthcoming) found that 69 percent of all projects feature community workers and provide support for their training and supervision.

Community support groups have been used in a variety of ways. Most commonly (59 percent of the projects), they have been mobilized to serve as channels for community information, education and communication, aimed at service acceptance. But in 29 percent of the projects, community groups, usually women's organizations and groups of community leaders, were trained at the expense of the project in how to provide education and information to the rest of the population. And in 27 percent of the projects, community groups were involved in providing services: for example, women's groups in Malawi (a 1987 project) are to be trained in health surveillance and in the provision of simple care; in Ghana (a 1985 project) the project was to finance grinding mills for women's groups to produce weaning food. In at least three projects, communities were intended to have a major management and implementation role in the health system. Thus, in Morocco (1985), health management committees were set up to participate in health program planning with the Government and to manage health resources at the local level; in both Peru (1982) and Nigeria (the Imo project, 1987), funds were included in the project to finance small scale health projects proposed and implemented by local communities; and in Nigeria Imo, the Village Health Development Committees were also to undertake health surveillance and identify individuals at high risk of disease. Finally, in 23 percent of the projects, communities were mobilized to provide in-kind or financial support for the government health system; in the Indonesia Fourth Population Project (1985), for example, village volunteers assisted in local health centers, and in the Niger project (1986), project beneficiaries were expected to finance the maintenance of their health centers.

About 21 percent of the reviewed projects provided finance for activities carried out by NGOs already existing and operating in the project areas. Three types of assistance are being given to NGOs: training and materials to assist NGOs to carry out IEC activities, as in the Sierra Leone project (1986) and Lesotho (1985); small amounts of money (US\$0.1-0.5m) for innovative activities to be carried out by NGOs, as in projects

in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Jamaica; and assistance for NGOs to take over and run health centers, as in the Pakistan and Kenya Integrated Rural Health projects. In Bangladesh, family planning activities carried out by NGOs have been financed more substantially: some US\$4 million have been channelled through NGOs.

The findings of that review highlighted three characteristics that place the not-for-profit NGOs in the PHN sectors in a favorable position to complement public health agencies: (a) their ethics and high degree of commitment are a strong incentive to perform despite low wages; (b) NGO self reliance makes most of them dependent on fees from user charges, and if service quality falls the NGOs existence may be threatened; (c) their integration into local communities and flexible management facilitate organizational learning (Heaver op. cit.).

More or less similar involvement of grassroots organizations can be seen in projects in other sectors, primarily in agricultural and urban projects (Cernea, 1981; Beckmann, 1985; World Bank, 1983 to 1987); projects in the "hard" sectors (transportation, other infrastructure, etc.) tend to have a considerably lower frequency of NGO involvement.

Clearly, however, in World Bank activities the recognition of NGO's potential is due not to financial reasons, but specifically to sociological reasons. The increasing recognition of NGOs is part of the growing awareness of the centrality of people in development work, part of the gradual move away from the technocratic/financial bias in conceiving development interventions.

Although the involvement of NGOs in the Bank's projects is noticeably on the increase, to a large extent it is still ad-hoc and dependent on circumstances rather than occurring systematically on the basis of a fully structured policy and set of

normative procedures; the extent and depth of such involvement is also greatly dependent on the policy and openness of the government of one or another borrowing country. NGOs are usually participating as delivery mechanisms or implementors of project components, with a relatively rare say in the very formulation of the project concept and its strategy. A policy-cum-operational statement on the World Bank's collaboration with NGOs, prepared in consultation with a number of NGOs (see ICVA, 1987) was issued in August 1988 (see World Bank, 1988, and further in the paper, pp. 42-47) is expected to broaden and diversify Bank-NGO cooperation considerably.

