



Publications 123

**Changing Roles
of NGOs in the
Creation, Storage,
and Dissemination**



**of Information
in Developing
Countries**

**Edited by
Steve W. Witt**

K · G · Saur

สิ่งพิมพ์รัฐบาล
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International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

Fédération Internationale des Associations de Bibliothécaires et des Bibliothèques

Internationaler Verband der bibliothekarischen Vereine und Institutionen

Международная Федерация Библиотечных Ассоциаций и Учреждений

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Library and information professionals gather annually at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress, held in August each year in cities around the world.

IFLA was founded in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1927 at an international conference of national library directors. IFLA was registered in the Netherlands in 1971. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Royal Library), the national library of the Netherlands, in The Hague, generously provides the facilities for our headquarters. Regional offices are located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Dakar, Senegal; and Singapore.

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K·G·Saur München 2006

IFLA Publications
edited by Sjoerd Koopman

Recommended catalogue entry:

Changing Roles of NGOs in the Creation, Storage, and Dissemination of Information in Developing Countries / edited by Steve W. Witt ; [International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions]. – München : K.G. Saur, 2006. – 146 p. : ill. ; 21 cm.
– (IFLA Publications ; 123).

ISBN 3-598-22030-8

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.



Printed on permanent paper

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard – Permanence of Paper for Publications and Documents in Libraries and Archives ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R1997)

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K.G.Saur Verlag, München
An Imprint of Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG

Cover illustrations: PhotoCase.com / Boeder Photo CD

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Printed in the Federal Republic of Germany by Strauss GmbH, Mörlenbach

ISBN 13: 978-3-598-22030-2

ISBN 10: 3-598-22030-8

ISSN 0344-6891 (IFLA Publications)

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Foreword

The IFLA Social Sciences Libraries Standing Committee is pleased to present this volume of essays and case-studies that focus on the role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the storage, dissemination, and creation of the knowledge important to both social scientists, studying current phenomena, and members of civil society, working on global issues ranging from AIDS, food security, and social transformation.

As noted throughout this volume, NGOs have gone through an unprecedented period of growth in the past decade. With this increase comes a staggering expansion of activities, publications, and intellectual output. Additionally, the activities of both libraries and NGOs increasingly intersect as these organizations attempt to provide essential services to support scholarly and social programs.

NGOs clearly serve an increasingly important role in addressing significant societal issues and are an essential node in the network that feeds the global knowledge society. The need for further research and support of the informational needs and behavior of NGOs is also evident. NGOs represent a tremendous knowledge base that remains largely untapped and unnetworked. Collaboration among NGOs and libraries is necessary to help preserve local knowledge, detect slowly developing problems, aid in development efforts, and share best-practices among NGOs focusing on common issues.

Some of the papers in this volume were presented at joint Social Science Libraries Section and Regional Activities Division session at the World Library and Information Congress: 70th IFLA General Conference and Council "*Libraries: Tools for Education and Development*," August 22th–27th 2004, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Others were solicited through a call-for papers. Papers were selected for their contribution to the overall understanding of information storage, dissemination, and creation among NGOs with an attempt to provide prospective from each of the worlds regions.

This volume is arranged in two sections. Section one focuses on the role of research libraries and NGOs in developed countries to provide logistical and physical support for NGOs throughout the world. Section two highlights case studies and activities of NGOs and collaborating libraries throughout the world.

For further information regarding this volume or the IFLA Social Science Libraries section, please contact Steve Witt at swwitt@uiuc.edu.

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The Warning Voice – NGOs and Information

Lynne M. Rudasill*

In the alphabet soup of NGOs, INGOs, DONGOs, IGOS, SMOs, and other organizations that populate the directories related to the topic of extra-governmental, issue-related organizations, one thing is clear: these organizations, regardless of intent or origin, are becoming ubiquitous in the social and political arenas. Few publications concerning non-governmental organizations (NGOs) exist before the 1950's. The Online Computer Library Center's (OCLC) WorldCat lists only 5 books and 20 serials for the time period between 1900 and 1950 on this subject. The decade between 1990 and 1999 shows 3,069 book records and 146 serial records in the database. A search for the first half of this decade reveals almost 1,900 books and 47 serials records. In recent years, publications by or about these agents of civil society and change have increased almost as exponentially as the number of related organizations. What exactly is a non-governmental organization? Where do we find them? What is the explanation for their rapid growth in the last twenty years? Why is the exponential growth of these organizations important to libraries and librarians throughout the world? What kinds of information resources do they provide that will help us better understand our globalized environment?

Defining the NGO

There are a number of definitions for the NGO. The *Yearbook of International Organizations* defines NGOs as "organizations which have not been founded, and are not formally controlled, by national governments" (Union of International Associations 2005). The Union of International Organizations, itself, can be considered a non-governmental organization that dates from the early 20th century. This overly-broad definition is refined by many other writers, especially in the literature of political science and sociology. Reinalda and Verbeek (2001) agree with the definition in the *Yearbook of International Organizations* and add that a second characteristic for these organizations is pursuit "by private means private objectives that are likely to have domestic or transnational public effects."

Gerard Clarke (1998) from the University of Wales, Swansea defines NGOs as "... private, non-profit, professional organizations with a distinctive legal

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character, concerned with public welfare goals.” Suter (2003) defines them as “any organization outside the government, such as the public service and the defense forces, and business.”

Clearly several themes are repeated when attempting to define the NGO. They are not governmentally supported or founded, although government policies might have been a major reason for their genesis. They usually have defined goals and objectives relating to the creation of a civil society. They frequently work at the grass-roots level to provide aid, education, and, most importantly for the librarian, information both to the audience they are trying to provide services to, and to a wider audience of policy-makers, state organizations and funding agencies. Suter (2003) refers to them as the “warning voice” that things are not as they should be in a just and equitable society.

The areas in which NGOs are active include a list of societal issues such as human rights, humanitarian relief, environmental degradation, health, and economic development. The types of NGOs include multi-national corporations, social movement organizations, grass roots groups and religious organizations among others. In the United States, Michael O’Neill (1989) divides NGOs into nine types that are identified by the organization’s orientation. He includes religion, private education and research, healthcare, arts and culture, social sciences, advocacy and legal services, international assistance, foundations and corporate funders, and mutual benefit organizations under the umbrella of NGOs. The broadest definition of NGOs is probably overly inclusive since it would also pertain to para-military groups, criminal syndicates, and others. These organizations that are outside of the established norm are not included in this exploration of these social movements. Rather than a litany of interest areas, we would simply divide NGOs into three groups—service NGOs, advocacy NGOs, and, perhaps, leisure NGOs that would include international sports organizations.

Proliferation and Globalization of NGOs

Almost every book or article concerning NGOs begins with the statement that these organizations have exploded onto the scene in the last two decades, and the number of identifiable organizations increases exponentially with each year. Even so, the vast number of local NGOs is probably under-reported. An example of the under-reporting of NGOs can be found using the Yearbook of International Organizations. A search for international non-governmental organizations (IGOs) in Cambodia retrieves 10 results. One of these is the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia. This group acts as an organizing committee for the country’s non-governmental organizations. The website of the organization indicates:

“CCC operates as a recognized membership organization to promote the activities of NGOs for the benefit of the people of Cambodia, by:

- facilitating cooperation and supporting members on issues of common concern for NGOs
- providing current information services relevant to NGOs
- strengthening relationships with the Royal Government of Cambodia, to effectively influence policy and practice related to aid and development
- collectively representing NGOs to influence donors.”

Cooperation Committee for Cambodia. 2005

The Committee is very active in publishing a variety of directories for organizations working in and with the country. The Directory of International Development Assistance in Cambodia profiles over 100 IGOs and other international development agencies working in Cambodia. The Directory of Cambodian NGOs from 2004-2005 profiles close to 200 local agencies active in Cambodia, none of which are picked up in the Yearbook of International Organizations (Cooperation Committee for Cambodia. 2005).

This example also underlines the complex hierarchy of non-governmentals. These organizations are prime examples of social networks, with a variety of layers and relationships. In her exploration of the relationships between these organizations and the United Nations, Martens (2005) describes two categories of organization for international NGOs—centrist and federative. The former generally develops with one particular organization providing the impetus for development of branches in many different geographic locations. This development could be referred to as “top-down,” and provides a structure that is hierarchical and centrally located. The branch organizations report to and abide by the rules and regulations of a central office of sorts. The federative organizations reflect an organization “from below” where several independent agencies recognizing similar goals band together across borders in hopes of providing services or influencing intergovernmental organizations and their agendas. There is less likely to be a reporting function of a hierarchical nature with this type of organization. Communication flows between the agencies rather than up a chain of command.

Regardless of the organizational style the NGO takes, it is important to understand the relationship of the organization to the wider power structure in which it attempts to exert influence. Iriye (2002) provides an historical viewpoint in which the NGO presaged the development of globalization as a factor in the development of internationalism. The development of NGOs immediately before and after World War I was quite rapid. The 1940s saw the advent of the NGO as a societal actor, and the beginnings of the political power these organi-

zations currently wield. The United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has recognized consultative status for these organizations since 1946 with the establishment of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations as a standing committee of the Council. And, it is interesting, but not surprising that the rapid multiplication in the number of NGOs coincided with the expansion of the Internet as a tool for the dissemination of information.

