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Future Directions For Development Non-Governmental Organizations

October 2001

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Abstract

The levelling off of Northern government development assistance and the new interest in civil society during the 1990s have radically changed the context for Southern development NGOs. After tracing the pace and the reasons for these two changes, this article focuses on three significant strategies which several of the leading Southern NGOs have developed for sustaining their transformative work both locally as well as globally: 1) defining their local programs in terms of much broader "global public goods" discussion; 2) developing their own capacity to analyze and publicize their own achievements; 3) linking with other Southern and northern NGOs working on the same issue for policy change. Three examples of these new approaches are presented as well as some implications for Northern (donor) NGOs.

Future Directions For Development Non-Governmental Organizations

For most development circles during the 1980s and early 90s, development non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were the darlings. These non-profit agencies were able to get close to the poor and engage their participation in ways that Southern government ministries never could. NGOs were innovative and lean. They seemed to share many of the characteristics of the market-place entrepreneurs and yet stay committed to working with the poor. As the 90s wore on, however, the discussion shifted toward *civil society* as the third sector along with business and government and the foreign aid budgets of Northern governments shrank. New—and harder—questions have emerged about the roles and purposes of these development NGOs within the societies of both the North and the South.

This refocus toward a more-balanced perspective about development is welcome. Major changes in development financing, global technology, and the very agenda of global civil society during the 1990s have radically shifted the contexts within which development NGOs, both Northern and Southern, carry out their mission. An excellent discussion of the impacts of these changes on Northern NGOs has already appeared in the *NonProfit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (M. Lindenberg, 1999). In this article I highlight several trends that may serve to shape the future for Southern NGOs and sketch some of the emerging strategic and organizational consequences these trends may have over the next 10 years. Without claiming to identify all of the possible trends or to insist that they apply equally to every Southern NGO, I hope this article can contribute to the strategic scanning that many NGOs have recently adopted as their management methodology. I will first examine the changing patterns of development financing, then identify three new strategies which some leading NGOs have developed to ensure their sustainability and finally outline the implications this new situation has for Northern NGOs. I begin by clarifying the current NGO context.

The Current Development NGO Context

During the 1990s the World Bank and the IMF exalted business and the private sector as *the* engine of economic development; concurrently they turned from government to NGOs as the deliverers of social services. However, the World Bank's (1997) report, *The State in a Changing World*, reaffirmed the role of governments as standard-setters and active guardians of the common good. Thus, the 1990s saw the focus broaden from the "golden age" of NGOs (1985-1995), when NGOs were seen as the *key* agencies for active participation of people in their own development. During the latter half of the decade a much healthier affirmation emerged for a variety of civil society organizations—not just NGOs—each contributing in its own way to the broader task of making democracy work (Putnam, 1993, helped define the shift). As a result, a more balanced assessment of the complementary roles of government, business and civil society—now including NGOs—in any sustainable development process has emerged.

During this change in focus on NGOs, the concept of civil society has played an important role. Originally virtually identified with NGOs, civil society has received many definitions. Diamond (1994) captures the current concept as "formal or informal groups of citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions, and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable." van Rooy (1998) provides a good survey on the current role of civil society in development aid programming.

The Pattern of Development Financing

Financing is one of the structural ingredients of any development process. Any NGO director—with the possible exception of those dealing with emergencies—may complain that the channels of funding that sustained the rapid growth of NGOs during the late 1970s and 1980s have tightened up—if not altogether dried up. It is important to understand this ebbing of funds within the history of development assistance from Northern governments.

Shifts in Funding Support

Stewart (1999), in her recent article "Aid in the Twenty-First Century: Reconciling the Real and the Desirable," argues against looking at the vast amounts of development assistance as a failure because they have not done away with poverty. Instead, she advocates recognizing that the two key purposes for such Northern government assistance have been achieved: keeping most Third World countries within the capitalist camp; and shifting governments away from a state-led Keynesian economics to the neo-liberal, laissez-faire model. The success in achieving these two (usually unstated) purposes of bilateral government assistance, she explains, is why the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) foreign aid averages dropped from 0.34% of gross national product (GNP) in 1984–1985 to 0.27% in 1995, even as most social development indicators in the South were worsening—dramatically, in some countries in Africa—during that same period.