(b) Involuntary Resettlement

A less usual, but nevertheless frequent type of situation in which NGOs have demonstrated their special potential, occurs when development projects entail involuntary population displacement and relocation (Cernea, 1988): for instance, dam reservoirs which submerge long segments of river valleys, highways which cut across farmers' cultivated lands, etc. The involuntary resettlement of people affected by such projects causes profound economic and cultural disruption, depriving people of their habitats, lands, means of production and sources of incomes. Unfortunately, the compensations and assistance provided by government agencies to the affected people has been in many cases unsatisfactory, including in some of the projects financed by the World Bank.

Nongovernmental organizations have in many instances proven that they are able to take the initiative for effective assistance to people subjected to involuntary resettlement. Historically, some NGOs have even been established as an expression of the need of relocatees from urban and slum areas to get organized, in order to defend their rights better. Some NGOs have flatly opposed any resettlement and the projects that cause

them. Other NGOs have asked for many years for a recognition of their capacity to assist displaced groups, but many governments have strongly opposed such NGO participation. This situation is changing now in many places. The World Bank recognizes the right, capacity and role of NGOs in providing significant help to people displaced, not only in emergencies created by floods, droughts, etc., but also in development-induced relocation. International NGOs -- like OXFAM (UK), the Environmental Defense Fund, Survival International, and others -- have repeatedly criticized poor resettlement performance under Bank-financed projects and have signaled to the Bank cases when resettlement does not proceed satisfactorily. Such signals have proven beneficial as they triggered additional Bank and local government efforts and led to definite improvements in the standards and conditions of resettlement.

A similar positive role is being exercised by some national NGOs. For example, in India the "Centre for Science and Environment", "Myrada", "Avard", and "Lokayan" have carried out in-depth field studies and developed a special expertise about involuntary relocation caused by development projects. Some of these studies have exercised considerable influence over government or donor agency programs related to resettlement.

When involuntary resettlement cannot be avoided, NGOs are well placed, due to their linkages with local communities, to both express resettlers' needs and defend their rights. In the Philippines, for instance, church related organizations helped the Kalinga and Bontoc tribes defend their rights against the displacement planned by the Marcos government for the Chico river dams III and IV under conditions that would have meant the destruction of these tribal societies (Winnacker, 1979). In other cases, (e.g., the activity of the ARCH-VAHINI group in Gujarat, India) NGOs enable the resettling populations to understand better their legal entitlements to replacement land, fair compensation, housing allowances, etc., thus providing a needed

service needed always, and particularly needed when one or another government agency fails to correctly respect these rights. NGOs have played a constructive role helping tribal people articulate their needs and concerns, for example in India's Narmada river projects. In various countries, NGOs have acted on behalf of resettlers by bringing their grievances to court, when necessary. Their role was further legitimized and reinforced when the courts ruled that resettlers' rights had been disregarded and ordered appropriate reprieve. Such actions did create some tension between NGOs and the government agencies at fault, but -- more importantly -- they helped improve the implementation standards of the projects under which such resettlement took place.

The Bank encourages NGOs' participation in the timely preparation of the technical and social resettlement plans that must be included into the Bank-financed projects that cause population dislocation (Cernea, 1988a, 1988b). Such recognized NGO participation is also a relatively recent development, compared to resettlement operations in the '70s or early '80s, and there is scope to expand it considerably in the future. Sociologists and anthropologists who work as project officers or consultants in Bank-assisted projects entailing resettlement (Cernea, 1988c) have provided empirical evidence that an effective approach to broadening people's information on resettlement is to involve knowledgeable local NGOs, on a long-term basis, in preparing relocation plans.^{7/} Based on recent positive experiences, the World Bank institutionally encourages borrowing agencies to cooperate with NGOs when such complex resettlement matters occur and need to be addressed through projects.

Preparing resettlement plans aimed at rebuilding a viable socio-economic base for the re-establishment of displaced people allows NGOs to enter into a negotiating process with the relevant agencies for obtaining adequate support to the

resettlers. In Brazil, for instance, a coalition of local NGOs (the Union of Rural Laborers) played an effective role in defining the content of the resettlement plan that is the centerpiece of the Bank-financed Itaparica resettlement and area development project, approved in 1987.