The State and the NGO

What is the relationship of the NGO to the state? For many years it was maintained that only the nation-state, with clearly defined, though often artificial, physical borders and governance, had the power to affect change. The state was the only actor in the power relationships between countries. Today, however, we are much more attuned to the global nature of power relationships and the interdependence of our species. The forces of globalization have blurred the borders of the state. In the European Union the effects of globalization and the relational changes it causes is clear, as the member nations try to deal with varying national policies and publics. What is referred to as the "normalization process," is actually the negotiation and mediation of state policy, primarily in the areas of commerce and immigration. The power wielded by the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, the World Intellectual Property Organization or any of the numerous international regulatory organizations has grown in the context of what can be viewed as a revolution in the Westphalian view of sovereignty and the state.

In writing about alternative forms of diplomacy, Leonard (2002) indicates, "NGOs have three key resources not readily available to foreign governments: credibility, expertise, and appropriate networks." How do NGOs, in the age of globalization, work to engage states in their response to social, political, and economic issues? Very few of these organizations would make a claim of outright power in the political arena, but most of them want a place on the agenda when issues affecting their clientele are being discussed. Organization, education, and information are the primary tools of the NGO. These tools are used most often in the international arena to provide interstate discussion or interstate coercive pressure to affect change.

In addition, Suter (2003) articulates several characteristics of NGOs that weaken any arguments that the organizations are not a viable force in international politics. First, he recognizes that NGOs provide an alternative focal point for the loyalty of some citizens. Next, in this age of communication, they show that governments do not have a monopoly over information and ideas. Further, NGOs can be very adept at using the mass media for their campaigns. NGOs

provide an alternative for those who wish to work for a better world. And, as mentioned earlier, they are recognized by a broad spectrum of intergovernmental organizations providing consultative status to the NGOs and enabling them to take part in the work of the larger organization. There is a cross-pollination of sorts in the form of expert advisors and observers and important information exchange.

Different states have different reactions to the development of organizations within their boundaries that seek to share power or influence decision-making. Often, the warning voice is perceived as interference with the sovereign rights of the state, generating tension between the government and the NGO. In more democratized areas, reactions range from encouragement to benign neglect. In other cases, the development of organizations that give voice to the intrinsic problems of an area is frowned upon and varying controls are in place to prevent any thought of power sharing or governmental influence by these organizations. This is especially apparent for organizations interested in democratization processes. Recent reactions by the Putin government have included accusations of spying and an attempt to require all NGOs to inform the government in advance about any project they intend to conduct. In 2005, Uzbekistan put over half of the active NGOs in the country out of business. In Belarus, external aid to organizations has been forbidden and in Tajikistan similar efforts have been made to control the interaction between local entities and foreign financial support. Other states that have recently cracked down on the activities of NGOs include Nepal, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. In still other states, the development of NGOs is fostered and sometimes the goals and influence of the organization are co-opted for political ends.

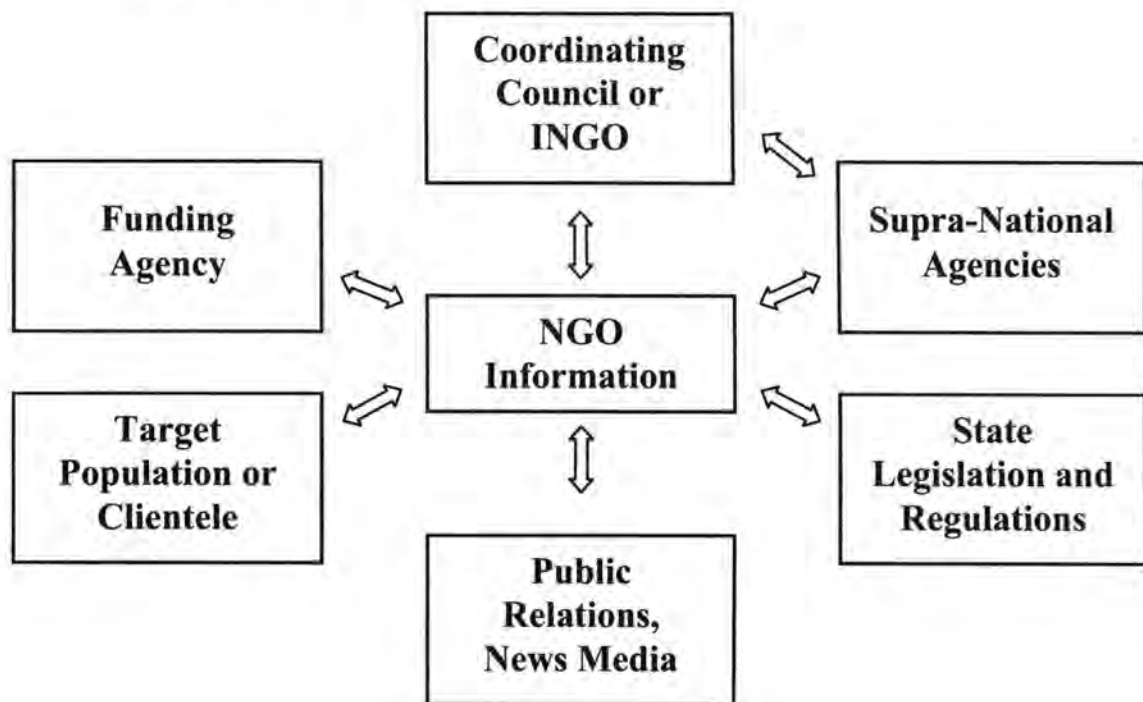
Mayhew (2005) provides an analysis of relationships between NGOs and the governments of Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal and Vietnam in which she explores legislative responses to the growth of local organizations. She concludes that, "legislation has the potential to institutionalize the core values associated with NGOs, shape their legitimacy, enhance their upwards and downwards accountability and consolidate their role as indigenous development partners." At the same time, there exists the threat of cooptation of the agencies for state political purposes.

Information and NGOs

Why is the growth of NGOs important to information specialists? The democratization of technology, finance, and information articulated by Friedman (2000) in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* has clearly had serious consequences for the library. These same revolutions are closely related to the growth in the importance of NGOs and the information they generate. There are many ways in

which information is created and disseminated by NGOs. Initially, the NGO creates knowledge for and about its client base whether the organization is service or advocacy related. This might take the form of educational materials, reports, and policies. Information also flows between the funding body and the organization in the form of reports, grant requests, and information bulletins. If the NGO is has an affiliated relationship with a larger body such as a coordinating council or other international governmental organization an exchange of ideas, plans, statistics, or other information types is shared. Additionally, information may flow to the larger audience through publications and media outlets. Frequently, the information generated by the local agency will be passed up an information avenue to a coordinating council and ultimately to a supra-national agency such as the United Nations for consideration in policy planning. A variety of information flows are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Flow of Information Around NGOs



In an exploration of the types of information shared between two NGOs and their funders, Ebrahim (2005) articulates a wide variety of information types. Information outflow from the organizations include physical and financial progress reports, narrative reports, annual reports, annual budgets and work-plans, published studies, internal studies, baseline and impact data, participatory rural appraisals, process documentation research, internal evaluation exercises, records, diaries, “significant changes,” tour notes, dialogue with community

members and field observations, and meeting minutes. The funding agencies for the NGOs studies provide project and program proposals, documents describing program strategies and interests, annual budgets and “summary justifications,” news clippings, trends, and networks, workshops and fairs, publicity documents, meeting minutes, field visit reports, evaluations and reviews, consultant reports/expertise, and monitoring missions.

Some of these documents may be a matter of public record, but most are not. Most of these documents are typical examples of grey literature. They are not widely distributed, and do not easily find their way into the traditional publication cycle. Those that are actually created electronically are rarely archived, and often not found due to the lack of technological know-how on behalf of their creators. A researcher may come across a report during a field interview, and then be unable to obtain a copy when returning home. The temporary nature of these documents is of concern for the scholar and the researcher.

Technology and the NGO

Where it is accessible, the Internet has been a great asset for the NGO. If the organization has access to the technology required for Internet publishing, getting information about the agency and its work can be easily provided through a web site. In addition, the proliferation of blogs and other means of electronic communication, including podcasts, allow the organization to widely disseminate the information it feels is vital to the entire wired world. The problem here lies in the ability to obtain the necessary hardware and the availability of supporting infrastructure. Much has been written of the information haves and have-nots in developing nations. In this manner, technology is a double-edged sword for the NGO.

The following table, derived from information in *Global Civil Society 2005/2006* provides a striking exploration of internet use (Glasius, et al. 2006). Using the categories recognized by the World Bank for low-income, middle-income, and high-income economies, the table shows the differences in Internet use per 1,000 people in 2003, the most recent year for which data is available. Clearly populations that do not commonly use this means of communication are at a disadvantage in trying to provide information via electronic means. As a baseline for comparison, the United States’ statistics indicate 555.8 people per 1,000 population used the Internet in 2003.