The 1995 DAC foreign aid average of 0.27% of GNP was still a sizable figure: US\$45 billion. And, although the overall percentage had dropped, the proportion of those government funds that flowed through NGOs had trebled during the same period, from 3.6% to 10%. Northern governments had lost their faith in Third World governments and were now investing in NGOs. It was this expansion to 10% of \$45 billion (i.e., \$4.5 billion) that financed the golden age of NGOs!

This major shift in funding support was not due to any demonstrated success in accomplishing national development by the first two generations of either relief or community-development NGOs (see Korten, 1987). Rather, as Robert McNamara stated in his 1980 farewell address to the World Bank, it was simply that NGOs promised a greater ability than state ministries to gain the participation of local populations in development projects. NGOs could perhaps offer needed social services more cheaply and efficiently than government bureaucracies and could help communities meet their *basic needs*. Two decades of government-to-government assistance were judged largely a failure due to corruption, inefficiency, and top-down planning. In any case, the more fundamental financial strategy into which the NGO golden age fit was that of structural adjustment promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This structural adjustment radically reduced the size and role of Southern governments as they sought to balance their budgets that had been distorted by earlier foreign assistance and debt dependence.

Not only was it the Northern governments who relied on NGOs to accomplish a more participatory development. Members of the Northern public (civil society) also increased their support to NGOs. From 1980 to 1991, spending by Northern development NGOs grew dramatically, by US\$3 billion (Edwards & Hulme, 1992, p. 14). The whole new industry of Northern development NGOs financed an even faster growing number of NGOs in many Southern countries. For this reason, Hulme and Edwards describe the NGO growth boom of the 1980s as supply-led rather than demand-driven. This relationship was one in which the recipient Southern NGOs became financially dependent upon Northern NGO donor agencies. This was a "hothouse" atmosphere in which neither the money nor the power for these new NGOs arose from their local communities, civil societies, or local businesses, but rather from cultivating good relationships with the regional project officers of Northern donors. To maintain this flow of outside funding, it was usually enough to produce regular reports and to demonstrate active engagement with two or three local community groups. As a donor-NGO officer in touch with many other donor agencies during this period, I was quite aware of the accountability standards.

During the pre-1990s period, by and large, Southern NGOs kept to themselves with minimal involvement with local or national government bureaucrats. The fact that many NGOs received significant funding from outside and were also actively building local pressure groups made them objects of suspicion and, occasionally, of investigation by government ministries, from India to Peru to Kenya.

Several burgeoning Southern NGOs became quite effective in engaging local community social support for their own development, and a few became very large, national organizations (such as Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka and PROSHIKA in Bangladesh). Very few documented and analyzed their successes and failures or published the proof of their accomplishments (exceptions include the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, The Aga Khan Foundation work in Pakistan and India, and Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka). Funders generally were readily satisfied with fly-in visits and annual reports.

Implications of Current Funding

Stewart (1999) points out that despite the achievement of the two unstated goals of resisting communism and promoting neo-liberalism, foreign assistance still retains some important functions within the new political economy, although it does not have the same weight as earlier. The new tasks that she mentions relate to a more diverse foreign policy and concern for domestic and global security. They are about creating and maintaining markets for Northern trade, preventing mass migrations, promoting regional development, preventing the collapse of governments, controlling weapons, and promoting environmental goals Stewart, p. 17; see also Kaul, 1999). Stewart conjectures that within these goals, the average level of DAC funding for development assistance will decline even further to 0.1% of GNP, but it will continue at this level, especially once Northern governments' annual deficits are overcome.

Stewart argues that the historically important poverty and redistribution agenda will not loom large in this new set of goals. Foreign aid will not focus on helping the poorest in the poorest countries, except for the politically more palatable cases of emergencies. The new consensus places responsibility for wealth creation (and, by extension, poverty reduction) on the private business sector and trade and makes the countries of the South primarily responsible for their own social development. According to Stewart, only a minority of countries (primarily in sub-Saharan Africa) experiencing recent conflict will receive external, poverty-targeted assistance.

