

# STUDY ON WORKS OF "THE AKANKSHA FOUNDATION"

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## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Non-Government Organizations (NGO) have been, in theory, in existence for many decades. Non-government organizations can vary in many different forms of association. For the purpose of this paper, the acronym NGO will be used, which is the official name given to non-government groups shortly after the formation of the United Nations after the Second World War, in 1945. As clearly stated in their name “Non-Government Organizations” are free and independent of direct control by government. Throughout the world there are many different types of NGOs, which can make the process of defining such an association a difficult task. There are a few basic characteristics that NGOs must abide by in order to be considered a NGO. These characteristics are: NGOs must not be a political party, NGOs must not be a criminal group and thirdly they must be a non-profit organization. Although, these three characteristics could possibly be disputed, these characteristics hold true for the majority of NGOs that have influence in the global political arena. Political party association could be the one characteristic that could promote the most debate of the three characteristics because a significant amount of NGOs work closely with political groups of like-minded views, but as noted before NGOs can not be a political party within their own organization.

Non-Government Organizations have many different missions and visions but the majority of their goals have one common theme of “Working together in partner with the United Nations for a more peaceful and sustainable world.” The key word in this quote



is sustainable, this type of theme is ideal for building the foundations of energy policy, and more specifically policy that can bring a decrease in fossil fuel use (as well as an increase use

of renewable energy). Greenpeace is a NGO that has taken energy policy to an intense new level. This research paper will include a brief section on Greenpeace and its role as a significant NGO in the global world of energy policy and energy renewable options.

### **NGOs at the International Level**

There are tens of thousands of different NGOs across the world. There is a broad range of different groups focusing on many different issues. Over the past decade there has been a significant increase in the number of NGOs around the world (See table #1 for specific growths). At the international level the main role of NGOs are concentrated in three major debatable issues: Human Rights, Environmental Issues, and Development issues. Energy policy can fall under all three categories. Under The Charter of the United Nations, Article 71 it states, “The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-government organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence.” This alone does not make NGOs a significant player in global decision-making process but rather a significant influencer. Under this article it is clear that there are some rights for NGOs at a consultation level. NGOs are allowed to at some degree, to voice their opinions and knowledge of certain areas in global governance but are not allowed to play a role in the “General Assembly” which ultimately makes the critical decisions.

NGOs represent a wide variety of issues but their greatest influence is their democratic nature to speak for the “Public Interest.” This type of philosophy has helped NGOs to be a great influence in global debates. Although NGOs have increased in number and influence over the course of history they have also endured many setbacks in their journey to reach their goal. A great deal of setbacks have been due to the difficult task of assembling the massive varieties of different NGOs at the international level. If the NGOs were able to join together to provide a solid foundation on global issues, they could have a greater strength in knowledge and power, to negotiate global issues with the UN and at other global political gatherings. Throughout the history of NGOs, they have experienced triumphs and defeats in reaching their ultimate goal for a peaceful and sustainable world. Of course many defeats have been due to their lack of decision-making power at all levels of governance, but the unification of like-minded NGOs joining together as one organization could only strengthen their battle.

## **NGOs and Private Voluntary Organizations:**

In discussion of politics within countries, a distinction is often made between interest groups and pressure groups, but it is taken for granted that both types of private groups have an impact upon government policy-making. The term, interest group, is biased towards consideration of groups such as companies or trade unions. Use of the term is unsatisfactory, as it tends to imply that such groups are only concerned with economic policy, that they only act to safeguard their own economic position and that only groups with substantial economic resources can have an impact on politics. None of these propositions is valid. Major economic actors are also concerned with values beyond the accumulation of wealth. At the minimum, they also pursue security and status. At the maximum, they have a wider responsibility towards health and safety, social welfare and environmental values. The term, pressure group, invokes a wider range of groups. Its use is intended to cover those, such as environmentalists and human rights groups, who are pursuing goals that do not directly benefit themselves. It emphasizes the processes by which groups mobilize support to promote their political values. The contrast between interest groups and pressure groups can be used to suggest a contrast between objective goals and subjective goals and hence privilege the pursuit of economic returns over environmental values and other abstract values.

In the United States, a similar distinction is made, with stronger, but different, normative connotations. Mention of a lobby seems to imply the illegitimate use of wealth in a secretive manner, while private voluntary organizations or public interest groups convey a positive image. There is a logical problem with the distinction in that membership of a lobby is both private and voluntary. These terms are also unsatisfactory as the latter two suggest charitable activity and do not readily bring to mind campaigning groups nor those who are concerned with global issues, such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International. "Public interest" appears to cover the general good, in an objective manner, but it is an essentially-contested concept, both with respect to what is "the public" and with respect to identifying "the common interest". One person's view of the public interest may be seen by another person as the assertion of unacceptable values, ideological extremism or special pleading.

The distinction between interest groups and pressure groups or between lobbies and private voluntary organizations has no analytical value. All pressure groups or voluntary organizations have some interests to protect, even if it is only the maintenance of their reputation, increasing the number of active supporters and gaining sufficient income to

communicate effectively. Altruistic charities use sophisticated public relations campaigns to raise funds and standard lobbying techniques when government taxation policy affects their income. Equally, all interest groups and lobbies are of political importance, precisely because their pressure influences social and political outcomes. They do not necessarily operate in a secretive manner in the corridors of power and they do at times seek to mobilize public support. When they engage in political debate, company representatives often argue for general abstract values that go beyond their specific concrete interests. Companies can only challenge the public interest – or more precisely public opinion – at the risk of damaging their public reputation, their brand values and their income. Many companies more positively promote what is often seen as the public interest. They may donate profits to charitable activities, identify directly with environmental values to benefit from green consumerism or even reduce consumption of energy and raw materials to reduce costs. Trade unions usually go much further than companies in making explicit their endorsement of a wide range of political values. They also allocate money, personnel and other resources to campaigning, both independently and in coalition with other pressure groups.