Table 1. Internet users per 1000 people (2003)

Region	Low Income*	Users /1000	Middle Income*	Users /1000	High Income*	Users /1000
East Asia & Pacific	Myanmar	0.5	Tonga	29.2	Brunei	102.3
	Mongolia	58.1	Malaysia	344.1	Australia	566.7
Europe & Central Asia	Tajikistan	0.6	Turkmenistan	1.7	Greece	150.0
	Moldova	79.8	Estonia	444.1	Sweden	573.1
Latin America & Caribbean	Nicaragua	17.3	Cuba	8.7	Bahamas	264.9
	Haiti	18.0	Barbados	370.8	NA	NA
Middle East & North Africa	Yemen	5.1	Iraq	1.0	Qatar	199.3
	NA	NA	Malta	303.0	Israel	301.4
South Asia	Afghanistan	1.0	Sri Lanka	13.0	NA	NA
	Bhutan	20.4	Maldives	53.4	NA	NA
Sub-Saharan Africa	Ethiopia	1.1	Swaziland	25.9	NA	NA
	Sao Tome & Principe	98.7	Mauritius	122.9	NA	NA

*Classified according to World Bank definitions

Source: Record 7: Media and Communication, Global Civil Society 2005/6

The Internet and mass media have greatly increased the ability to recognize a potential human disaster or provide the warning voice. The ability to capture and archive this information is relatively easy for the librarian in the developed world because the channels of communication are transparent. In theory, it is possible to watch for movements of large numbers of refugees in order to make relief supplies and efforts more sensitive to the shifting populations. In practice, it is still difficult to safely and effectively move the necessary technology into areas that are in turmoil. Distrust not necessarily of the individual aid worker, but of a perceived threat this technology poses, often impedes humanitarian relief organizations.

Beyond individual events, there are many broader implications for the dissemination of information by NGOs. Brian Martin Murphy (2005) quotes the

forward to a manual written by Michael Polman, facilitator for the Interdoc project, “Most NGOs trade in information for social change. Some focus on collection information, some on analysing it and others on its dissemination. NGOs have become independent intelligence centres specializing either in a region or a specific topic....” Unfortunately, at this time, most of the information resources provided by NGOs goes untapped.

Knowledge Networks

It is helpful to view the relationship between the NGO and information from a model that reflects the NGO’s point of action. Korten (1990), Elliot (1987), and Clarke (1998) have each discussed this approach, and the method can be useful to the librarian to ascertain information production as well as information needs. In this model, three generations of NGOs are described. The successive generations of NGOs work with a gradually expanding audience and base. The flow of information is both upward from the NGO and downward to the individuals the NGO serves. The generations are not mutually exclusive. That is, there exists a little part of generation one in generation two or three, and so on. The model reflects the maturity of the organization to some extent, but maturity in this sense should not indicate a lack of purpose or organization at any level.

The first generation NGO works within a community to provide welfare and relief to local populations, focusing on crisis intervention by providing food, health care, advocacy of human rights and/or other vital services. At this point, the primary flow of information is into the organization from the larger political, social and economic arena. Information obtained is processed and made relevant to the local community by the organization. The information produced by the NGO at this point is targeted at the user population and also the funding agency. It provides the *raison d’etre* for the NGO’s work. The organizations at this level are frequently referred to as People’s Organizations or grassroots organizations (GROs).

The second generation NGO is usually involved in development projects at the local level. Projects might include water supply improvements, sanitation, agricultural production, and general education. The information provided to funding bodies is still very important. However, this generation is already somewhat established. Like the first generation organization, the focus remains at the local and regional level, using economies of size to provide assistance and aid. Also, like the first generation NGO, these more mature organizations remain downward focused and generally avoid overt political organization and mobilization of clientele. Information flows are toward the target population, but the volume is greater and reflects more expertise in handling problems than the younger organization.

The third generation NGO is likely to work both locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally in attempting to mobilize support for an issue and build coalitions. Many of these organizations base their work on the “conscientization” and mobilization concepts developed by Latin American liberation theologians such as Assmann, Gutiérrez and Fanon. These are the organizations that most effectively use the mass media. They publish regularly and use a variety of means to get information out to the public. The nature of their work makes it important for them to access the international arena. These organizations also often provide assistance to groups of similar organizations, ensuring a means of communication between the smaller units, and when possible, resources. They frequently act as coordinating councils.

Third generation NGOs most frequently provide the warning voice that cries for attention by librarians. Whether organization’s purpose is to improve the position of the groups with which they work, or to affect change within a society, the “warning voice” organizations are most heavily involved in the production of information. These mature organizations also tend to be the ones looking for a seat at the table of the more globalized IGOs. Many of these groups are recognized with consultative status in the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and other international policy-making groups. This allows the organization, if not a place on the agenda, at least a voice in the issues under consideration. When this occurs, NGOs are transformed. Bach and Stark (2004) indicate that these organizations go beyond brokering information, to brokering knowledge. “Facilitating knowledge is powerful for forming associations that are not just linked communities, but what we can call knowledge communities—communities that use a recombinant and multiplicative logic of link, search, interact to sustain themselves and grow” p 109.

An Agenda for the Future

What are libraries and librarians doing to work with NGOs in the accumulation and dissemination of information and knowledge? In many cases, these organizations are very aware of the importance of including an information professional on staff. Librarians have been very good at social networking in many ways in the past. We know how to organize and disseminate information to a wide variety of audiences. In many cases, including those case studies mentioned in this book, librarians are already working with a large number of organizations. We have the tools in the form of both print and electronic resources to support and extend the reach of NGOs. A growing number of academic librarians are working closely with their IT departments to create digital repositories for the scholars on their campuses as both institutional collections and subject collections. Perhaps a consortium of these institutions could be

prevailed upon to provide similar services for a variety of NGOs using grant monies that are already available.

Another, extremely important step would be to collect in earnest the grey literature that is being produced by NGOs. Frequently, the wheel is being re-made on a regular basis because NGOs don't have the resources to make the information they are producing publicly available. This inability to access a variety of information resources is a problem for the scholar, the funding agency, and the larger intergovernmental organizations that might find first hand accounts of the successes and failures of NGO efforts extremely helpful. Digitization alone is not the answer. If an agency does not have access to the Internet because of a lack of technology and a lack of infrastructure to support the technology, the information being produced will not be turned into knowledge about the problems and solutions being encountered in the effort to improve human rights or capacity building in underdeveloped areas of the world. A first effort might be to capture the information in print, microfilm it, and redistribute it in an efficient and effective manner. Again, the ability of librarians to create and use social networks effectively should not be discounted in these efforts.

The time is ripe for information specialists to work with a variety of agencies to capture and disseminate essential documents related to the work of NGOs. The Millennium Development Goals (United Nations 2005) drafted by the United Nations in consultation with a variety of NGOs underlines the ability of librarians and NGOs to have an impact on the policy-making of large organizations. This work can be done one group at a time, or in global concert, but it is work that must be done to mitigate the negative effects of ecological change, disparity in resource distribution, global health threats, and respect for human rights for the 6 billion individuals who reside on our planet.

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The Permanence of Smoke: A Challenge to Research Libraries to Showcase and Preserve the Work of NGOs Serving Developing Countries

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Introduction

Great moments in history are by their very nature fleeting and transitory. Whether of war and battle, or of compassion and succor, all pass away, even as swirling smoke does, from cannon on a battlefield, or from a cooking fire to feed the hungry. Transitory also is the actual work of those who would help others in the world, many today working in aid and advocacy groups called “Non-Governmental Organizations” or NGOs (DeChaine 2005). And yet that work is critical to document and add to the record of our civilization as contained in libraries on a global basis. Students, scholars, and the general public want to know about this work in the present time, and the future may have many questions to ask about what was done, by whom, and to what effect.

Kofi Annan (2006), Secretary General of the United Nations, has said “The United Nations once dealt only with governments. But now we know that peace and prosperity cannot be achieved without partnerships involving governments, international organizations, the business community, and civil society. In today’s world, we depend on each other.”

It has also been suggested that the work of NGOs can also be studied to ensure that they are really working for the common good (Brauman 2005).

For whatever purposes of research, in order to understand what is available from NGOs which libraries can capture and make accessible to their clientele, eight landmark NGOs serving developing countries are studied here. Documentation and publications are found which can serve as models to further work both in the field and in the public forum. These organizations in several cases have also created a permanent record for research and scholarship, for now and for the future, in placing working documents in formal archives. The critical work of the NGOs studied here has spanned many years. They range from Anti-Slavery International, whose roots reach back to 1737 making it arguably the world’s oldest human rights organization, to the relatively recent Human Rights Watch, founded in 1978. Serving populations of developing countries, each offers the promise of change and improvement for the lives of those peoples,

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and for the governments of their countries, often overwhelmed by disaster such as the 2004 Sumatra tsunami, the abject poverty so prevalent in many areas, and disease such as AIDS pandemic. NGOs have learned much in recent times about dealing with large scale disasters of all kinds. In the medical field, for example, the British medical journal *Lancet* in 2004 reported: “Major advances have been made during the past decade in the way the international community responds to the health and nutrition consequences of complex emergencies. The public health and clinical response to diseases of acute epidemic potential has improved, especially in camps” (Salama et al. 2004).

Each of these eight organizations provides documentation which serves as a window to show situations in individual countries, and also provides a voice to articulate conditions and problems in those countries, for their own governments and to the rest of the world. In the age of the Internet, one primary immediate vehicle for communicating their work broadly is found in the strong web presence each maintains. Each also uses various libraries as appropriate archival repositories, maintains their own bookstore or entering into partnership with strong publishers, makes its work known through news releases and informational publications, and documents its substantial publications of whatever length which are distributed broadly.

The patterns examined here can be seen as representative of several best practices among NGOs, in maintaining and disseminating documentation. These eight have been highly successful in capturing a record of their work to encourage others to join them—an important goal in many instances, and through strong partnerships with the library community, to share a history of their concern, their effect on it, and of the times in which they live and work, with students, scholars, and even posterity.