An interesting example is the preparation of the resettlement plan for the Karnataka - Upper Krishna Irrigation II project. Aimed at resettling over 100,000 people, this plan was prepared by the technical agencies of the state government, but was found by the Bank to be insufficient for proceeding to the appraisal of the project. The appraisal was postponed; the Karnataka state government contracted the help of MYRADA, an NGO specialized in resettlement, to assist in improving this plan. MYRADA started with a sound social survey of the affected population and its needs, assessed the potential for relocation, etc. and prepared a much more complete resettlement plan, in cooperation with the government agencies. Two successive Bank reviews proposed further improvements in this plan, before appraisal could take place, and these were made jointly by MYRADA and the relevant technical agencies. Although state agencies had invited the Bank to appraise the project, the Bank postponed appraisal with over 15 months in expectation of a resettlement plan improved to the standards of the policy requirements. When appraisal finally took place in February 1988, the resettlement plan, with a substantial NGO contribution, offered a much better base for the next project and fully justified both the postponement and the NGO's involvement.

In virtually every case when it was attempted, the involvement of NGO was apt to address better the social and cultural complexities of people's involuntary resettlement. NGOs are also making an exceptional contribution worldwide to the effectiveness of international donors assistance for refugees from natural disasters, or from war and other political turmoil.

Thus, besides the "normal" or regular development project interventions, it appears that institutionalized operational collaboration with NGO in the context of less-than-usual, complex, disruptive, but sometimes unavoidable projects is also at least as effective as any other "normal" activity.

Development Education

A second area of cooperation between the World Bank and NGOs is development education. This effort is directed primarily to the public in advanced industrial countries, in order to increase general awareness about development issues, constraints, objectives, needs, difficulties. The Bank's main partners are, in this domain, the international NGOs and the national and international federations of NGOs. The Bank provides some support to their development education work, participates in national and international NGO conferences, symposia (OISCA, 1986; 1987), and sustains a substantial publication and media program.

International NGOs have become influential in shaping public opinion and sometimes official policies in developed countries; the increased financial resources channeled through NGOs, described in Section II, are one of the results of those activities. Bank-NGO cooperation in development education may help fund-raising efforts both for NGOs and for the Bank's concessionary lending through IDA to the poorest borrowing countries at below market rates.

Less effort has gone, however, into providing direct Bank assistance to development education activities carried out by NGOs in third world countries, and this is definitely an area in which more support is required.

Policy Dialogue

Policy changes are usually more consequential for development than specific projects. Recent experience has shown that NGOs can also influence the policies of large development organizations. Discussions between NGOs and the World Bank on policy issues regarding, in particular, poverty issues and the environment, have contributed to the evolution of World Bank policies in the content of structural adjustment programs (Schuh, 1987; World Bank, 1987).

Partly in response to NGO concern, the Bank has taken a number of steps to sharpen its focus on poverty and to lighten the social costs of adjustment especially by targeting better the support for social expenditures. Compensatory programs are being started in several countries and will benefit poor people adversely affected by adjustment. Some NGOs have argued that what is really needed is a chance for local NGOs, especially organizations of poor people, to influence adjustment policies, not just the small compensatory programs that help cushion the impact of harsh policies.

For several years, environmental NGOs have waged an international campaign to get the World Bank and other multilateral development banks (MDBs) to pay more attention to the environmental aspects of development. Some Bank-assisted projects and policies have been subjected to close analysis and questioning. NGOs have convinced a number of Bank's member governments to join them in asking for increased emphasis on environment (Aufderheide and Rich, 1988). The results have been significant, leading to considerable improvements in some specific projects, to changes in policies and in the internal Bank organizational structure and staff allocation. Specifically, in the environmental field, the Bank has developed its dialogue and collaboration with organizations like the World Resource Institute (WRI), the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF),

the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and others. Even though their criticism of certain Bank-assisted projects has sometimes been harsh, it was received with respect and professional consideration and it has helped the Bank and some of its borrowing agencies become more keenly aware of some projects' implications on vulnerable groups, on resettlement, on nonrenewable resources, etc.