Whatever one might think of these terms from the discourse on politics within countries, they are never used in global politics. Because diplomats like to claim that they are pursuing "the national interest" of a united society, they will not admit to relations with interest groups or pressure groups and they prefer the bland title, non-governmental organizations. The thinking behind the concept of a public interest group has been transferred to some people's attitudes to NGOs. There is a desire to limit access to the UN system to "proper" NGOs, but all this means is that groups supported by the person concerned should be included and other groups excluded. The other terms – interest group, pressure group, lobby and private voluntary organization – could *all* be applied legitimately to most NGOs. However, there is mutual connivance in most political processes at the global level to hide behind the uncontroversial catch-all term NGOs. The only significant exception, which is discussed below, is the tendency in global environmental politics to talk about "Major Groups". This sounds more positive, but it is still a vague term, devoid of any direct association with participation in policy-making.

In the logic of the language, there is no difference between a non-governmental organization and a private voluntary organization, but NGO still carries neutral connotations and applicability to a diverse range of political actors, whereas PVO suggests moral approval

of a more limited range of groups. In practice, it is impossible to agree any general terms to distinguish praiseworthy from unacceptable groups, either in domestic politics or in global politics, because such a distinction is a subjective choice made on the basis of each observer's own value preferences.

### **Transnational Actors**

In academic study of international relations, the term "transnational" was adopted to refer to any relationship across country boundaries, in which at least one of the actors was not a government. It was adopted in order to deny the assumption that international relations was the same as inter-state relations, or more precisely intergovernmental relations. It came into currency in the 1970s as a result of economic and environmental questions being recognized as a high priority for the global agenda. It is immediately apparent that the academic concept of a transnational actor is quite different from the political concept of an NGO. Firstly, it excludes all NGO activity that is confined to a single country. Secondly, it includes all the other non-governmental actors that have been defined as being outside the world of NGOs. It is commonplace to refer to transnational companies, transnational criminals, transnational guerrillas and transnational terrorists. In global politics, it is rare for any reference to be made to transnational NGOs, presumably because an NGO's involvement in global politics *ipso facto* makes it transnational.

### **Independence from Governments**

The most difficult question about the independence of NGOs is whether they come under governmental influence. Individual governments do at times try to influence the NGO community in a particular field, by establishing NGOs that promote their policies. This has been recognized by quite common use of the acronym GONGO, to label a government-organized NGO. Also, in more authoritarian societies, NGOs may find it very difficult to act independently and they may not receive acknowledgment from other political actors even when they are acting independently. Beyond these unusual situations, there is a widespread prejudice that government funding leads to government control. In the field of human rights, it would damage an NGO for such a perception to arise, so Amnesty International has strict rules that it will not accept direct government funding for normal activities. On the other hand, development and humanitarian relief NGOs need substantial resources, to run their operational programs, so most of them readily accept official funds. While these NGOs

would like the security of a guaranteed budget for their administrative overheads, governments generally only want to support field costs for projects.

Nominally NGOs may appear to be independent, when they design their own programs, but government influence can arise indirectly if the program is designed to make it more likely that government grants or contracts will be forthcoming. On the other hand, confident experienced NGOs can appeal for funding for new approaches and in so doing cause government officials to re-assess policy. The best example of this is the way in which NGOs, particularly the International Planned Parenthood Federation, dragged governments into adopting population programs. There is no obvious method to identify the direction of influence, without detailed knowledge of the relationship between an NGO and a government. Environmental NGOs may have either type of funding relationship. Conservation and research groups may happily obtain government funds to support their programs: some are innovative and some are not. Beyond these situations, radical campaigning groups may be unwilling and unable to attract government funds.

### **NGOs, Political Parties and Ethnic Minorities**

While a political party is not regarded as an NGO and cannot gain recognition at the UN, a small number of transnational groupings of political parties do gain consultative status with ECOSOC. There are also several groups of parliamentarians with consultative status. No problems have arisen with either group, because they have carefully avoided trying to involve the UN in the "internal affairs of states". Human rights NGOs feel aggrieved that the same principle is applied to them, even though one of the purposes of ECOSOC is "promoting respect for, and observance of, human rights". In May 1968, ECOSOC Resolution 1296 (XLIV) specified that NGOs "should have a general international concern with this matter, not restricted to the interests of a particular group of persons, a single nationality or the situation in a single State". While this provision was dropped from the revised text in July 1996, it is still applied in practice. On this basis, the Indian government can block the World Sikh Organization from gaining UN recognition. Christian Solidarity International also lost its consultative status in October 1999 after it had allowed the guerrilla leader, John Garang, to speak on its behalf, at the Commission on Human Rights.

The recognition of minority rights is such a complex question that it is handled very differently in different countries. In both North and South America, the minority communities who are descendants of the inhabitants prior to the arrival of the great waves of European settlers are given the privileged title of "indigenous peoples". The term has also been adopted in Australia and New Zealand and a few other countries. On the other hand, governments in various ethnically diverse countries do not wish to accord any special recognition to minorities. The compromise is that the UN refers to indigenous people, as individuals who have rights, and not to indigenous peoples (note the plural). This avoids recognition of any collective identity or any claim to the right of self-determination. The restrictions deriving from Resolution 1296 mean the organizations with consultative status are mainly global or regional coalitions of ethnic minorities. However, special procedures have been adopted in both the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Sustainable Development to allow participation by a wider range of indigenous organizations. In addition, in July 2000, ECOSOC established a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, consisting of sixteen independent experts, half of whom are nominated by indigenous organizations. Through a variety of complex issue linkages, these NGOs can be important in environmental politics, notably in the conservation of rainforests. While they are only present in the UN system under the auspices of the arrangements for NGOs, indigenous people are often keen to claim a unique status that is separate from and superior to the representatives of NGOs. As a result, their alliance with environmentalists does not always operate smoothly.

### **NGOs and their Relations with Business and Commerce**

A few intergovernmental economic organizations do allow an individual company to have access under their provisions for NGOs, but this is only in cases where there are loose *ad hoc* procedures and there are no formal institutional arrangements. However, as with political parties, non-profit-making federations of companies, established for industry-wide collaboration and to act as lobbies, are widely accepted. From the earliest days of the UN, bodies such as the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Organization of Employers and similar organizations for particular economic sectors have been included among the NGOs. Until the 1990s, they were not of much significance in the UN itself, but they have always been important in the specialized agencies. The more technical the question under discussion, the more the policy-making process will draw on their expertise.