There are further challenges for research libraries in doing more than making their clientele aware of the work of important NGOs such as the eight studied here. Particular value added also comes from cataloging of web sites as well as documents and publications from NGOs, mirror hosting of critical NGO web sites, and transformation of PDF only files into permanent paper documents.

Table 1: Eight Landmark NGOs and their Primary Web Sites

Name of NGO	Time-line	Website Address
Africa Action	1953 to present	http://africaaction.org/
Amnesty International	1961 to present	http://www.amnesty.org/
Anti-Slavery International	1737 to present	http://www.antislavery.org/

Doctors Without Borders	1971 to present	http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/
Human Rights Watch	1978 to present	http://www.hrw.org/
Oxfam International	1942 to present	http://www.oxfam.org/
Terre des Hommes International Fédération	1960 to present	http://www.terredeshommes.ch/
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	1915 to present	http://www.wilpf.org/

Why are Libraries Important Partners for NGOs?

At the dawn of what has arguably been called the Internet Age (Howard and Jones 2004), the question could be raised of whether libraries have a role to play as important partners with major NGOs. After, all, isn't everything on the web? While that may be the case for today's focus for each NGO, the web can only hold so much, visually. When an element important to an NGO must be found by drilling down two, three, four or more levels, then it is not certain that the public will have the patience, or the web searching skills, to find something which could otherwise be of interest. Search engines such as Google bring the searcher to the site, but finding the links down and down and down again to the actual page of interest is challenging at best, and sometimes an impossible task for the typical user.

There is the further serious question of availability of computers connected to the Internet. Even in countries of the industrialized economies, personal computers are not universally found, according to estimates from the International Telecommunications Union found in the *United Nations Common Database of Statistics* (UN Statistical Office 2006). Another important element is that connectivity is not universal in the world. Even when the web is an important resource for students, scholars, and the public to know about the work of NGOs, in many countries, a library will still be the place where the research can be done. Further, in regions where packet charges are made, a librarian as a skilled searcher can greatly economize on getting to relevant pages on the web.

This partnership is also important for libraries and well as for NGOs. Some of the value added in the relationship comes to the NGO from the research library. An active field-based NGO brings primary documentation in its most authentic form, to those seeking information in a library. A library patron can in effect even travel through time in studying the work of an NGO. A well-trained physician can report travel from present day Addis Ababa, through a few miles of countryside, and take modern medicine back into the 15th century in terms of much else in a traditional village found there. A library patron anywhere in the world can follow this journey on the web sites of Doctors Without Borders, and learn important lessons about the value of advanced medical treatment, and about how sharing across boundaries of time, space, economic advantage, and education can enhance the lives of those on both sides of the equation.

Libraries and their patrons gain much for understanding the work of NGOs on a global basis. What, then, must libraries understand about the nature of NGOs in order to foster this relationship? What can the NGOs themselves teach us?

Principle One: *Partnership with a Research Library can have a Powerful Multiplier Effect on the Work of an NGO.*

NGO Studied: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Non-governmental Organizations do not represent their countries at the national and governmental level for specific reasons. Even as some NGOs serve broadly to accomplish a particular purpose in their societies, such as to promote medical care or to feed the hungry, others serve the purpose of providing a way to document, and then to offer corrections, for problems of an extreme nature in the society. Overall human rights violations, and more specific ones such as traffic in women and children, torture of political prisoners, discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation, all are unfortunate examples. Organization with this latter type of focus can help us to see through the idealized lens of pure social reform, to document exactly what the stress and difficulties of a time and place really are.

The case of one such body, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, is highly instructive in this regard. Created in the tumultuous days of what has come to be called the first World War, with that war the world entering a time of profound change, the ladies—women, who banded together were a part of creating that change (Foster 1989). Even as the first World War raged around them in Europe in 1915, the Women's League met, women cutting across the supposed loyalties of national boundaries, to join together in a shared

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loyalty to peace, and to social justice for all people (Addams, Balch and Hamilton 1915).

It is possible to read about these tumultuous times in summary form—on the web or in history books. But a more immediate way of connecting to this otherwise vanished world is to look at the actual records left by those early reforming women. These records form a core component of the Peace Collection (Swarthmore Peace Collection 2006) at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania in the Northeast of the United States. The collection was built on the contributed papers of Jane Hull, founder of the Women's Political Party, the early name of today's Women International League for Peace and Freedom (Bussey and Tims 1965). Over the years since that donation in 1930, many related archives of other organizations have been donated. Stretching the documentations on related materials back to 1818, a significant body of primary materials has been assembled on the passions of these pioneers working for a better world and striving to begin to create that world through the work they undertook.

The idealistic women who had tried to head off the carnage of the First World War in Europe were not dissuaded by the failure of that effort. Indeed, if one visits their web site today, they continue to work at the leading edge of peace and social justice. One reads about Grannies, women of advanced years, who offer themselves for military service in place of the young people they wish to dissuade from joining the military. The web site dramatizes that these are ladies undertaking this work by picturing them singing together, wearing flowered hats and other ladies garb. This group of strong activists has further teamed up with a research library to take over the job of letting the work continue to speak to an unseen future.

The purpose of the Swarthmore College Peace Collection is to gather, preserve, and make accessible materials that document non-governmental efforts for nonviolent social change, disarmament, and conflict resolution between peoples and nations. The SCPC was established about 1930 ... the SCPC has grown to encompass the papers of many individuals and the records of numerous organizations, reflecting the spread of the peace movement (circa 1815 to the present), in the United States and around the world. The SCPC also holds material on such subjects as pacifism, women and peace, conscientious objection, nonviolence, civil disobedience, progressivism, the Vietnam era, African-American protest, feminism, civil liberties, the history of social work, and other reform movements. Over half of the Collection documents women's prominent role in the peace movement and activities in the public realm. (Swarthmore Peace Collection 2006)

Not only does the effort of those pioneering social activists continue in mute witness in those archives, but they have been joined by the records of some twenty other organizations as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Non-Governmental Organization files available in the Swarthmore Peace Collection

American Peace Society	Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam
Central Committee for Conscientious	National Campaign for Peace Tax Fund
Objectors	National Council for Prevention of War
Center for Economic Conversion	Peace Action
Center on Conscience and War	Physicians for Social Responsibility
Clergy and Laity Concerned	SANE Inc.
Committee for Nonviolent Action	United for Peace and Justice
Fellowship of Reconciliation	Universal Peace Union
Friends Committee on National	War Resisters League
Legislation	Women Strike for Peace
Great Peace March	Women's International League

Principle Two: *Multiple Languages Stimulate Interest In Truly Local Projects.*

NGO Studied: Terre Des Hommes International Fédération.

Since 1960, Terre Des Hommes International has worked to mitigate human rights violations in the lives of children, especially in relation to child labor. It also seeks to narrow the economic gaps between the industrialized “north” countries, and the developing “south” countries around the globe. Even as many other non-governmental organizations work across borders and among diverse

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language groups, Terre des Hommes offers an interesting pattern for multi-lingual presence for its work. There are separate sites, each with a separate focus, in Germany, and in Switzerland.

Working directly to help children, Terre des Hommes Switzerland supports a number of development projects managed by local partners in Africa, Latin America, and Asia—in eleven countries. In each area, local affiliates work to point out serious violations of human rights for children (Strack and Ponce 200), to encourage education for all children, and to work across the rural and urban (Vargas, Peña, and Rodríguez 1997) barriers to help children have better lives.

It is common for an international NGO to work in multiple languages. Terre des Hommes also works in separate languages, with a special twist. For historic developmental reasons, the Swiss site works largely in French, and focuses directly on children, while the German site focuses more on the impact on children arising from inequalities in development between North and South countries. Terre des Hommes also works with a fee-based newsletter publication, making a charge even to its donors. Working in French, without extensive parallel publications in English, Terre des Hommes also issues publications on topics relating to child labor and the situation on children in the developing countries of the “south”. Materials are also created especially for teachers to use in classrooms, and for school children themselves. These last publications are available on request, without charge.

Terre des Hommes then offers an interesting case study of connecting to local areas through particular language focus, without reaching out to those speaking other languages, which are increasingly diverse. For example, it has been estimated that of the languages with the largest numbers of speakers in the world today, three of the largest are Chinese, English, and Hindi. The next largest groups include Arabic, Bengali, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish (Gordon 2005). NGOs in both the web and print publications are using an increasing number and variety of languages. The diverse languages used in the NGOs being studied here as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Working Languages of NGOs Being Studied

NGO	Language(s)
Africa Action	Works in English
Amnesty International	English, French, Spanish, Arabic, publishes in others
Anti-Slavery International	English, French, Spanish, Arabic
Doctors Without Borders	French and English, other languages

NGO	Language(s)
Human Rights Watch	Main languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, works in more than a dozen others.
Oxfam International	English, French, Spanish, works in others
Terre des Hommes International Fédération	French, English, and German
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	Works in many languages.

Principle Three: *A Special and Narrow Focus Can Strengthen the Value of an NGO's Work for Libraries.*

NGO Studied: Africa Action.

Africa Action is an NGO which focuses only on that region, and does so from the perspective of what American civil rights activists can bring to the work. Reaching back to 1953, Africa Action now has a half century's experience in working to create partnerships between activists and civil society organizations in the United States and in Africa (Houser 2003). Their goal is to change U.S. foreign policy, and also the policies of international organizations such as the World Bank and the World Health Organization to benefit Africa countries and peoples as they work towards peace and development. Africa Action is the oldest organization in the U.S. working on African affairs, working towards making a real difference in African lives.