This crucial shift in the financing of development was first signaled in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) (1997) report on "Sustainable Development: OECD policy approaches for the 21st century." This report insisted that the primary responsibility for poverty alleviation lay with the Southern countries themselves and noted that many of these countries—such as India, Brazil and Chile—harboured a significant wealthy and middle-class population which should carry the key responsibility for local wealth distribution. Although the irony of Northern governments' proclaiming this truth only after their own funds dried up cannot be lost, this local responsibility must become central to the next phase of NGO development. Whatever role the imbalance of world trade plays in the production of global poverty, the citizens of each country still have to determine how they choose to address their own poverty and wealth distribution.

The implementation of this shift in official development assistance (ODA) quickly ran into difficulties in the short term. Northern governments were forced to recognize that many Southern states had inadequate staffing and policies to take up the task of designing and implementing their own economic development and poverty reduction plans; their indigenous policy priorities and effective bureaucracies needed to be rebuilt. Thus OECD donors first had to focus on local capacity building and on greater coordination among their own donor programs (Charles Bassett, CIDA Vice-President, personal communication, February 2001).

For example, CIDA's long-term strategy (still in draft form) acknowledges that Canadian aid resources will be prioritized toward some of the same global public goods that Stewart (1999) identified (global security, weapons control, environment). Nonetheless, "serious institutional crises currently paralyze the multilateral system to effectively address global public goods with equity among developing countries" (Tomlinson, 2001). The danger of re-direction of ODA toward only those developing countries that adopt the "right" policies and rebuild competent development ministries is that less funding will move to the poorest countries and more will move toward those middle-income countries able and interested in entering the global economy.

From this brief review of shifts in development assistance, at least two major trends emerge for NGOs over the foreseeable future. First, the overall size of development funding from Northern governments will

diminish significantly or, at best, level off. Secondly, funds that continue to flow will be more narrowly focused toward specific areas of interest to the foreign policies of the donor countries, leaving poverty alleviation programs to the neo-liberalized markets of Southern countries or the consciences of their elites. These trends are neither universal nor absolute, but the overall shift in direction is becoming clear.

Concerns of Sustainability for Southern NGOs

Along with these shifts that are forcing Southern NGOs to engage more directly with their own societies, another series of changes is occurring in the roles that NGOs play in these societies. In his article, "Three Generations of NGOs," and later in his book, "Getting to the 21st Century," Korten (1987, 1990) pointed to several major transformations in this hybrid category of development NGOs: from emergency relief agencies to community-based organizers to international politico-economic lobbyists, and (lastly) to the servants of people's movements. Korten suggests that each of these stages emerged from a realization of the limits of the previous incarnation in achieving real development change. As with many such stages typologies, Korten implies that the latest stage is the best—that is, NGOs as servants of people's movements. Is this realistically the future direction for Southern NGOs?

The Emerging Identity for Southern NGOs

Many NGOs in countries as diverse as India, the Philippines, Brazil and Kenya see themselves as assisting people's movements by serving as trainers, advisors, or intermediaries (e.g., see Carroll, 1992). However, in the last decade very few Southern countries have produced significant people's movements. In several Latin American countries and in the Philippines, earlier movements have now ebbed and receded to shells of their former selves. Most Southern NGOs in fact work with people's local organizations rather than the few more politically powerful people's social movements (such as India's Chipko or Brazil's Landless Movement). Thus, with a few notable exceptions, Korten's (1990) pointing NGOs toward the service of people's movements does not represent a very fruitful—or sustainable—direction for most Southern NGOs. Spontaneous people's movements are few and far between and do not offer an adequate rationale for NGO existence.

What the 1990s have revealed to be the weakness of this analysis of NGOs is its singular focus on NGOs alone (or sometimes in concert with people's movements). Increasingly, what is defining development is not the activity of any one actor, be it the private sector, the government, or NGOs, but rather the *challenge of bringing these diverse players into a concerted, complementary local effort*. Rather than one NGO working with its community groups, sustainable development seems to result from a number of different actors with different interests finding a common focus or implementing a local project that advances all of their interests.