One of the outcomes of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the UN Conference on Environment and Development, was to draw companies into global environmental politics and hence more into the work of ECOSOC. Sectoral bodies are prominent when questions such as energy or transport are on the agenda. In addition, issue-oriented commercial grouping have been formed. The most prominent is the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, a successor to various lobbies that focused on the Earth Summit, to promote environmentally friendly business. The oil companies have sound environmental credentials in some forums, but not in others. The Oil Companies International Maritime Forum is making a useful contribution to the reduction of oil pollution at sea, but the Global Climate Coalition opposes reductions in oil consumption. OCIMF is registered as an NGO by the International Maritime Organization, and the GCC is admitted as an observer to the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 1999, the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, explicitly called upon companies to widen their social responsibilities by entering into a Global Compact with the UN. Companies that do so agree to endorse nine principles, covering promotion of a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labor standards and protection of the environment. Soon afterwards, global business organizations, several hundred companies and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions responded positively, but only a handful of human rights, environment and development NGOs did so. There remains a deep suspicion among many such NGOs about the possibility of companies implementing commitments to social responsibility.

Despite the suspicion of business, some NGOs have chosen to engage directly in collaborative arrangements to formulate and monitor statements of business ethics. This has been done both on an industry-wide basis and with individual companies. For example, WWF (known as the Worldwide Fund for Nature until July 2000) took the lead in forming the Forest Stewardship Council in 1993 and the Marine Stewardship Council in 1996. Each Council works to promote sustainable practices, with participating companies gaining the benefit of having their products endorsed by the NGOs as being environmentally friendly. Similarly, various companies are having environmental and/or social audits undertaken on an annual basis, by independent assessors.

## **NGOs and the Political Use of Violence**

There has been no compromise in any political system with the idea that the use of violence is not a normal part of the political process. In the UN, aggressive behavior by individuals is sufficient to raise the question of suspension of an NGO's consultative status. In the exceptional circumstances where group of guerrillas wish to claim their use of violence is acceptable as part of the struggle against an oppressive regime, the group does not call itself an NGO. Their supporters call them a national liberation movement, whereas their opponents call them terrorists. Sometimes these groups gain admittance to intergovernmental organizations, as if they were the governments of recognized states. At the UN, they have never been classified as NGOs, but a few have been given a different status, as observers at the General Assembly and at UN conferences. Within individual countries, there are rare examples of the use of violence as a deliberate tactic, by groups that would normally be referred to as NGOs. A clear example is the Animal Liberation Front in the United Kingdom. They are simply regarded as criminals by the government and by the public, including many who support their goals. A commitment to non-violence is the best respected of the principles defining what is an NGO.

## **Different Types of Structures among NGOs**

There is a great variety of ways in which NGOs are structured. The classic model is of a membership organization, co-ordinated in a geographically-defined hierarchy. Individual people work in local groups, which co-ordinate in provinces and then have a headquarters in the capital city for the country as a whole. Such country-wide organizations are called national NGOs. Frequently, the national NGOs combine in an international NGO, or INGO, which may consist of regional groups of countries and be capped by a global body. Not all the levels of the hierarchy need exist. Many countries are too small to have provincial structures. Smaller specialist NGOs may simply enroll individual members at the national level, without having any local branches. Occasionally, individuals are enrolled at the international level. On the other hand, in large organizations, the international level often seems relatively remote and attracts little attention, even among the NGO's own members. The group running a local family planning clinic does not necessarily know about the work of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) at the UN World Conference on

Women in Beijing. Nevertheless, such global organizations with their membership measured in millions do maintain a democratic policy-making process. While some may hold direct elections for key posts at the national level, the responsibility to the membership at the global level is always indirect, via some international council or assembly of national representatives.

It should be noted that one of the ambiguities about the term, NGO, is whether it is referring to a local, provincial, national, regional or global body. Until the early 1990s, the matter was generally straightforward in academic, news media or political discussions. The overwhelming majority of local and provincial NGOs never engaged in transnational activities. Thus NGO, by itself, usually meant a national NGO and regional or global bodies were called international NGOs. National NGOs did engage in transnational development and humanitarian activities, but, with very few exceptions, they were not, in their own right, participants in international diplomacy. When they wanted to exercise political influence at the global level, they did so through the appropriate INGO. In the 1990s, there was a great upsurge in local organizations becoming active at the global level, particularly on environmental issues, because of the Rio Earth Summit in June 1992, and on social issues, because of the Copenhagen Social Summit in March 1995. Since then, the term INGO has not been used so much and NGO, by itself, has come to cover both national and international NGOs. As an expression of the new politics, various terms then were popularized to refer to local NGOs. Grass-roots organizations, community based organizations (CBOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs), all came into currency. There is still an ambiguity whether these newer terms cover organizations that only operate at the local level or also include local branches of national organizations. Grass-roots and community organizations clearly refer solely to the local level, but civil society has connotations of any level within a single country. Indeed, it has become quite common to refer to global civil society.

Linguistic usage in the legal atmosphere at the UN used to be somewhat different. When the UN was formed, any involvement of private individuals or groups in its work constituted deviation from the norm of diplomacy being the exclusive preserve of "states". Thus, a national organization, as mentioned in Article 71 of the UN Charter, was any NGO based in a single country. No distinction was made between an organization that covered a large constituency, over the whole country, and an organization based solely in a local community or a small section of the population. The lack of any distinction did not matter, as

participation by either country-wide or more limited national NGOs was so rare in the permanent UN organs. Participation began on a small scale in the 1970s at UN conferences, on an *ad hoc* basis. When the ECOSOC rules were changed in 1996, to admit "national NGOs" to consultative status as a matter of routine, the presumption became that a national organization was a country-wide membership organization or a federation of local groups or an umbrella group, that is a coalition of NGOs operating in different fields. As is common at the UN, practice has not been consistent: a few local NGOs have been admitted as "national NGOs" to consultative status. The Rio conference also produced a term that has only been used in environmental politics at the UN. "Major Groups" refers to a system of categorizing NGOs from all levels, for the purposes of participating in UN policy-making processes.