NGOs of developed countries have also successfully used their considerable influence to obtain more Bank, donor and borrower governments' attention to the issues raised by the NGOs of developing countries, thus gaining both public legitimacy and more resources for the resolution of these issues. Such policy and program-related dialogue will continue to be part of Bank-NGO relationships.

Public Framework for NGOs

An important gain for local and national NGOs from their interaction with international organizations is increased legitimacy, visibility and support in their own countries. The Bank has in a number of cases helped establish a favorable public policy framework for NGO activity by giving explicit advice to government agencies in borrowing countries, and direct support for such interaction through Bank-to-Government contacts.

In Bangladesh, for instance, the Bank has strongly supported the reformulation of the Government's policy on NGOs, particularly in the direction of streamlining the administrative and legal framework within which they operate, so as to enhance NGO contribution. An important poverty alleviation project currently under preparation with Bank assistance, is an impetus towards this policy reformulation through the key role given to NGOs.

In Pakistan, as a condition for Bank financing of large-scale on-farm water management projects, the Bank has asked the Government that special national and provincial legislation be issued to establish a legal framework for creating grassroots organizations of water users along each watercourse. Indeed, such legislation was issued before the project became effective; more than 8,000 water users' associations were subsequently established as part of the implementation of the Bank-assisted water management project. Fragile as many still are, these associations are making a valuable contribution to watercourse lining; but they also face growth difficulties -- they tend to remain single task oriented, often lack continuity in their activities and some become ephemeral or fail. Nevertheless, the mass establishment of such grassroots organizations, resulting from a development intervention and facilitated through a government-enacted legal framework, represents significant progress that is apt to expand and yield long-term benefits. In other countries as well, Bank-assisted projects have provided multisided support to the establishment and strengthening of communal water users associations, like in the Philippines (see Bagadion and Korten, 1985) or in Thailand, where a special project started in 1987 to revitalize a number of traditional "people's irrigation systems" that existed in the northern part of the country but were threatened with disruption and disappearance by recent adverse factors.

The Bank is actively encouraging national governments to consider structured NGO participation in Bank-financed projects and to explore new forms of partnership between governmental institutions and the growing numbers of nongovernmental organizations. In several countries (Indonesia, Togo, Kenya, Rwanda, etc.), the Bank has initiated trilateral meetings between NGOs, government agencies and the Bank to jointly examine sectoral or national development strategies. The Bank has started to indicate to governments the value it attaches to drawing on NGO experience and information for improving its own programming and

the quality of the policy positions it takes into dialogue with government; it also underscores the comparative advantage that NGOs have in some cases for assuming responsibility for parts of certain public programs.

This road, however, is not an easy one: more than a few governments (at the political level) and numerous government agencies (at the technical level) oppose formal NGO involvement. They feel directly or indirectly threatened by NGOs growth and empowerment (Berg, 1987) and often react with suspicion and hostility to NGO activities. They may regard some NGOs activities as attempts to subvert government policies and/or as an unwelcome involvement in politics. In turn, NGOs sometimes face the dilemma of accepting some government funds and putting their credibility or full autonomy at some risk; this is why they sometimes decline association with certain programs that have a government imprimatur. In certain contexts, they distrust government agencies on a wholesale basis, fear the power of governments, but they also sometimes fail to see the potential gains to be obtained by giving or getting support through involvement with selected government-assisted programs.

While I referred above primarily to the World Bank, comparable changes and the trend towards more trilateral cooperation are occurring within some other multilateral and bilateral aid agencies (Hirono, 1987). The point of it all is that new patterns of relationship are gradually evolving not only on the local scene, but on the international one as well. These new relationships (a) put NGOs firmer on the agenda of development, and (b) connect more tightly the local level NGOs and the issues of local social development with the trends and processes that govern international aid.