An organization with such a sharp and comparatively narrow focus can be lost in the overall picture of effective NGOs that students, scholars, and the public may wish to study. It is important for research libraries to make such a specialized NGO visible in its reference guides and web links, and when the time is ripe, host either primary archives, or electronic or micro copies of working documents. A research library can keep a small, focused and vital NGO such as Africa Action very much in the research consciousness of its clientele, and of other libraries when Africa is a focus of its collections. Africa Action brings detailed information on the situation in many areas of Africa, and at the same time, in recognizing its work, libraries can help to keep the smaller NGO

for being dismissed as a boutique organization, without the substance to be an important player in its field of economic empowerment and inter-governmental relations.

Principle Four: *Faded Glory Should Not Get in the Way of Current Work.*

NGO Studied: Oxfam International

Oxfam in the popular mind is still connected to the famine relief which was its founding principle at the end of the Second World War (Jones 1967). At that time, Oxfam successfully petitioned the Allies to allow food relief ships to go through the blockade to feed starving women and children in Greece (Black 1992). When maintained by the organization, the Historical Record is important, but may work best by being kept separate from the current working documentation. This is shown by the fact that today, Oxfam's current literature focuses on the broader problem of the alleviation of poverty on a world-wide basis (Simmons 1995). The strategy for achieving this goal is to work on a number of fronts (Vaux, 2001), with the United Nations on a global range of issues including education, looking at the great numbers in the world who cannot read and write a disproportionate number of these women. Also, with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund on economic matters, with the World Trade Organization on their "Make Trade Fair" initiative, and with the European Commission on a wide range of issues, perhaps most notably in the areas of human rights and humanitarian matters. Oxfam is also based in numerous countries around the world, with major offices in America, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Spain, among other areas.

For organizations such as Oxfam focusing on current critical missions, such as the response to the Asian Tsunami in December of 2004, there is little time for the past. Further, the international arm of Oxfam, founded in 1960, is approaching a half century of working to feed hungry people on a global basis, to make a better place for women in the world (Gender Works 1999), and to shift public opinion so that "equity is considered to be as important as economic growth." Oxfam does provide Annual Reports for the most recent five years, and also the most recent strategic plan for its work, all on the web. What about the details of evolution of this organization? To maintain the historic record, so that now or some point in the future scholars—and other activists—can understand how they came to be able to meet critical needs, an archival library—separate from the current research process, is necessary to keep the records.

This need is answered by Oxfam hosting its own extensive Archives, which they identify as "unique records which have been preserved because they

continue to be significant for historical and learning purposes”: and as their “institutional memory” Oxfam described them as follows:

Oxfam’s historic records go back to its earliest days. The oldest document in Oxfam’s possession is the original minute book recording the first meeting of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief in October 1942. Other early records go back to the 1940s but do not fully reflect Oxfam’s work as there are only patchy survivals up to the mid-1950s. Fortunately, minutes of meetings of the governing body and subsidiary committees are relatively complete for the entire period of Oxfam’s history. Project files, relating to grants made to project partners, form the bulk of the archive material held and number over 21,000. Some project files date back to 1954 but the series is more complete from the early 1960s. Together these give a detailed picture of Oxfam’s work over the decades. (Oxfam. 2005)

Principle Five: *The Act of Publishing Can Directly Further the Work of an Advocacy Group.*

NGO Studied: Anti-Slavery International.

In examining the work of the Anti-Slavery Society in its evolving forms over time, the value of partnership with libraries used for research can be illustrated and documented. Anti-Slavery International traces its work back to 1737, and the historical record of its work is well represented in many libraries today. We see the *Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention* in Philadelphia in December of 1833, published that year in book form by Door and Butterfield in New York City (American Anti-Slavery Society 1833). Today, in 2006, in the WorldCat shared catalogs of major U.S. libraries is reported as being held in the active catalogs of twenty-four libraries in the U.S. today. *Proceedings of New England Anti-Slavery Convention*, held in Boston, Mass in May of 1834 (New England Anti-Slavery Society. 1860), are reported to be held in 151 U.S. libraries today, with a like number for the Rhode Island Anti-slavery Convention on February 1836 (Rhode-Island Anti-Slavery Society 1836). The American Anti-Slavery Society publishing its proceedings by decades and these are still held very broadly. For example, the *Proceedings of the American Anti-slavery Society in its Third Decade* (American Anti-Slavery Society 1864), published in 1864 are held by some 175 libraries in the U.S. today.

Having the historical record widely held of work done in previous times, even previous centuries, give weight and substance to the current work being done by the NGO today. Many of the same libraries which number in the hun-

dreds for these proceedings, which can be seen as a strong predecessor to the Internet as the way the word used to be gotten out. Those proceedings today are on microfilm, and certainly some libraries hold that format which did not hold the paper; but the paper was also held broadly.

For example, *American Slavery as it is; Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (Weld, T. D. 1839) was first published by the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1839—and the original publication is still held today by more than 230 U.S. libraries.

Anti-Slavery International continues a strong publishing program at the present time. It makes public statements exposing the prevalence and documenting the harms coming from slavery in the world today. For example, in 1997 when the *New York Times* wanted to define slavery in today's world, the director of Anti-Slavery International to explain the term and its meaning (Crossette 1997). Anti-Slavery's own publications are widely held. The recent landmark publication *Enslaved Peoples* in the 1990s (Anti-Slavery International 1997) is held in some 74 U.S. libraries, while their 1994 publication *Slavery in Brazil, a Link in the Chain of Modernization* (Sutton, A. 1994) is found in some 35 U.S. libraries, and the 1994 publication *Ethnic Groups in Burma* (Smith, et al. 1994) is held by 32 libraries.

The Karlsruhe Virtual Catalog in Germany enables a common search to some 100 million books and serials contained in a broad range of libraries. These are contained in a dozen libraries in Germany, five each in Austria and Switzerland, and one or two each in seventeen other countries. The word—about slavery—is still getting out to the patrons who frequent libraries around the globe seeking to know and understand this type of human rights violation.

Another type of publication in which NGOs get their message out to the world, largely through libraries as intermediaries, is through the news aggregators which libraries provide to their clientele. One major service of this type is the Lexis-Nexis News Service, a division of the Reed Elsevier Company, which describes their service as follows: "The Nexis® news and business information service was launched in 1979 to enrich [Lexis legal] research with recent and archival news and financial information. Since that time, the service has grown to become the largest news and business online information service [in the world]...It provides access to thousands of worldwide newspapers, magazines, trade journals, industry newsletters, [and other materials] (Lexis 2006).

The Lexis service is held in several hundred academic and research libraries in the United States alone. Another major service, held in dozens of academic and research libraries, is **Factiva**, providing access to both Dow Jones and Reuter's sources, which described itself as follows: Factiva®, a Dow Jones & Reuters Company, provides ... an unrivalled collection of more than 10,000 sources in 22 languages, including influential local, national and international

newspapers, leading business magazines, trade publications, and newswires (Factiva. 2006).

Table 4 shows the number of recent news articles relating to the NGOs in this study which are found in these two services. Many newspapers are covered in Lexis, and in Factiva, both newspapers and other sources are found which include magazines and reports.

Table 4: News Coverage for NGOs—Counts taken in April 2006

NGO	Lexis-News <i>Number of Stories</i>	Factiva / Dow Jonex <i>Number of Stories</i>
Africa Action	Some Found	2067 (all dates)
Amnesty International	557 – 6 months	13,421 – 6 months
Anti-Slavery International	79 – all dates	894 – all dates
Doctors Without Borders	222 – last year	1856 – last year
Human Rights Watch	653 – last year	18,613 – last year
Oxfam International	61 – last year	1231 – last year
Terre des Hommes Int Féd	45 – all dates	Some found
Women’s Int. League	140 – all dates	1682 – all dates

The final type of publication which connects an NGO through libraries to students, scholars, and the general public, is the secondary source. The drama that can be found in the work on an NGO can often be found directly in such sources, and readers may then choose to explore actual publications and records of the NGO as well. Such publications are not the creation of a modern book trade, but can be found in previous times as well. For example, *The Anti-Slavery Crusade, a Chronicle of the Gathering Storm* was published by Yale University Press in 1919 (Macy, J. 1919).

Principle Six: *Through NGO Partnerships, Libraries Can Help Save Lives and Restore Health.*

NGO Studied: Doctors Without Borders

Doctors Without Borders, known in much of the world by its French title, *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF), describes itself as an international independent medical humanitarian organization. Through both funded staff, and volun-

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teers especially drawn from the industrialized nations, Doctors Without Borders brings direct emergency help populations harmed by war and other armed conflict, and also epidemics, and natural and man-made disasters (Leyton, E.1998). Further, they also work to help those who otherwise do not have health care.

Students at all levels in schools in the industrialized nations see disadvantaged people in the news media of their countries, suffering from lack of medical care which would be most often readily available in the industrialized countries. Adults also see the terrible lack, and the loss of quality of life, and life itself, by the absence of such health cases. Doctors Without Borders brings a practical solution to this situation (Moorhouse and Cheng 2005). How do libraries partner with this organization, beyond the general NGO supports that are intrinsic in libraries today? The special case of Doctors Without Borders brings the research tools for understanding health and medicine to the attention of those interested in health issues in other nations. Librarians answer queries as to the details of this disease, or the economics of this treatment. The library serves as a platform to broaden the knowledge and understanding of what modern medicine can mean in a particular country through Doctors Without Borders.