Hereafter, use of NGO alone will imply that any or all levels are included, while local, national or global will be used when the meaning must be restricted to that level. Terms such as CBOs and Major Groups will also be used in the appropriate political context.

### Changes in Terminology Covering NGOs

| Level of Organisation    | From 1945 to Early 1990s                           | Early 1990s Onwards  |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Local                    | National NGO, at the UN<br>Not discussed elsewhere | Grass-roots, community based or civil society organization, or local NGO |
| Provincial (USA - state) | National NGO, at the UN<br>Not discussed elsewhere | Civil society organization or local NGO                                  |
| National                 | National NGO, at the UN<br>NGO, outside the UN     | NGO or national NGO or civil society organization                        |
| Regional                 | International NGO                                  | NGO or civil society organization  |
| Global                   | International NGO                                  | NGO or Major Group or civil society organization                         |

A minority of NGOs conform to the model of a global democratic hierarchy, in which any person may become a member. One variant is for the NGO to have subscribers or supporters, providing income, receiving newsletters and responding to calls for action, but not having

any democratic control either over expenditure or over policy priorities for the organization. This is common among altruistic NGOs, promoting social welfare and poverty alleviation, and also among environmental NGOs. Another variant is for a specific status or participation in some activity to be a prerequisite for membership. Thus trade unions are only open to those employed in certain occupations (sometimes very broadly defined). Similarly, professional, scientific and technical bodies are only open to people with the relevant qualification. Such organizations may then be grouped on a functional basis rather than a geographical basis, before they form national and/or international federations. Trade unions do maintain democratic decision-making structures (at least in principle, if not always in practice). However, professional, scientific and technical bodies have professional norms that override democratic norms and members may be expelled for violating the professional norms. A third variant is a religious organization. The major religions do all have complex hierarchies, from the local faith community through to global spiritual authorities. None of them claim to be democratic: authority is based on faith, a holy text, the charisma of individuals or a hierarchical tradition. To some it will be surprising to discuss trade unions, professional bodies and religious organizations as if they are NGOs. Indeed, the leaders of all three will usually deny they are NGOs. Nevertheless, they are treated on the same basis as NGOs throughout the UN system, with the exception of the special place for unions in the International Labour Organisation's tripartite system of governance.

### **Coalition-Building Among NGOs**

Once NGOs do decide to influence public policy, they organize, in broad coalitions, specifically for this purpose. This means there is a large number of NGOs that bear no resemblance to the classic model of a unified hierarchy. Coalitions may take the form of umbrella INGOs, networks or caucuses. In the days when the main form of communication was by mail and even transnational telephone conversations were expensive and time-consuming to arrange, multi-national coalitions generally took the form of institutional structures. Many international women's organizations, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies and the World Conservation Union are examples that date from this era. They are referred to as umbrella organizations, to signify the presence under the single umbrella of a variety of different NGOs that do not share a common identity. In the 1960s, direct transnational telephone dialing was established and air travel became sufficiently cheap for individuals to meet occasionally. Then in the 1970s the news media gradually used satellite

communications, so that events in one place were shared around the world as television images. These processes encouraged the formation of looser issue-based networks of NGOs to exchange information, mobilize support and co-ordinate strategies. At this stage, networks still required some degree of formal organization, with enough resources being raised to pay the salary of a network administrator and associated costs for the paperwork. The International Baby Foods Action Network was the prototype, followed by similar networks on pesticides, rainforests, climate change and other questions. The advent of e-mail and the web in the 1990s then meant that the costs of running a network dropped substantially and individual people could afford to take part in sophisticated instantaneous global communications. The number of networks increased dramatically and they no longer needed any formal structure. Once a lead organization or even a lead individual establishes technical and political communication skills, a coalition of thousands of NGOs can be formed rapidly and their influence focused on specific targets. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the Coalition for an International Criminal Court and Jubilee 2000 are the most spectacular examples. However, the impact of technological change should not be exaggerated. The most effective modern networks still derive their impact from being coalitions of well-organized NGOs. Although communication costs are now minimal, it is still essential to have sufficient resources at the center, even if they are provided by a single member of the network, for at least one person to devote most or all of his/her time to servicing the network.

A variant of the global network is a global caucus. This arises when a group of NGOs come together as lobbyists at an international diplomatic event, such as a UN agenda-setting conference or a UN forum for negotiating on the formulation or implementation of a treaty. The caucus will be highly focused on achieving specific outcomes from the diplomatic process. The impression is given that such a caucus is an ad hoc grouping that only exists during the two or three weeks of the relevant diplomatic meetings. It may be accurate that the particular combination of NGOs having the particular political purpose will never meet again. However, a successful caucus will be well prepared and will carry forward procedural expertise, substantive knowledge, political status and diplomatic contacts gained in one forum through to the next forum, handling similar questions. Key organizations and key individuals provide continuity. Women's organizations and environmentalists are among the most successful operating in this way.

When we consider something as loose and transient as a caucus, it is perhaps inappropriate to call it an organization. Nevertheless, structured umbrella coalitions, networks and caucuses are all handled in the same way by governments. In the UN system, all transnational actors have to accept the label "NGO", in order to participate. They may be present under the label of the coalition or of its constituents or through both routes. Umbrella INGOs have consultative status and networks usually are listed, but caucuses rarely have any formal recognition. Coalitions that focus on policy outcomes in a particular country or a particular intergovernmental organization will tend to take the form of an umbrella organization. Coalitions that focus on issues tend to take the form of a network or a caucus, with different members being active in different policy forums.

In global environmental politics, there is a unique set of caucuses – the system of "Major Groups". The term was adopted at the Earth Summit, when *Agenda 21* devoted one of its four sections to "Strengthening the Role of Major Groups". The preamble argued that "one of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making" and this must be done as a "real social partnership" with "individuals, groups and organizations". The aim was for the UN to move beyond the traditional reliance on the established NGOs, in two ways. Communication must reach down to individuals at the level of local communities and particular sectors of society of importance for the environment must be mobilized. The section devoted separate chapters to nine Major Groups, under the following headings.