The central thesis of Edwards' (1999) *Future positive* is that "cooperation implies reciprocity ... a willingness to give as well as take, the voluntary acceptance of limits and actions on all sides rather than just one ... Cooperation means creating opportunities for others to develop themselves" (pp. 3-4). For development NGOs to participate in this more multi-faceted approach to local development, they need to be quite clear about their own expertise and role in the broader process. Rather than seek to remain in their traditional role as project promoters, they have to accept Sithembiso Nyoni's observation that "no country in the world has ever developed itself through projects" (cited in Edwards, p. 70). By focusing narrowly only on work with local communities — even where they are fairly effective and apparently successful—NGOs are not going to respond adequately to the broader development goals of the local community nor be sustainable in the medium term.

Many Southern NGOs, of course, see themselves working with local communities primarily to build a base for transforming unjust power and economic relationships. It was the need to package their work into formats acceptable to Northern donors that constrained them into the project mold. The drop in Northern funding and the recent shift to seeking funds from within their own societies has led many NGOs to contract out their technical expertise in health, agriculture, microcredit or community organizing to local governments or even national ministries (e.g., see my LIUCP study, 1996). Studies of this new government-NGO cooperation are beginning to emerge (see e.g., Farrington & Bebbington, 1993). They are uncovering many unforeseen problems in their different operational methodologies, their different time horizons, and (perhaps most basically) their different organizational cultures.

In identifying themselves primarily as service providers available to almost any contractor, some NGOs have crossed the line from being social transformers to becoming small consulting businesses. This crossover

would support Uphoff's (1996) allocation of NGOs to the second (business) sector. To achieve this transition successfully, most of these NGOs have had to become more specialized, more professional, and more results-oriented in their reporting, but none of these supposed improvements by themselves has led these NGOs across the line. As Fowler (1997) has astutely noted in *Striking a Balance*, this identity-shift into the (non-profit) business sector occurs only when these NGOs release themselves (usually unconsciously) from their primary mission of social transformation and adopt their own organizational survival as the primary goal. When they were dependent on far-away Northern funders, this choice of masters (the local community or the funder) was felt especially at reporting time but it did not compromise the NGO on the local scene. With local government or business funding, financial influence is now brought much closer to home; the potential conflicts of interest are much sharpened and harder to avoid.

Implied Tensions and Values

An element of this tension is present when NGOs opt to sell their services to those community groups or cooperatives that can afford them, when they develop sideline, for-profit businesses (publishing, consulting, research), or when they seek public funding through campaigns addressed to the upper-classes. In these three cases there is less institutional divergence of interests than when contracting with local governments—the NGO can still clearly affirm its basic solidarity with the poor and marginalized; in contrast, local governments (as part of the public sector) most often have to opt for a less partisan position both in policy and in practice.

The shift in values will come neither easily nor rapidly when the better-off citizens of Southern countries are asked to assume responsibility for addressing the poverty of their fellow citizens. The Hunger Campaign in Brazil since 1993 managed to engage large numbers of Brazilians in providing relief assistance of money, goods and media attention to many marginalized, but met massive and passive resistance when its leader, Betinho, tried to move the campaign from one of relief to address the more structural issue of employment. Individuals and groups were creative and generous in sharing their goods; they could not manage to create new jobs (see Landim, 1998; Lopez de Carvalho, 1995). Experience the world over shows that emergencies, be they natural or political, receive their strongest response locally; what is more difficult is to move supporters' consciousness to the structural roots of ongoing poverty. NGOs by themselves cannot presume to address such a major cultural transformation. Putting their role into perspective, Putnam (1993), in his study of Italian democratic patterns, has shown that the roots of social-capital formation go back generations, even centuries, and are not readily transformed even by large-scale government programs.