Principle Seven: *Well Drawn Histories Further Interest in NGOs.*

NGO Studied: Amnesty International.

A well written popular history or other presentation for a major international NGO is a great strength in its partnership with research libraries. For example, one of the best known and broadest based human rights advocacy groups in the world today is Amnesty International. In 1981 *Against Oblivion: Amnesty International's Fight for Human Rights* (Power 1981) was published as a paperback, and today is held in the United States alone in some eighty-five libraries, according to the WorldCat shared catalog. It was joined by what has become the classic history of Amnesty, *Like Water on a Stone* (Power 2001) written in 2001 and published by a university press, as was a new history was published in 2006, *Keepers of the Flame, Understanding Amnesty International* (Hopgood 2006). Why does this organization generate so much interest in a broad range of libraries? The very breadth recommends it work. Amnesty works on a truly global basis, and has brought so much attention to human rights violations, especially those that are state sanctioned, that it has been suggested that the concept of human rights has been strengthened by their work (Clark 2001). Amnesty also unflinchingly focuses attention on difficult issues such as torture, especially of women (Callamard 1999) and children (Amnesty International

2000). It also works to enable the release of prisoners of conscience, to bring about fair trials for political prisoners, and to end torture and executions, in all and any countries. A still broader concern for prisoners began about 1991, in its work against hostage taking, torture (Amnesty International 2001), and the killing of captives by armed opposition groups. In 1993, its mission was broadened again to shelter women (Amnesty International. 2001b), female war prisoners, and those imprisoned because of sexual orientation (Bamforth 2005).

The three histories of Amnesty make real to a broad range of readers the objectives Amnesty works for. These will not be easy to achieve; they can only be brought about by a profound shift in the political climate of the myriad countries in which Amnesty tries to make a difference. To help in this regard, public opinion is informed by its publications and press releases. In terms of the press, the coverage which Amnesty achieves can be termed to be remarkable. Table 4 shows that Amnesty—within a six month period at the end of 2005 and beginning of 2006, had more some 13,000 news stories reported in the publications covered by the Factiva / Dow Jones service. Indeed Amnesty gets the word out, and makes the public—and policy makers—aware of the circumstance for those whose treatment it would make more fair.

Libraries rely on sound and well documented histories such as *Against Oblivion*, *Water on Stone*, and *Keepers of the Flame* to explain the work of this organization, and generate interest in its more detailed documentation of current situations. This is difficult since Amnesty is independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion, and does not support or oppose any government or political system. Therefore the news media and the library world in all countries are its strongest allies; they truly partner in its work to make a difference in people's lives. Likewise, in creating a substantial and credible body of information on the treatment of prisoners and other disadvantaged groups, Amnesty makes its publications important for any library which seeks to represent the human rights situation. This is a monumental task, since Amnesty is so large. It is headquartered in London, but has a very broad geographic reach, with offices in more than a hundred countries over most of the world. In terms of individuals, it is made up of over one and a half million members, supporters and subscribers in some 150 countries.

And yet Amnesty International keeps a clear focus, and a credible sense of mission not only in the press but also in the library world. Well written histories help a great deal in this regard as a beginning point for library patrons. Where they do not exist, the creation of clear and readable histories of other major NGOs would be a great help to libraries trying to make their work known to interested students, scholars, and members of the public.

Principle Eight: *Speaking Truth to Power Captures a Wide Audience—and Makes Libraries Willing Partners.*

NGO Studied: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch, the newest of the NGOs being studied here, continues to carry out work which can offer useful patterns for partnerships with research libraries. In less than three decades since its creation in 1978, it has created a voice of conscience beyond public policy in all areas of the world. Did a plane take off in this country, travel to a second country, and end up elsewhere with a human cargo delivered for ill treatment outside the accepted norms of international law? It could have been sent to country X by many different national powers; who is to know that this has happened if the nation sending the flight is not forthcoming about their designation and purpose? And yet, Human Rights Watch was able in recent years to learn about such activity, and report in the world's press (Fisher, et al. 2005), that it was happening, to the embarrassment of all countries seeking to work in secret for dark purposes. Informal but keen observers all over the world report into this formidable network, and the voluminous output of what they see and report is shown in the more than 18,000 news items reported in the last year through the Factiva / Dow Jones service, in Table 4 above.

Everyone is told when Human Rights Watch becomes involved in reporting on harm coming to individuals and groups, whether from a governmental body, an economic power, producer or business, or other organization of all stripes, without turning away from difficult or even horrible subjects. They report on the "ethics" of torture in publications such as *Torture: Does it make us Safer?* (Roth, et al. 2005). They describe child soldiers in books including *My Gun was as Tall as Me* (Human Rights Watch 2000) and *You'll Learn Not to Cry* (Brett, S. 2003). They talk about the ill situation of women in publications including *From the Household to the Factory* (Sunderland, J. 2002). Human Rights Watch also testifies before national law and policy making bodies including the United States Congress. Dorothy Q. Thomas, who was then Director of the Women's Rights Project in Human Rights Watch, delivered riveting testimony on the Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children to a 1994 legislative hearing before a committee of the United States House of Representatives.

That testimony began.

I will illustrate in detail how the international sex trafficking system works; the role of government agents in promoting and sustaining it; and the way in which legal remedies tend to punish the victims rather than the culprits. Finally, I will recommend steps that the US government

should take to help stop this modern form of slavery and to address women's human rights violations more generally ... Although women and girls are the majority of victims, they are not the only ones. The trade in human beings targets both males and females; they are recruited for sexual slavery, forced domestic servitude, involuntary marriage or other exploitative purposes. (U.S. Congress. House)

Libraries have a powerful role to play in supporting the work of Human Rights Watch. The sheer volume of the work of this body makes study of their organization and methods rather like trying to take small and exact measures the size of a teacup to understand the output of one of the world's great waterfalls. Libraries can provide access to news articles which describe the media alerts that an organization such as Human Rights Watch has issued. These include individual Human Rights Watch Reports on various regions of the world. There are more substantial publications issued including their Global Reports, such as their *Global Report on Prisons* (Human Rights Watch 1993), and another on *Women's Human Rights* (Human Rights Watch 2000). Labor issues are also a focus, as shown in the *Unfair Advantage: Workers' Freedom of Association in the United States* (Compa 2004). They also gather issues central to human rights across borders and among many peoples into publications such as *Indivisible Human Rights: the Relationship of Political and Civil Rights to Survival, Subsistence and Poverty* (Human Rights Watch 1992), which shows basic issues related to human rights in historic and current perspective.

Conclusion

A Record That Endures

Eight landmark Non Governmental Organizations serving populations in developing nations have been described in this group of case studies as offering a striking paradigm for strong partnerships with research libraries. There is great mutual benefit from such partnerships. The NGO can have its work better understood, and perhaps also better supported, and the research library can present to the students, scholars, and members of the public the perspective that the NGO offers on topics and regions, and even on the situation of individuals and groups of peoples.

With libraries as strong partners, the witness of helping in a fully formed record can be kept as both captured pictures and written proceedings and other documents, to enable current understanding and future research, beyond a pattern which could remind us of the impermanence of blowing and drifting smoke.

Table 5: Lessons Learned from NGOs in this Study

	Subject/Issue?	NGO Studied
Principle One	Partnership with a Research Library can have a Powerful Multiplier Effect on the Work of an NGO.	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Principle Two	Multiple Languages Stimulate Interest In Truly Local Projects.	Terre Des Hommes International Fédération
Principle Three	Special and Narrow Focus can Strengthen the Value of an NGO's Work for Libraries.	Africa Action
Principle Four	Glory Should Not Get in the Way of Current Work	Oxfam
Principle Five	Act of Publishing can Directly Further the Work of an Advocacy Group.	Anti-Slavery International
Principle Six	Through NGO Partnerships, Libraries can Help Save Lives and Restore Health.	Doctors Without Borders
Principle Seven	Well Drawn Histories Further Interest in NGOs	Amnesty International
Principle Eight	Speaking Truth to Power Captures a Wide Audience—and Makes Libraries Willing Partners.	Human Rights Watch

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Working in Partnership to Build Knowledge Societies

Sara Harrity

Introduction

In its World Development Report 1998/99 the World Bank focused on knowledge for development and reported that “knowledge gives people greater control over their destinies” (World Bank. 1999). Librarians play an essential role in creating knowledge societies. They supply and promote information resources within local communities, enable sharing of local knowledge and languages and maintain awareness of community information needs. Yet African libraries are frequently under-resourced, facing book shortages and shortages of trained personnel. This is where Book Aid International comes in. Book Aid works in partnership with libraries to support education, literacy, and the development of a reading culture.

Book Aid International has been in existence for over 50 years and in that time it has worked with a variety of library and book sector partners, engaging in capacity building work with libraries to provide training and materials (approximately 500,000 volumes each year). A registered charity based in the UK, Book Aid works with partner libraries in eighteen countries, seventeen of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Much of our learning has come from the practical experience of partnerships and the inspirational people we have met in African libraries, both librarians and service users. Book Aid International programmes are led by our library service partners, and ultimately, we hope, by the communities that we seek to serve, particularly the poorest and most disadvantaged in African societies. The challenges involved in discovering what the needs of these communities are and how best we can serve them are some of the biggest challenges facing African librarians today. I shall return to this point later in the chapter. For now, I will seek to define the role I believe that libraries can have in creating knowledge societies and promoting sustainable development. Libraries are able to bridge knowledge gaps, promote informal learning and support formal education. In doing so, they contribute to poverty alleviation. To illustrate this point I have listed a few examples that show the sheer variety of opportunity available to people using libraries. Library users can: maintain and develop literacy skills learned in the classroom; access knowledge that will equip them to improve their lives and livelihoods; learn about health issues and be better able to protect their families from sickness; understand their democratic rights; and acquire skills that will help them gain paid employment.