- Global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development
- Children and youth in sustainable development
- Recognising and strengthening the role of indigenous people and their communities
- Strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations: partners for sustainable development
- Local authorities' initiatives in support of *Agenda 21*
- Strengthening the role of workers and their trade unions
- Strengthening the role of business and industry
- Scientific and technological community
- Strengthening the role of farmers.

The choice of these nine groups was the arbitrary and incoherent outcome of negotiations at UNCED. It was influenced by the personal concerns of Maurice Strong and by the lobbying

of NGOs who were accredited to the conference. It is arbitrary to single out women but not men; the young but not the elderly; indigenous people but not other minorities; unions but not professional associations; business and industry but not commerce, finance and services; natural scientists but not social scientists; and farmers but not fishing communities. It is anomalous, but understandable, to emphasize one level of government, local authorities, when they have responsibility for all the Major Groups. Above all it is incoherent to have NGOs as one of the Major Groups, when *all* the other eight (including associations of local authorities) are represented in the UN system via the ECOSOC "arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations". This incoherence arises because many in the other Major Groups did not wish to be labeled as NGOs and there had to be a category to encompass environment and development NGOs.

In the Commission on Sustainable Development set up after the Earth Summit, special arrangements were made to allow for participation by all the new groups that had engaged with the UN for the first time at Rio. Any NGO that had been accredited for UNCED was allowed to apply for Roster NGO status at sessions of the CSD and later was given a special fast-track procedure for gaining full status with ECOSOC. Although the CSD is constitutionally a standard subsidiary body of ECOSOC, it has developed its own procedures for relating to NGOs. Rather than each NGO attempting to exercise its participation rights separately, the NGOs are organized into the nine Major Groups from *Agenda 21*. These categories are used both by the NGOs in their own caucusing and in the formal proceedings. In addition, the CSD has gone beyond the normal consultative arrangements to hold various types of formal, and informal, panels and seminars. Notably, each of the annual sessions starts with the appropriate Major Groups making presentations in special "stakeholder dialogues" on the different substantive agenda items for that year. In pragmatic terms, the illogicality of having NGOs as one of the nine groups of NGOs serves a useful function, in enabling any organization that does not fit elsewhere to be included. This Major Groups system has only operated in the CSD and in other processes that have been derived from UNCED.



## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last decade, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have gained increased attention among scholars and practitioners of development. They have become increasingly important agents of the development process in the countries of the South, in all of their main areas of work such as humanitarian relief, long-term development, policy formation and political advocacy (Attack 1999). On the other hand, there is a current view that NGOs constitute a viable alternative to government as channels of development assistance, particularly in developing countries. Some of the NGOs' functions and advantages, according to Streeten (1997) are:

- (1) They are good at reaching and mobilizing the poor and remote communities;
- (2) They help empower poor people to gain control of their lives, and they work with and strengthen local institutions;
- (3) They carry out projects at lower costs and more efficiently than the government agencies and
- (4) They promote sustainable development. In this article two aspects will be discussed, first, the relationship between NGO and empowerment as a particular virtue of NGOs, and second, the strategy and program undertaken by NGOs that contribute to sustainable community development.

In other words, the purpose of this paper is to shed some light on the NGOs' program regarding issues of empowerment and sustainable community development. In particular, the paper seeks to highlight participation of NGOs in promoting sustainable community development. Thus, this article will review some literature regarding the NGOs' programs, and highlight how these programs would affect community empowerment, and finally contribute to sustainable community development.

NGOs are professionally-staffed organizations aiming at contributing to the reduction of human suffering and to the development of poor countries (Streeten 1997). They do this in various ways, e.g. by funding projects, engaging in service provision and capacity building, contributing to awareness, and promoting the self-organization of various groups (Baccaro 2001). Meanwhile, Desai (2005) has mentioned that NGOs have an important role to play in

supporting women, men and households, and expected that they can meet the welfare. She accounted some role and functions for NGOs, such as counseling and support service, awareness raising and advocacy, legal aid and microfinance. These services help the people to achieve their ability, skill and knowledge, and take control over their own lives and finally become empowered. On the other hand, Stromquist (2002) has noted three major functions for NGOs such as (1) service delivery (e.g. relief, welfare, basic skills); (2) educational provision (e.g. basic skills and often critical analysis of social environments); and (3) public policy advocacy.

Baccaro (2001) shows how particular NGOs can promote the organization and “empowerment” of the poor, particularly poor women, through a combination of micro-credit, awareness-raising, training for group members, and other social services. Empowerment is the ability of individuals to gain control socially, politically, economically and psychologically through (1) access to information, knowledge and skills; (2) decision making; and (3) individual self-efficacy, community participation, and perceived control (Rappaport 1987; Zimmerman and Rappaport 1988). In the long term, the aim of NGOs is to promote sustainable community development through activities that promote capacity building and selfreliance. Langran (2002), has mentioned that NGOs through capacity building help to sustain community development. NGOs are often created in order to expand the capacities of people (Korten 1990). Furthermore, NGOs are praised for promoting community self-reliance and empowerment through supporting community-based groups and relying on participatory processes (Korten 1990; Clark 1991; Friedmann 1992; Fowler 1993; Edwards and Hulme 1994; Salamon 1994).

On the other hand, sustainable development has emerged over the past few decades as an important paradigm for community development. However, as Bradshaw and Winn (2000) have noted, sustainability is rooted largely in an environmental approach, particularly in the industrialized countries. But, the goal of sustainable development is to find a balance between three pillars - social, economic and environmental - of communities (Sneddon 2000). The Rio Conference interpreted sustainable development as a single process with three dimensions. In addition, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation defined it as three distinct processes, of “economic development, social development and environmental protection— as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars” (United Nations 2002). These dimensions were originally introduced with the aim of identifying areas in which social, economic and

environmental goals are interrelated (Holmberg and Sandbrook 1992). However, these dimensions of sustainable development have done little to reduce the complexity of the concept and has itself introduced a contradiction.