However, by building more and more horizontal organizational links of belonging and membership, vibrant civil societies do emerge (Serageldin & Grootaert, 1999, argue for a vertical dimension as well). To undertake this long-range task, which is within their expertise, development NGOs will have to join together in national umbrella organizations and work actively with other civil society groups such as churches, religious bodies, labour unions, and socially responsible business groups to encourage a culture of respectful response to the marginalized. In facing the challenge to develop local funding—just as in the new, more complementary approach to local development itself—NGOs are now called into cooperation with other, broader social forces rather than relying on themselves to bring about a fully integrated development.

Southern NGOs' New Roles

Faced with the reduction and/or re-focusing of international development assistance and the long-term challenge of developing local sources of financial support, Southern NGOs need to find a medium-term strategy that allows them to continue their work of social transformation and, if possible, to become more effective. From observations of several leading Southern NGOs over the past decade (such as FASE in Brazil; Consortium Latino Americano para Agroecología y Desarrollo (CLADES) in Chile; USC in Mali; and the Institute for Popular Democracy in the Philippines), I have extracted three strategies:

1. Repackage the NGO's previous best development work to fall within one of the major global public goods that require truly global and diverse responses.
2. Develop the NGO's capacity to analyze, demonstrate its effectiveness, and publicize its achievements (together with the other actors).
3. Link up with other selected Southern and Northern NGOs already working on the same issue in order to effect broader policy change at the global level.

I describe each of these strategies in the following subsections.

Define Work in Terms of a Global Public Good

Even as the traditional poverty-reduction work of development assistance is being shifted back to Southern nations, it is still possible to recast that local community development work within one of the categories that Kaul (1998) has named global public goods: food security (including genetic modification and diversity); local democratic development; environmental preservation/protection; human rights; and gender awareness. This would be neither a new tactic nor a deceitful one; most NGOs are used to re-packaging themselves according to the five-year cycle of development themes. What is new about this approach is the conceptualization of an NGO's *local efforts* at development in terms of a *globally perceived* issue or problem. Engaging local communities in organic agricultural practices in the deserts of Mali or the highlands of Peru can be seen either as an isolated local project or as one effort at global food security.

Although integrated development approaches may still be a viable representation of an NGO's work nationally, the trend internationally is toward specialization, focusing upon a particular aspect of local development (which can include the management of diverse actors at the local level). If NGOs are able to maintain a similar focus in several different sites in their country, this ensures the further benefit of comparing how a given approach works in different contexts. The potential to apply learnings to a new context is always a key concern.

This specialization permits the NGO to realize its own comparative advantage within the global setting. No other actor can claim the same expertise at trying out alternatives at the grassroots level, within a dynamic context of local development. Neither academics nor Northern issue-based NGOs have that advantage. Thus, what may appear to be the "narrowing-down" of an NGO mission in fact provides a window from which to contribute to a global analysis of the same issue. For example, the excellent quality of USC Mali's work on local organic farming in desert regions has made them a key reference for the international concerns of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and also attracts funds from Northern foundations and governments.

Develop Capacity to Demonstrate Excellent Work

One of the refrains of evaluators of NGO work is the lack of rigorous record-keeping and analytical documentation of often excellent work. Perhaps one of the most serious weaknesses of development NGOs generally—as the initial honeymoon with the World Bank and government donors ended in the early 1990s—was their inability to demonstrate convincingly, with studies and evaluations, their effectiveness at innovation, at engaging local participation, and at being more efficient than other development actors. There were plenty of regular reports to donors, but few were based on sustained monitoring and objective criteria. The Aga Khan Foundation (in its work in East Africa, Pakistan and India) and Sarvodaya (in Sri Lanka) were among the few agencies that systematically studied and invited outside evaluators to analyze their work (see Shah & Shah, 1993, 1996; Goulet, 1981). Most NGOs kept whatever evaluations were carried out within their own organization, so there was little room for collective learnings, much less comparisons between NGOs. Until recent years, with the new emphasis on results-based management, donor agencies were satisfied with annual narrative, financial reporting, and occasional staff visits.