To sum up, the micro-level is increasingly moving into the limelight. This offers new strategic opportunities for many local NGOs. They must still learn the most effective ways to use

them so that they can bring significant incremental benefits to their local constituencies.

World Bank Policy for Collaboration with NGOs

Based on accumulated experiences and on recent general Bank policy documents, an Operational Manual Statement (OMS) was prepared in the Bank on collaboration with NGOs. After consultation with a number of NGO representatives, it was issued in August 1988. This is the first time that such a statement was formulated by the Bank on NGOs, and a summary of its main provisions follows.*

The policy guidelines start by stating a basic premise: that collaboration with and advice from NGOs may benefit the work of the World Bank. The Bank's policy position in this domain is therefore formulated in order to guide staff in advising country governments and their agencies on how to make use of NGOs in Bank-financed programs and in order to help staff understand the advantages and benefits of working with NGOs. The OMS lays down guidelines for handling general issues, formulates procedures for project-related activities and delineates responsibilities for pursuing Bank objectives in fostering the collaboration with NGOs.

* Throughout the summary given in this subsection, indented single-spaced passages are used for highlighting or paraphrasing the key elements of these guidelines. Although OMSs are generally treated as internal Bank documents, that are issued to provide guidance to staff, OMS 5.30 on the Bank's collaboration with NGOs is available for NGOs with which the Bank works.

In defining the NGOs with which it seeks to collaborate, the Bank's policy takes a broad, nonrestrictive position. It refers to

a wide variety of groups and institutions that are entirely or largely independent of government and are characterized primarily by humanitarian and cooperative, rather than commercial objectives. Setting aside terminological and name differences that vary from one country to another, the Bank's policy recognizes the nature of NGOs as private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment or undertake community development. Production-related NGOs are seen as particularly relevant to the Bank's development objectives, and such grassroot organizations include: water users' societies, pastoral associations, consumer and credit cooperatives, farm equipment purchase and lease associations, tree-grower associations and other similar groups. Environmental and emergency relief NGOs are in turn relevant to the Bank's objectives regarding the environment, support for resettlement and reconstruction, etc.

The policy guidelines clearly state that, although the Bank's primary relationships are with governments, collaboration with NGOs can improve the effectiveness of many Bank-supported operations, particularly in terms of increasing the long-term sustainability of development initiatives and alleviating poverty.

Because of the Bank's relationship to its member governments, staff must also respect government policies regarding the involvement of NGOs in Bank-supported activities. At the same time, staff should, where appropriate, explain to governments how collaboration with NGOs could strengthen the development process, and should encourage constructive working relationships among governments, donors and NGOs.

The Bank's policy encourages cooperation with various NGOs -- either based in the developing, or in the developed countries -- and with apex federations or councils of NGOs. The strengths and constraints that characterize NGOs are

considered.^{8/} It is also noted that the fact that some NGOs combine development with political or religious objectives may limit the extent to which the Bank can work with them while safeguarding the primary relationship with its member governments.

Types of collaboration. The guidelines explicitly encourage staff, as a "matter of Bank policy", to develop contacts and operational collaboration with NGOs along a wide range of activities. These include the

analysis of development issues, in which Bank staff and governments can learn from NGO assessments of official development programs, especially regarding the concerns of low-income groups. A role for NGOs may be among the measures of an adjustment program, especially concerning the social dimension of adjustment; where appropriate, NGOs should be consulted at an early stage. The Bank's analytical country economic and sector work on poverty-related issues could benefit from both NGOs' views and an analysis of the role of NGOs.

The project cycle offers many "entrance points" for NGO contributions. While many such "entrance points" had been used even before the new guidelines were issued, they are now explicitly defined in order to point out the available options for more systematic NGO incorporation into the preparation and execution of projects.

During project identification and design, for instance, the guidelines suggest that staff should consider involving NGOs as either

- (a) sources of information on intended beneficiaries and on technological and institutional innovation. Small NGO programs may sometimes become the model for a larger Bank-financed project;
- (b) consultants for the Bank, government or local communities during project preparation, who should be involved at an early stage;

- (c) resource contributors: for project financing, some international NGOs may cofinance a project or, more likely, finance activities complementary to a Bank-financed project.