Hibbard and Tang (2004) in their study in Vietnam, have noted the importance of NGOs' roles in sustainable community development. One of the roles was that NGOs balance the social, economic and environmental factors in promoting sustainable development. Another important role of NGO that they discovered was decentralization of the central government which helps the local communities to acquire more power in order to make their own decisions. But, sometimes the local communities lack specialists to do professional work and resources that are important for the particular projects. In this situation, NGO assists local staff with drafting sustainable development plans that are functional under the umbrella of a central government policy. Finally, they concluded that sustainable community development is process-oriented, and it requires extensive community participation and relies on network to share resources, knowledge and expertise.

From the literatures, it could be summarized that NGOs play an important function in promoting sustainable community development. Sustainable community development emphasizes on a balance between environmental concerns and development objectives, while simultaneously enhancing local social relationships. Sustainable communities meet the economic needs of their residents, enhance and protect the environment, and promote more humane local societies (Bridger and Luloff 1997). As Bridger (1997) has mentioned, sustainable community development includes five dimensions. The first dimension emphasises on increasing local economic diversity.

The second is self-reliance which entails the development of local markets, local production, local processing of previously imported goods, and greater cooperation among local economic entities. The third dimension involves a reduction in the use of energy, coupled with the careful management and recycling of waste products. The fourth dimension focuses on the protection and enhancement of biological diversity and careful stewardship of natural resources. Finally, the fifth dimension is related to the commitment of the sustainable communities to social justice.

Through the functions of providing microfinance, initiating capacity building and self-reliance, NGOs could promote empowerment among community members, and eventually community sustainable development.

Specifically, the discussions are on the functions related to provision of microfinance, initiation of community capacity building and selfreliance. Eventually, sustainable community development will be achieved, particularly when community is empowered. The “bottom-up approach” in community development would likely bring about empowerment to the community and finally sustainable community development. According to Finger (1994), the bottom-up approach emphasizes community participation, grassroots movements and local decision making. It argues that community participation and grassroots initiatives promote participatory decision making and local self-reliance (Panda 2007).In bottom-up approach, people are able to define their own problems and having ability and capacity to solve it through organizing and participating themselves.

## CHAPTER 3 - COMPANY PROFILE



The Akanksha Foundation is a non-profit organisation with a mission to provide children from low-income communities with a high-quality education, enabling them to maximize their potential and transform their lives. Akanksha works in the field of education, initiating school reform through The School Project, and providing a supplemental education through the Akanksha centers.

Currently, Akanksha reaches out to over 4600 children through two models: the after-school or center model and the School Project.

Akanksha has 15 centers and 15 schools in Mumbai and Pune. The School Project is a venture to open high-quality schools serving children from low-income communities in Mumbai and Pune. These schools are in partnership with local municipalities, with the vision of creating small clusters of model schools in these cities that can be used to impact the mainstream education system.

Through the centers, a commitment is made to support each child by providing a strong educational foundation, good time, self-esteem and values, and to help them plan how they can earn a steady livelihood as a step towards improving their standard of living.

## **AKANKSHA TEAM**

### **Chief Executive Officer - Vandana Goyal**

Vandana is a graduate of Claremont McKenna College, with a degree in Economics. As part of her undergraduate studies, she spent a year at the London School of Economics. The initial years of her career were spent at Citizen Schools, a Boston-based non-profit organization dedicated to changing the life trajectory of underprivileged urban children in the United States. She joined Akanksha in 2006, initially serving on the team that created a blueprint for Teach for India, later moving on to manage the Beyond School department serving all adolescent children of Akanksha. In 2007, she became the Director of Akanksha's School Project, launched to create a network of high-performing schools within the government system. She took over as CEO in January of 2010. In 2012, Vandana was honored by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader. In 2014 she successfully completed two Executive Education courses, Global Leadership and Public Policy for the 21st Century at the Harvard Kennedy School, and Strategic Perspectives in Non Profit Management at Harvard Business School. Vandana serves on the Board of Directors of The Akanksha Foundation, Akanksha Canada and Thermax Social Initiatives Foundation. She also serves on the Advisory Board of the India School Leadership Institute, KINOE ( Kids in Need of Education) and STIR Education.

### **Chief Learning Officer - Matthew Corallo**

Matthew holds a Master's degree in Political Science from St. John's University, Jamaica, NY and has also completed the Aspiring Principal's Program from the New York City Leadership Academy. He comes with a rich experience of over 14 years in the field of education, beginning his career as a Social Studies teacher to being a principal where he led and managed all aspects of instruction and organisation for his school. Recently, Matthew has been the Curriculum Director at Creative Communicators – New York where he developed and implemented curriculum to maximize learning skills for students with special needs and physical disabilities.

### **Chief Financial Officer - Sivakami Kotla**

Sivakami has done her graduation in Commerce (Accountancy & Economics) from Mumbai University and advance diploma in Business Administration from Welingkar's Institute of Management, Mumbai. She comes with a rich experience of 11 yrs in the manufacturing and development sectors. She has worked with large international non-profit organisations like Hope Worldwide and Handicap International. She has built strong finance teams, has handled multiple stakeholders and has had responsibility for financial management of regional projects. She has handled financial audits, reviews conducted by donor agencies and has managed finalization of regional accounts, prepared budgets for USAID grants, Indian government grants, institutional and corporate funding. She brings in a lot of passion, experience and understanding of the development sector.

### **Director – Education – Anjali Sabnani**

Anjali holds a degree from St. Xavier's College in Mumbai and has a background in advertising and PR, working at Adfactors Advertising for six years prior to joining Akanksha. Anjali joined Akanksha in the year 2000 as a volunteer. In 2001, she became a teacher, and in 2004 she assumed the responsibility of Assistant Education Manager. She is currently heading the Education Department and oversees teacher support and training for the city of Mumbai.

### **Senior Director - Operations – Anandhi Yagnaraman**

Anandhi has done her graduation from Chennai University and has a MA in Educational Leadership and Management from University of London. She joined Akanksha in the year 2000 as a computer teacher. She worked with the Art for Akanksha project, and then was a teacher until 2004. She then moved to the UK for a few years, and moved back to India, working as the Program Coordinator and Head of the School Program for Akshara in Bangalore. She rejoined Akanksha Pune in the year 2009 as General Manager Pune, and is currently in charge of operations for centers and schools in Mumbai and Pune.