In the future, what will turn an NGO's variety of local experiences into an acknowledged global expertise is high quality ongoing research and analysis of their experiences. Working with a variety of other local actors (government, small business and community groups), the NGO will have the interest—and even the need—to produce a well—documented analysis of that experience. That documentation provides the key for NGOs to enter into the debate on global public goods, providing the global policy level debates with some solid footing in Southern development experience.

I emphasize that not every NGO has to provide such analysis and evaluation from within its own staff (most of whom are activists and not analysts by nature). Here as in the next stage, a strategic alliance can be built with a nearby university to engage students in applied research, reciprocally influencing the formation of those students. For example, in 1992 CLADES struck a mutually beneficial alliance with 11 Latin American colleges of agriculture to develop professional training programs, integrated curriculum and interdisciplinary research (see Sarandon & Hang, 1995). This contributes to the building of a stronger local civil society of mutual cooperation, providing added value for both parties.

Link up with Other Southern and Selected Northern NGOs for Policy Impact

Any NGO that has accomplished the first two strategies will find it fairly easy to gain access to any number of global issue groupings, either via the Internet or through attending international meetings. To some extent, the problem here lies in discerning among the growing number of such networks which one(s) are

most in alignment with the NGO's agenda. Global communications have made these linkages easier to access and to maintain (though African NGOs still find such access difficult). However, strategic choices must be made at this level about which groupings will repay the effort required to participate.

If North-South relations were best characterized during the NGO golden age as ones of partnership, *strategic alliances* are the hallmark for the next period. No longer a relationship between purported equals (as with partnerships) limited simply to the donor-recipient relation, strategic alliances build upon real diversities within and beyond the NGO sector. These alliances seek out complementary strengths in order to work at common tasks—usually at the policy level.

In this shared struggle each party has its own expertise to offer, and the success of the common enterprise depends on combining and interweaving their diverse offerings to maximize their impact. In many of these networks, Northern NGOs (often no longer the former donor agencies) still have primary access to centres of power, where the development debates are framed. But without some significant Southern input and involvement, their claim to represent the interests of those marginalized tends to be unconvincing.

Three global public goods networks can serve as examples.

One of the oldest networks grew up in the human rights work of the 1980s, as Latin American and Asian human rights groups tried to get out their message of government-inspired abuse and to influence international opinion, specifically during the annual gathering in Geneva of the UN Human Rights Commission. Numerous NGO human rights groups—many with no direct links to the churches—were invited and coordinated by the World Council of Churches' Human Rights Desk to make their interventions during the review of various countries. Northern church groups arranged tours for these Southern representatives and introduced them to the Northern government delegations, providing grassroots, live testimonies of atrocities that some Southern governments tried to hide. This North-South coordination continues to this day (for a fuller discussion, see World Council International, 1998).

A second NGO network grew up in reaction to the World Bank's structural adjustment policies during the late 1980s. Cries of anguish came to Northern churches and donor agencies from the marginalized in various parts of Africa, Latin America, and Asia as IMF/World Bank teams forced governments to cut back education and health care budgets dramatically to deal with the debt crisis. Northern NGOs and churches began lobbying their own governments to change this "Washington Consensus."¹ UNICEF's (1987) report "Adjustment with a Human Face" documented the structural adjustment policies' effects on children, and an NGO alliance brought together by the Development Gap in Washington and the Third World Network in Malaysia led to direct conversations with the World Bank and later to the Bank's establishment of an NGO international committee to analyze and criticize key policies. This committee's success by 1996 led to the establishment of the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative Network (SAPRIN) (see NGO Working Group, 1993; World Bank, 1996).

A third group emerging during the 1990s around Northern agribusiness's patenting of seeds from Southern germplasm has expanded into the area of genetic modification. Originally led by the Rural Advancement Fund International (RAFI), this group saw that CGIAR exercised extraordinary control over public plant resources through its regulation of the various crop research centers, mainly located in Southern countries. By gaining the support of key Southern national centers in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, as well as several national agricultural NGOs in the Philippines, Malaysia, Chile and Brazil, and linking up with a few academic researchers at the University of California at Berkeley, this small network managed to mobilize several Southern governments to defend their own farmers' seed heritage against powerful U.S. and European grain businesses. Since 1992, they have served on a consultative NGO committee now operating *within* the CGIAR to preserve genetic diversity and the primacy of indigenous breeders' rights (see Serageldin, 1996; James, 1996).