The project implementation phase opens up additional opportunities for collaboration with NGOs. The guidelines identify at least six such key roles for NGOs, such as

- (a) a contractor or manager engaged by the government and financed from the loan proceeds or through Trust Funds;
- (b) a financial intermediary or a supplier of technical knowledge to local beneficiaries;
- (c) an adviser either assisting local beneficiaries to apply for project resources (e.g., credits) or organizing local communities to make use of project facilities;
- (d) an independent partner implementing activities complementary to a Bank-financed project;
- (e) the recipient of government grant or loan funds; or
- (f) the beneficiary of an NGO funding mechanism established by the project.

Project performance monitoring. Performance monitoring and feedback about ongoing impact on the area population is another type of contribution for which NGOs often have a comparative advantage in terms of access to information and objectivity. As was aptly said, "where bureaucratic eyes are astigmatic, NGOs provide vivid images of what is really happening at the grassroots" (Qureshi, 1988). The Bank's guidelines state that

NGOs may assist the government, a project entity, or the Bank in monitoring project progress or evaluating results. As outside observers, NGOs are often more objective and independent in reporting about performance, outcomes and impact. Where feasible, their contribution to monitoring should be included in the project design.

Of course, NGOs' participation in project design, implementation, or monitoring will raise questions regarding the handling of information about projects and related issues, an area that often is fraught with difficulties and controversy. The guidelines recommend that

staff should be responsive -- and encourage governments to be responsive -- to NGOs that request information or raise questions about Bank-supported activities, subject to preserving the confidentiality of privileged information. Staff should also observe the Bank's administrative provisions which, while adhering to the general principle that the Bank should be open about its activities, prescribes specific restrictions on utilizing data on Bank operations. Similarly, if NGOs give the Bank information, the extent of confidentiality should be agreed in advance.

Information-sharing and coordination among NGOs can improve their effectiveness and facilitate their dealings with the government, but Bank staff should discourage governments from imposing coordination or over-regulation. NGOs should take the lead in deciding whether and how they will work together or with one or another formal agency.

Project Financing Aspects. Because NGOs find it difficult to finance their involvement in the relatively long planning processes required for Bank operations, the Bank sometimes makes small grants to NGOs from its budget for studies or meetings related to Bank operations. For instance, for projects in Africa a special funding arrangement (the Special Project Preparation Facility) can be used to launch innovative NGO-related activities; the Bank has also a special program of grant funding for African NGOs active in population planning. Grant funding to facilitate NGO involvement in a Bank-financed project can also be sought from an international NGO or from another official development agency (e.g., bilateral development agencies and the European Economic Community). A few bilateral agencies (like CIDA, SIDA, NORAD, etc., or UNICEF and UNDP) provide grants directly to developing-country NGOs and NGO associations. Such

grants can be requested for supporting project-related activities.

A Bank-supported project may sometimes finance NGO-managed components. However, the Bank realizes that too much official funding can destroy an NGO's grassroots character; sometime, the administrative costs of funding small NGO projects is disproportionate to activity costs. Therefore, Bank staff are directed to carefully take into account NGOs' need to ensure that their special status is not compromised as a result of official funding. Moreover, beyond funding per se, any major collaboration with NGOs may need to be accompanied by management assistance, for example, to improve monitoring and accounting as a way to foster institution-building in indigenous NGOs.

The new guidelines also formalize the possibility of NGOs participation in project execution as contractors or suppliers, in which case the usual procurement criteria should be met. As a special way for facilitating NGO contracts which are usually small and involve community participation, when open competitive procurement is not always feasible direct contracting may be justified if an NGO is the only entity capable of carrying out an activity (e.g., maintenance of feeder roads in remote areas, or the transfer of a particular technology).