Sadly, this ideal range of opportunities is often not realised in practice. The infrastructure of public libraries that exists in sub-Saharan Africa has been largely neglected by governments and the international development community. Dwindling public funds have made it hard for library services to extend their networks. In Uganda, for instance, the government's development budget for libraries amounted to just \$75,000 (US) over the last five years, to cater for both capital expenditure and book buying (National Library of Uganda. 2004).

There continues to be a great need for libraries, both within formal educational establishments such as schools, universities, colleges, and in the community. Current resource shortages are impacting on educational quality to a significant extent. Primary education is failing young learners in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. A UNESCO/ADEA report for the 2000 Education for All assessment found that the majority of schools in Africa do not have a school library, and where one exists it is often "no more than a few shelves of outdated and worn out material, inadequately staffed" (Montagnes 2001, 27).

The result of such problems is that many children leave school with poor reading ability. This has been demonstrated by the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) data. A 1995–98 survey measured primary school students reading literacy against standards established by national reading experts and sixth grade teachers. In four out of seven countries, fewer than half the sixth graders achieved minimum competence in reading. This study was compared with another done by SACMEQ two years later, which saw literacy scores falling even further in five out of six countries.

Shortage of reading materials is also having a serious impact on adult literacy levels and reading ability amongst school leavers and newly literate adults. Progress towards Universal Primary Education has raised adult literacy levels in sub-Saharan Africa to 65% at present. This may be, however, a fleeting statistic as literacy skills can be lost within a few years without regular use. National education policies urgently need to set a framework for maintaining literacy and enhancing lifelong learning after formal education has ceased, including investment in community libraries and increased access to reading material.

Such evidence clearly demonstrates that libraries need greater support and policy recognition for the work that they are doing. Book Aid International's work supports not only the physical resources of libraries, through book provision, but also aims to deliver capacity building work with library staff, as well as undertaking joint advocacy with partner organisations. We understand the importance of the librarian's role in making information accessible and ensuring that it is shared and promoted widely within the community that he or she serves. Not only this, but the most effective librarians are also able to be responsive and adaptive; they can use knowledge gathered through their work to continually enhance and improve the services they provide. This knowledge

might be gathered from the immediate community, or imparted by managers, or gleaned from the broader environment of policy and practice in the book and library sector. In short, librarians need to categorise and render useful the knowledge they store on library shelves and must also have one ear to the ground to pick up on new developments and capitalise on them.

One of the ways in which Book Aid International seeks to help librarians in this task is to share what we have seen and heard from partners throughout our network. The following quotation from a Nigerian librarian, Mr. Sanussi Nassarawa, poses a challenge to librarians about how best to ensure library services are as relevant, appropriate, and useful as they can be, within the context of African development. Nassarawa advises, "Librarians must start seeing themselves as agents of change in terms of educational, information and cultural pursuits of the society in which they serve" (Book Aid International 2004).

To some extent this is already happening and we hope that the examples we have gathered here in this chapter will serve to illustrate the very positive activities taking place in many African libraries. We also hope to act as a spur to librarians and policy makers to engage more deeply with the agenda for change and ensure that libraries are positioned centrally with regard to education, information and culture in every country around the world. We hope that libraries can prioritize reaching the most disadvantaged members of society, whether directly through community resources, or indirectly through supporting professional training for those nurses, teachers, lawyers, and extension workers who also have an immensely important role to play in facilitating development and poverty reduction.

Our vision is of community libraries that offer knowledge beyond the book shelf. They need to create welcoming and attractive environments that are child-friendly and accessible to new literates and even non-literate users. Librarians need to work towards achieving exemplary libraries which offer the widest possible range of services from books, radio, talks, ICT, and videos, to games, science, and art. Programmes of events need to make the link with local literacy groups and schools, while also encouraging people to come along to activities such as reading groups, storytelling sessions, discussion forums, and community meetings. All the services mentioned above are already being offered in some African libraries. The challenge now is to galvanize the continent's professionals so that all public libraries can fulfill this role.

Sharing Information Resources

The first section of this paper looks at the experience Book Aid International has gained through many years of supplying information and knowledge to Africa's libraries through our book provision work. Book Aid International's main

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activity has always been to supply books to support readers and learners. Each year around half a million books are distributed from our London warehouse and every one is chosen in response to an identified need expressed by a partner organisation. They in turn make their selections on behalf of the communities they serve and we are proud to be able to offer them a very wide range of subject areas and specialist material. Our selections encompass all stages of learning and development, starting with books for babies and young children, to support early childhood development and promote a culture of reading, right through to specialist teacher training or medical material to support higher education and ongoing professional development.

We seek to serve all these needs and many more. Our work is also driven by a desire to supplement local knowledge and we are conscious that our efforts are only one part in a much larger process of generating and sharing information through libraries. For instance, we strongly believe that the supply of books from the North should supplement information generated by local communities and nationally, and materials in local and national languages.

We focus on the poorest and most disadvantaged and this explains why the vast majority of our support goes to sub-Saharan Africa, where there is very little book purchasing power amongst the local population and a great need for investment in the expansion of education provision, improved educational quality, and the creation of literate environments that can sustain and promote a culture of lifelong learning. Community access to information is essential to this process of improving and expanding educational opportunities. We believe that public libraries are the essential knowledge management tools that will enable free and universal access to information. This in turn is one of the essential building blocks of a literate educated society.

One organisation we have been able to support is the Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya. This example dramatically illustrates the power of the written word in transforming lives. On a visit to the camp in 2004 Book Aid International staff saw that the response to our books was universally enthusiastic. African writers' material and teaching methodology books were especially well received and felt to have a great impact on refugee teachers who need to read widely to embed their improving language skills. More recently we've heard how the education opportunities in the camp are seen as among the best in the district, all thanks to the impact of the camp's library on the learning of both pupils and teachers who have accessed its books to improve and extend on the lessons learnt in class. In fact one Dadaab student recently gained second place in the whole of Kenya in his Primary Leaving Certificate exams.

One of the benefits of Book Aid International's long history is that we've been able to build up a strong understanding of the subject areas and titles our partners need and we've developed systems that allow them the maximum

amount of choice in the process. Indeed, just as we work hard to match up partners' requests with books from Book Aid International's stock our partner librarians are also playing their part in promoting choice and participation locally. They gauge local book needs and ensure that the material we send is appropriate. Community, school and higher education librarians all undertake to choose books that are useful and appropriate to the people they serve and to then display them in attractive and accessible ways that help those readers seeking to internalise the knowledge found within the books and other resources of the library.

Some of the chief ways that books are having an impact include the direct impacts on users. We have heard from a great many libraries reporting that more users are coming in to access their stock since a Book Aid International donation. Sometimes the effect is dramatic, as in the case of Adamawa State Library Board who had very few resources to offer readers prior to our support. They now have 200 users each day, which is a vast increase on previous numbers. We often find that our support for public libraries comes after years of low levels of resourcing from central government resulting in low stock levels and outdated collections of material.

Years of coping with resource shortages also frequently lead librarians to carefully guard the few resources they do have. Weeding of old and outdated stock may only be undertaken with great reluctance. It also leads libraries to accept inappropriate materials from aid agencies that are operating in a less than professional manner and engaging in what can only be described in 'book dumping'. Sadly there are still those people who sincerely believe that any book is better than no book, so irrelevant and unusable materials from the West are often shipped over, at no small cost. This is not a view that Book Aid International shares. We seek to bolster the position of librarians as professionals who understand and promote community information needs, not as passive recipients presiding over a jumble of irrelevant discards and unattractive material. It is the relevance of the knowledge inside books that counts and for this reason Book Aid International works to promote best practice in book donations.

Book Aid International has worked hard to be in a position where it is able to be hugely selective about the material it sends out, whilst at the same time supplying many thousands of books each year to our largest library service partners. Those who have national distribution networks have been able to utilise our book donations for a wide range of purposes. A typical example is the National Library of Uganda, which distributes Book Aid International books to public libraries, to schools and NGOs, and is also able to support the creation of new community libraries through books and training in the care and promotion of books.

One such library is Kitengesa community library in Uganda. The library is colourful and attractive, and runs a host of weekly activities including an open forum for teenagers called "Straight Talk", adult reading sessions, a reading club and writers club. Games are organised, particularly on Saturday nights. Literacy classes have attracted numerous local women and young people from all the neighbouring schools access books there. Book Aid International books are a vital part of the library's collection and are well used.

Another strong example is Chiwamba Information Centre in rural Malawi. All sources of information are incorporated into the centre's services, including a particular emphasis on using and sharing local knowledge. Newspapers and board games are available while television and video show a mixture of informative and entertainment films (Saturday night shows are very popular). A village newsletter for special events is also produced, which Malawi National Library Service staff type up and copy. Adult literacy classes are held at the centre, attended mostly by women. The centre is also used for meetings by extension workers. It offers a wide range of books for newly literate readers and there is a strong collection of agricultural information. In fact Book Aid International books have facilitated the expansion of library services through community libraries and public resource centres housed in schools, not only in Uganda and Malawi but also in Kenya, Namibia and Sierra Leone.