These are three of many NGO-civil society networks that have emerged in response to global issues. Almost always these networks begin with a few die-hard, committed individuals who, out of their sense of social justice, feel compelled to take up what seems a David and Goliath battle against insuperable odds. The history of the past 10 years has shown that as these networks collect more adherents from across the globe and consistently maintain a sharp research and intelligence base, they have leveraged far greater power than their numbers alone warrant. Computers and Internet communication have certainly facilitated these networks, but their real strength lies in the diversity and solidity of their membership base, all willing to focus on one precise issue at a time.

For Southern NGOs, then, this is the pattern that offers even greater strength and impact over the coming decade. It is based on drawing an added value from their own local experience in multisectoral development, subjecting this experience to a critical assessment, and then presenting this analysis to those global networks that can best bring that experience to bear on international policy debates. One might call this the *new survival strategy of NGOs*.

Implications for Northern NGOs

But what of Northern development NGOs? Here too an identity crisis is taking place as their central role of collecting and disbursing funds overseas is lessening. No clear direction yet appears for this group, which in most cases is redoubling its efforts at fund-raising while facing even greater competition from NGOs catering to domestic issues—who are also being forced off governmental support. More research and discussion is needed for these groups (see M. Lindenberg, 1999).

Likely their sustainability will rest upon the quality and depth of their engagement with their own constituency within Northern civil society. The church-related donor NGOs have some advantage here, because churchgoers are disproportionately over-represented among all charitable givers. Some Northern NGOs have further developed their own lobbying capacity with their governments, drawing upon their Southern links to provide country-specific or issue-specific information to offset their nation's business interests. In Sudan, for example, the ongoing campaign of the InterChurch Committee on Africa (ICCAF) to expose and drive out the oil investments of a Canadian company, Talisman, is illustrative (see Nguyen, 2001). This again is a role for strengthening civil society, but it depends greatly on the quality of the inputs received from Southern NGO partners. The work of World Vision International in lobbying its constituency and governments to eliminate land mines is another excellent example of this option ([ref?]).

For NGOs in both the North and the South, the coming decade will call for changes more profound in both function and identity than at any time since the 1970s, when NGOs made the shift from emergency relief to community-based development. Unlike universities or churches, there are no ready-built and permanent functions for development NGOs. If NGOs choose to identify themselves as simply service providers, then they properly fall, as Uphoff (1996) has argued, in the second sector of small business. However, if, as I believe, NGOs' central commitment is to help transform social structures for political and economic justice, they may have a permanent role in most societies but never a safe haven, given the turbulent seas of civil society. Many NGOs will founder in the present turbulence, but those that survive by making the necessary adjustments can make an even greater contribution to social justice, but this time at a global level.

Endnotes

¹Washington Consensus is the term used to describe the informal policy-level agreement that emerged during the 1980s between the World Bank, the IMF and the U.S. government (all located in Washington) that market-forces were the dominant engine of growth and government bureaucracies normally hindered that growth by excessive regulation/controls, leading to structural adjustment solutions focused on national debt and trade balances.

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Biographical Notes

Robert Fugere has moved back and forth between development practice and academic teaching. After working in Latin America in the early 1960s, he returned to Canada to gain a Ph.D. in the theology of development at the University of Toronto and then taught at U of Toronto, York University and Seneca College. Hired as Executive Director of the InterChurch Fund for International Development in 1980, Bob managed an ecumenical fund of \$3 million supporting a wide range of development projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America for 17 years. He served on several policy-level committees for both the Canadian NGO sector as well as for CIDA as well as chairing three international consultations on development trends. After a short stint as consultant and evaluator, he moved from part-time teaching at University of Toronto to the Coady Institute, where he is responsible for courses in development history and management. Publications include case studies of multi-sectoral cooperation and policy-level advocacy by NGOs.