Finally, the policy guidelines also establish clear in-house responsibilities for implementing all these provisions and for further developing the Bank's policy toward NGOs. The Bank-NGO Committee will continue to act as a formal forum and focal point for the Bank's discussions with NGOs. Altogether, it is expected that the new statement of August 1988 will give a strong impetus to the Bank's efforts for further collaboration with nongovernmental organizations.



VI. STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR LOCAL NGO DEVELOPMENT

In summing up this paper, I would like briefly to focus on two issues which I regard as being of central strategic importance for expanding the NGO movement and its impact on local social development.

Organizational Build-Up

The immediate progress, as well as the long-term influence of NGOs as a social movement, depends first and foremost on the build-up of their organizational capacity. This demands expansion of their coverage and comprehensiveness, i.e. extensive development; it also demands intensive development. This will require strengthening the many fragile and ephemeral NGOs that risk disappearing without a trace, by reinforcing their internal organizational scaffolding, improving their accountability mechanisms both to their own membership and to the public at large, and fortifying their internal decision making, self-maintenance and reproductive processes.

The contribution of those NGOs that work for building other NGOs and for organizing people within structures adequate to their culture and focused on achieving joint goals is invaluable. Social organization is a strategic resource for accelerating development and improving people's livelihoods, a resource that can be built up patiently and systematically. This is an area in which social scientists, particularly sociologists and anthropologists, may make a significant contribution, since the genesis of grassroots organizations of various kinds need not be a result of spontaneity alone: efforts to establish new associations and institutions and strengthening existing ones could gain from specialized sociological knowledge.

Support for establishing grassroots organizations must be given on an increased scale by public bodies and international development agencies. This requires financial investments as well. But there is still too little knowledge and even fewer imaginative approaches about how to invest in grassroots organization building. But without allocating resources, supporting institution building only rhetorically is insufficient. In this area again, "the Bank's experience ... is that strong organizations of poor people often help public programs respond to the real needs of the poor. With public participation, programs are also more likely to keep working after the Bank's involvement ends" (Qureshi, 1988).

Organizations, like knowledge, are forms of capital accumulation. People's propensity for organizing is an immense development resource and NGOs are an adequate vehicle for tapping it. As emphasized earlier, NGOs should not be regarded just as a conduit for funds or as a means for implementing programs, but as a resource in themselves, a type of development capital. Thus, building them up is development. In turn, NGOs would amplify their capacity faster by putting more of their scarce resources into training their own membership and leaders (Sazanami, 1984; see also Holloway and Watson,^{9/} 1987) and into strengthening their management patterns and internal authority and accountability systems -- all basic prerequisites for durable impacts.

Policy and Administrative Environments

The area of NGO-Government relationships is decisive for the strategic development and impact of NGOs. To achieve wider relevance, and to gain replicability for their initiatives on large scales, NGOs must influence government bodies, local and national.

The first requirement is to develop a more favorable policy and administrative environment for NGOs' existence and

activities. More decentralized patterns of development work, particularly in regional and local planning, offer important opportunities both to governments and NGOs for "appropriate administration" (Calavan^{10/}) and for organizational strategies for managing local level development (Gunawardena, 1987).

Paradoxical as it may sound, the progress of nongovernmental organizations depends, partly, on government support. But governments are often reluctant to collaborate with, and sometimes are directly hostile to, NGOs. In turn, NGOs themselves often put restraints on their cooperation with governments. This may be out of a concern with being co-opted, or because they don't see much potential in such cooperation, or because rivalries among NGOs themselves. Perhaps a reversal of thinking and posture is called for among NGOs: NGOs may consider strategies for actively trying, in their own turn, to "use" governments, for getting the government's policies, mechanisms and resources to be more responsive to the development needs and initiatives of the people they represent.

In practice, this is not an easy and short-run goal, but there are indeed many ways of working patiently towards it. Its achievement will depend largely on solving the question discussed before -- the organizational build-up of NGO's strength. Therefore, once again, constructing the link between relevance, organizational capacity and replicability appears as the cornerstone for an expanded NGO impact on development.