## CHAPTER 4 – PROJECTS

### 4.1. The School Project

The mission of The School Project is to create a model for high-performing schools that redefines what is possible for children from low-income communities, and has the potential to drive wider systemic reform.



In India today, 96% of primary school age children are enrolled in school. The quality of learning indicators, however, is of persistently low levels– with low standards of education, up to 25% absenteeism amongst government school teachers, a 50% drop out rate between grade 1 and grade 5, and 90% dropout by grade 10.

A few years after the millennium, there began a trend amongst people living in low-income urban communities of putting their children into low-fee or ‘affordable’ private schools. Today, approximately only 40% of the 1.1 million children living in the city of Mumbai attend government schools. In response, The Municipal Corporations of Pune (PMC) and Mumbai (MCGM) acknowledged the insufficient supply of English-medium schools and have initiated setting up of new municipal schools of this kind.

Based on this organizational history and environmental context, Akanksha decided to step back and redefine its approach to its mission of equipping all children with an education that has the power to fundamentally transform their life trajectory.



In 2006, Anu Aga, an Akanksha board member, approached the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) to adopt a municipal school through the Thermax Social Initiatives Foundation (TSIF). The PMC granted permission for TSIF to run the KC Thackeray Vidya Niketan Municipal School, serving the scholarship students across the municipal schools in Pune from Standard 3 and above. Although Akanksha was initially an unofficial partner in this initiative, the seeds of The School Project were sown with the opening of the first school in June 2007.

In the first year of the school opening, TSIF and Akanksha chose to administer a 3rd party assessment called ‘ASSET’, an assessment, fairly new at the time, taken by a small pool of elite private schools. On this baseline assessment, the children performed anywhere from 30-70% below the mean. Eight months later, the students had bridged an achievement gap of nearly 25 percentage points— with some students performing near the mean. These promising initial results built confidence in the potential of schools to provide the kind of environment that children from low-income communities needed.

In 2008, Akanksha decided that working within the government system offered more scope to reach more children and one day be an advocate for education reform from within the system, using the case study of the Akanksha Schools as a model of what can work in public education. With 15 schools across both cities, this model continues to grow and thrive today.

## 4.2 The Model

The Akanksha School Model has been adapted from best practices of high-performing schools in India and around the world, and Akanksha’s own experience in education, gathered over its twenty years of serving some of the poorest urban slum communities in Mumbai and Pune. These **Six Pillars** represent the guiding principles of The School Project and the core of what Akanksha believes drives the success of its schools. (hover your cursor over each pillar to know more)

- Excellent Educators
- Progressive Pedagogy
- Focus on Results
- Parents as Partners
- Scalable Cost

- More Time

## **Akanksha Schools**

Upon sensing the increasing trend of people living in low- income urban communities putting their children in low- fee or ‘affordable’ private schools, Akanksha decided to step back and redefine its approach to its mission of equipping all children with an education that has the power to fundamentally transform their life trajectory.

Akanksha has 8 schools in Mumbai and 7 schools in Pune in partnership with the PMC and the MCGM along with other supporters.

*(hover your cursor over each photograph to know more)*

## **MUMBAI**

### ***Abhyudaya Nagar Mumbai Public School***

School Leader: Chitra Vishwanath

Teacher Leader: Rachana Sundaram

Timings: 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Address: Opposite Abhyudaya Nagar Market, Near Kala Chowki Police Station, Abhyudaya Nagar, Mumbai



***D. N. Nagar Mumbai Public School***

School Leader: Sheetal Murudkar

Asst School Leader: Zoya Khan

Timings: 7:30 AM – 12:30 PM & 12:30 PM- 6:30 PM

Address: Behind Versova Police Station, Link Road, Andheri (W), Mumbai



***Laxmi Nagar Mumbai Public School***

Junior School Coordinator: Prachi Mangaonkar

Timings: 12:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Address: Opposite Khar Gymkhana, 14th Road, Khar (W), Mumbai



***Mahalaxmi Mumbai Public School***

Junior School Coordinator: Sima Jhaveri

Timings: 12:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Address: Near Mahalaxmi Temple, Behind Shobha Hotel, Bhulabhai Desai Road,  
Mahalaxmi, Mumbai

## CHAPTER 5 – PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

### **‘Art for Akanksha’ Products**

Akanksha products range from simple ideas to complicated pieces of art! At the heart of each product is the immense talent in children and their boundless creativity. Each product is more than just a piece of art; each product carries the story of the child or children who were involved in creating it. Akanksha products capture the creativity we foster in our art programs and design class.

Akanksha Products can be divided into 3 categories:

#### **1. Hand-crafted Products from Design class**





These are hand painted pieces our children create in class are functional and beautiful. Inspired by little designers in class and created in collaboration with big designers, the Akanksha Shop is home to products such as linen and furniture that are also geared to reach the retail market.

## 2. Printed Products



The designs that emerge from the various art sessions at design class are subsequently used in a range of products that are inspired by the child's art and finished by professional partners.

## 3. Akanksha Cards and Calendars

Over the years, Akanksha cards have been a simple and effective way for Akanksha children to reach out to millions of people across the world with a simple message: each child holds tremendous potential. The Akanksha cards come in a trademark square size, in different paper qualities and designs for various occasions. We even custom create designs for companies for events such as birthdays or weddings.

## **CORPORATE OFFERS**

### **Products for corporates**

Art for Akanksha provides companies the opportunity to invest in truly unique ideas, designed around special themes, to products and gift hampers that carry a message; from workshops that bring teams together, to murals that brighten and personalize office spaces.

### **Why choose ‘Art for Akanksha’?**

‘Art for Akanksha’ offers companies a high level of customization – from the product theme, price, and design to branding, packaging, and delivery. The products are unique because they combine art and the children’s talent, and all profits from the sale of products go into providing an art education for Akanksha children and into sustaining the organisation’s educational initiatives.