NOTES

- 1/ In commenting on a prior version of this paper, Kamla Chowdhry observed that while the recent mass multiplication of NGOs is indisputable, the earlier NGO movement also reached very significant levels in certain periods. For instance, in India during the Gandhian period, thousands of NGOs emerged and made a historic contribution to the Gandhian objectives. Before that, various missionaries groups had set up many education and health facilities in India.
- 2/ The member countries of DAC (Development Assistance Committee) are the following: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States. The capacity of NGOs in these countries to raise private resources for development aid varies widely from country to country. Given fluctuations in exchange rates, this is best expressed by the share of NGO grants in the countries' gross national product. In 1985, the highest ratios were attained in Ireland (0.13 percent) and the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden (0.08 percent), compared to the average of 0.03 percent for the DAC countries together. The absolute amount of private grants has gradually increased over years, as visible from Table 1, but for the DAC countries combined their share in GNP fell from 0.04 percent in 1973 to 0.03 percent in 1985.
- 3/ Although distinctions do exist between the NGOs that are village-based or urban-based and incorporate a segment of the community itself, on the one hand, and the so-called professional NGOs, advocacy NGOs, etc., which consist of a specialized group of activists, on the other, both the former and the latter see themselves as agents acting on behalf of the community's interest.
- 4/ For instance, a rather solid and comprehensive study by Gorman and assoc. (1984) of the contribution of voluntary organizations as development agents excludes from its analysis "the thousands of voluntary agencies which are engaged primarily in local or domestic pursuits", and explains this exclusion as follows:

" ... excluded from our analysis are all profit-making organizations. While these may make considerable contributions to development through investment activities and through donations to

private charities, their primary purpose does not lie in the direction of philanthropy. By contrast, PVOs have as their raison d'être the provisions of resources and services to others without profit as a motive". (Gorman, 1984, p. 2).

5/ Norman Uphoff defines membership organizations as "local self-help associations whose members may seek to handle (i) multiple tasks, e.g., local developmental associations ... (ii) specific tasks, e.g., water users associations ... or (iii) needs of members who have some particular characteristic or interest in common, e.g., mothers' club ... Service organizations are the local organizations formed primarily to help persons other than members, though members may also benefit from them." (Uphoff, 1986; see also Esman and Uphoff, 1984.)

6/ Projects financed by outside donors must assess in advance what the local people need and expect. However, such programs are sometimes based on preconceived ideas, and the manner of superficial "consulting" of local people may become just a means for justifying these preconceptions, rather than for authentic learning about local needs and priorities. John Mason gives a very telling example from an AID evaluation study:

"We [project designers] went to the villages to ask what they wanted. They said -- give us an improved water supply. We asked what else? They said -- a hospital. We asked what next? They said -- a school....All the time, in the backs of our heads, we knew they were going to get maize production." (Mason, 1987).

The implication is that if the intended beneficiaries of such projects would be organized and would act as constituted groups, their capacity to express and assert their needs and demands would be more effective.

7/ Personal communications from Maritta Koch-Weser, Thayer Scudder, Abdul Salam, William Partridge, and Daniel Gross provided considerable factual confirmation of the positive role of NGOs in many resettlement projects.

8/ Much along the lines of the discussion contained in chapter IV of the present paper.

9/ Richard Holloway and David Watson have prepared an interesting manual entitled "Changing Focus" -- one of the very few based on direct field experience that is available for planners at the local level and that focuses on poverty aspects. Such a manual could be used effectively in training NGO activists as well; among other things, it

suggests ways in which NGO methods can be integrated into the policies and approaches of government agencies.

- 10/ Michael Calavan has developed a useful six-pronged set of recommendations for creating an "appropriate administration" framework for NGO-government collaboration; (a) recommendations to government bureaucrats and politicians; (b) recommendations for external donor agencies; (c) for external private voluntary organizations; (d) for local leaders and groups; and (e) for researchers. (See Calavan, 1984)

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