Here are some testimonials from past partnerships:

*“The Akanksha-HDFC association has been truly acknowledged by business channels as well as customers of the bank. It has helped us garner patronage from our customers, which in turn helps grow our business in the long run. Also with such activities we get a chance to give back to society.”*

- Samar Kagalwalla, Regional Marketing Manager

*Art for Akanksha partnered with HDFC to create customized gifts for new account openings.*

*“The jigsaws incorporated Godrej’s core values with a very ‘Akanksha’ touch. The pride and sense of achievement that the employees felt at the end of the workshop was very visible. It’s great to have moments in your adult life where you can paint without inhibitions in the company of children. Such associations help us learn the value of empathy and understand that we all have wondrous potential in all of us. We just need a safe place to bring out our creativity and imaginations.”*



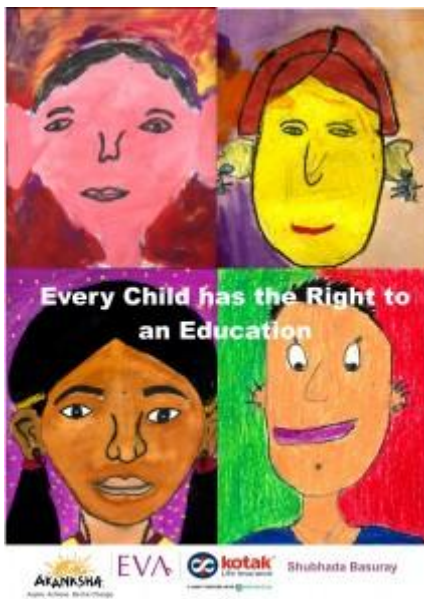
– Abhik Bhattacharji, Godrej

*Art for Akanksha partnered with Godrej and ran an art workshop to create 3 large jigsaw murals.*

*“I wanted to engage in an art activity where children and employees could be involved in the best possible way and since Akanksha is an expert in this area, I decided on working together for this workshop.”*

- Poulomi Pal, Manager-Partnerships and Communication-CSR, Essar Investment Ltd.

*Akanksha not only ran various art workshops for Essar employees, but the Essar Foundation flew out Art for Akanksha alumni to help with their School Redevelopment Project and work with students of a school for children from low-income communities in Bihar. Art for Akanksha designed workshops that helped motivate the students and painted murals on the walls of the school.*



Art for Akanksha has partnered with several corporates such as Tata AIG, Birla Sun Life, Swastik Production, Bain Capital, Barclays, Franklin Templeton, Morgan Stanley, Godrej, HDFC, Citi Group, Societe Generale, Aon Hewitt, Panacea Biotech, Sinsan Pharmaceuticals, Peek-a-boo, FutureOrgs, Ezeego, and many more

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

### **Service Learning Program**



Mission: To transform students into empowered individuals who are able to identify and understand social issues and embrace active citizenship. The Service Learning Program (SLP) aims to inculcate a sense of agency in its students. A year and half program, SLP exposes participants to various social issues and motivates them to create frameworks for change. Students attend weekly session/workshops that cover current affairs and develop leadership skills. The SLP team also supports Akanksha's centers integrate a spirit of service into the curriculum, and three Akanksha schools are currently piloting service learning programs.

### **Sports Program**



The Sports Program's primary goal is for children to have fun, create friendships, and build self-confidence through physical activity. In addition, the students are taught the value and importance of teamwork. Classes are run on weekends, and children are introduced to a variety of sports and offered a safe, healthy opportunity for organized physical play. Students

who are particularly successful in classes are invited to join one of Akanksha's teams, which compete in leagues with teams from other community organizations so they can continue to develop their skills in a more competitive environment.

## CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION

In conclusion, AKANKSHA NGO has a history of providing information to governments and companies about not only local and national issues but also at an increasing rate, at the international level for children and humanities. International government alone is difficult strictly between the massive diversities between each country that is represented at these international conferences. The goals of the NGO are not only to have their voices heard but actually understood. The NGOs feel it is essential to have action against child poverty, sexual abuse of children made at the political level. Although, USA has backed out of the Kyoto Protocol, NGOs such as Akanksha do not look at this as a failure but believe some of their efforts have made a difference with the countries that have ratified this international treaty. Perhaps, with the increase over the past decade of NGOs and the future of NGOs looking bright, they may some day join together in their efforts. When this day does evolve the pressure at the level will be felt and action will be taken.

The point of this debate about terminology is to emphasize that NGOs are not just well-meaning, uncontroversial, non-political groups. Furthermore, there is no difference between the role of NGOs in domestic and in global politics. At both levels, they are diverse, controversial and of major political significance. The impact of a particular NGO may vary across time and place, and from one issue to another, but collectively NGOs generate the dynamics of political change. We have seen that there is often an assumption that NGOs are operating for the general public good or even that they are "progressive". However, there is such diversity to the values advocated by different NGOs that they oppose each other, as well as putting pressure on governments and companies. Many women's NGOs oppose religious NGOs on questions of sexual and reproductive behavior. Hunters, farmers and fishing communities oppose animal rights groups. Environmental and development NGOs have different perspectives on sustainable development from each other. Many radical NGOs are hostile to reformist NGOs who accept incremental change. It is not logically possible for anybody to support all NGOs nor indeed to be hostile to all NGOs.

Many government leaders express quite hostile attitudes to NGOs, even in some democratic societies. In as much as this is a general sentiment, it is irrational. There are particular factors that explain the irrationality. Firstly, the increased impact of NGOs has caused resentment among those whom they criticize. Secondly, the claim by some NGOs that they are the "voice of the people" and hence have greater legitimacy than governments is deeply offensive to government officials. As they are quick to point out, it is also a ludicrous claim. Thirdly, the violence and the extreme revolutionary and/or nihilistic attitudes associated with some of the participants in a series of anti-globalization demonstrations, starting at Seattle in 1999, diminished the status of the other NGOs at the demonstrations. In some circles, there was even a generalized negative impact upon NGOs from the terrorist attacks upon New York and Washington in September 2001. Nevertheless, virtually all government leaders, in both domestic and global politics, including those who have expressed hostility, will work with NGOs when they expect the most active NGOs to be allies, in support of their current political goals.

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**APPENDICES:  
SNAPSHOTS AND GALLERY**



The kids of NGO Akanksha visited on the sets of The Buddy Project – Wallpaper