One other key component of Book Aid International's work has been our support for the local book chain of authors, publishers, booksellers and libraries. We are playing our part in supporting long term solutions to the overwhelming book shortages facing Africa. A strong book trade is central to this. We hope to strengthen businesses to provide locally affordable and culturally relevant material, which records and shares local knowledge. As part of this work we have for over a decade sought to place African published books in the hands of African readers, both through the purchase of books from all over the continent and grants for local and regional book purchase.

The first scheme was known as the Intra African Book Support Scheme (IABSS) and it enabled libraries to select African published titles from other nations, so enhancing intra-African trade, whilst at the same time creating or developing the stock of culturally appropriate material. An independent evaluation in 2005 revealed many positive benefits that the scheme had brought about. Readers who were interviewed frequently reported a preference for books which connected immediately or vividly with their lives or concerns. Rural Ugandan readers found that stories set in cities in Nigeria or South Africa appealed greatly and were not perceived as strange or exotic so long as they looked at issues faced by the readers themselves, such as family life, moral choices, love and relationships. One quotation from Namibia neatly illustrates the impact the project has had: "The community library service has 48 constituent libraries and

is in the process of opening more. The books help to build up starting collections, and increase the number of books in existing libraries. The libraries are in rural areas and the users love the books with an African background which they feel they can relate to” (Bentham 2005).

All this evidence demonstrates that our work is having an impact. We are changing people’s lives, opening up opportunities to them and encouraging readers to keep returning again and again to make use of their local libraries. We always find that field visits offer important opportunities to interview readers and see the impact of our work on end users. We are primarily reliant on our partner organisations for close analysis of needs and impacts and we continue to work with them to overcome the resource constraints that limit their capacity to undertake this in sufficient frequency and detail. This is essential work as it is precisely this kind of information that we need if we are to reach non-users and ensure that library services are accessed by as many people as possible.

To maximise the impact we have on the lives of the poorest and most disadvantaged, needs analysis must take in not only what it is that current users need, but also actively seek out the ‘invisible’ and ‘unheard’ in communities. We must ask ourselves which groups in the community would benefit most from using the library and how we can ensure not only that they use it, but own it and shape it’s development. Only through looking at the community as a whole can libraries assume their rightful place at the heart of the poverty reduction process. The poorest in society are those who most need accessible information to enhance their awareness of the options open to them, and to help them to improve their situations.

Library managers need to be armed with the right sort of knowledge when approaching funders and policy makers. They need the evidence that shows that what we are doing is having an impact, and proves that with the right resourcing so much more can be achieved. This is the vital next step to ensuring that their contributions can be recognised.

To take this next step we need radical change—a move away from monitoring service delivery to active engagement with communities, to learn how best we can support and mobilise them to act in support of libraries and the greater cause of access to information and knowledge for all. This is a huge challenge and difficult to undertake alone. One of the ways in which Book Aid International seeks to make its contribution to this vital area is through our newer programme of work, which is based around shared learning.

Shared learning

A culture of shared learning is a key aspect of the knowledge management approach. Book Aid International is lucky to have a wide group of organisations

within its network, each of whom brings a range of practical skills and experience. Partnerships, based on shared commitments to common goals, are at the heart of our approach. We ensure that we take the time to learn from organisations the positive and negative aspects of their experiences so that both inform our learning strategy and determine the types of training programmes we provide.

Our partner organisations have a great deal of knowledge that can be used and exchanged. They are also organisations that have frequently suffered resource cutbacks for years and training for staff is frequently a casualty of such cutbacks. Book Aid International's partners are often confronted by similar challenges to one another and this has helped us to draw an analysis of priority areas which now forms the focus of Book Aid International's training programme.

Before I go into detail with examples I should like to explain the ethos of our work to support building the capacity of public library services. We develop training with partners and work together on planning, delivery and follow-up. Needs are identified jointly, methods are always participatory and we are improving the relevance of our training by working increasingly with facilitators and resource people from within the local information sector. We have also always striven to ensure that any courses we run lay the foundations for ongoing learning and we believe there are two key elements to this. Firstly, there needs to be a commitment to enabling staff to contribute to changing and developing existing policy and practice. This allows a process of renewal and refinement in management and services, to ensure a library or library service is best placed to meet the needs of the community it serves. Secondly, establishing channels for information sharing, both within organisations and through partnerships with other organisations are a very good way of enabling the sharing of best practice and also of ensuring that in the context of a resource-poor environment access to learning and information resources can be maximised.

We are working with partners across a wide range of need areas. Priorities for many include the learning about issues such as advocacy, monitoring, impact assessment and distribution and targeting of materials. In the last couple of years training has ranged from regional workshops, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders—such as our work with the East African Book Development Association (EABDA)—to work placements and systems development—such as our recent work on distribution and targeting with the Tanzania Library Service.

In East Africa, Book Aid International has been working with member organisations of EABDA and of Book Development Councils in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda to build capacity in the delivery of their reading promotion work. Their programme incorporates national book weeks and outreach work in which

reading tents are organised, books supplied to establish school libraries, teachers trained in the skills to care for and promote the books. It's a demanding approach that needs skilled personnel at all levels of project delivery. In 2005, for example, Book Aid International facilitated training for EABDA that combined reading promotion, 'training the trainer' skills and book collection management for teachers. All stakeholders within the Book Development Councils have a role to play in delivery of the project and so all were brought together for a broad-based training workshop. Participants gained increased confidence in how to structure the training they deliver to teacher-librarians. They aim to equip teacher-librarians with the skills to manage and promote book stocks given to their newly established school libraries. Our investment consisted of devising a three day workshop and involving EABDA stakeholders drawn from all three countries.

The return on that investment is very positive and reports have been sent in illustrating how the newfound training skills have enabled shared learning with many new beneficiaries. For example, a workshop participant from Tanzania had held training for 50 new teacher-librarians during national book week, each of whom received a collection of Book Aid International books and locally purchased books to start off their new school libraries. Meanwhile, in Uganda teachers and pupils in Mbarara primary schools have taken part in a programme of work that has promoted reading and built up pupil and teacher support for library improvement within the school. Sessions within this programme included exploration of the books that pupils liked, producing pictures to improve the library environment, story telling sessions and training for teachers to enable them to organise reading clubs and to have library lessons incorporated in the curriculum.

A more internally-focused example of Book Aid International training consists in our work with Tanzania Library Service to improve distribution and targeting of material and building on previous work to build the capacity of regional libraries within the context of decentralisation. Our overall aim was to ensure that the books distributed through the national library network were carefully matched with local needs. Much of the work was about improving systems and information flows, so that district and branch libraries could effectively feed in their needs and the headquarters library in Dar es Salaam could efficiently process books and be responsive to user needs throughout their distribution network. One of Book Aid International's librarians undertook a work placement in the headquarters library, working with Tanzania Library Service staff to solve problems and establish new ways of working for the future. One participant commented that he had gained "knowledge which will help me work more efficiently and therefore meet our objectives of providing informal education for my region and Tanzania as a whole" (Steenson and Lang 2004).

Another example of shared learning is realised through our network of Southern partners. Best practice in libraries is shared through our twice yearly BookLinks newsletter which forms a key part of Book Aid International's strategy to strengthen all parts of the book chain to provide a long term solution to book shortages. BookLinks is one of the ways in which we plan to help our partner libraries (and the local book trade) promote themselves and their unique role in education and development. It provides a forum for sharing information on ICT use and developments, as well as case studies of successful projects to inform and inspire. This publication is geared towards stimulating action from its readership. Articles are brief and geared towards providing practical information about projects that can be replicated and resources that can be obtained for free or at low cost. Another way in which we seek to inspire action and enquiry is to encourage readers to contribute articles and we always seek to include the contact details of the author of an article. This enables readers to obtain further information and encourages a dialogue between book chain representatives.

Workshop forums offer another opportunity for development. We regularly bring together high-ranking professionals to identify and share good practice and build leadership capability. For instance, a workshop in November 2005 brought together six Directors of African national library services to collectively address the book and information needs of Africa's most disadvantaged communities. Key Book Aid International staff co-facilitated the workshop, which was funded by the Department for International Development. Five days of workshops and meetings allowed them to identify and share solutions to the leadership challenges they face, such as funding shortages, lack of policy recognition and the immense diversity of needs in the communities that they serve. Participants were able to learn a great deal from one another. For instance, many went away keen to emulate the media successes achieved by Malawi National Library Service and Kenya National Library Service. In both cases the recruitment of Public Relations Officers had provided a boost to the organisations' advocacy efforts and succeeded in attracting large numbers of new users into libraries.

Our professional development programme pairs up two librarians from different countries for a UK visit with training opportunities. The Exchanges and Training Programme, has been running for many years and it has offered librarians the chance to come to the UK and to undertake a range of visits and work shadowing opportunities as well as formal training in areas ranging from fund-raising, project management and ICT skills, to reading promotion.

We have recently strengthened this project by adding in south-south exchange visits that follow on from the UK-based training and allow librarians the chance to see innovative services adopted by their peers and colleagues in neighbouring countries. By visiting projects that address the gaps they may have

identified in their own service provision, or by seeing for themselves how problem areas can be resolved, practical learning is enhanced. Discussions ensue between the two peer librarians and a trusting knowledge-sharing relationship is formed, that we hope will long outlast the duration of the project.

Initial evaluations of the south-south exchange programme have been tremendously positive. For instance, a link up between Tanzania Library Service and librarians in Uganda offered an important opportunity to see firsthand both the benefits and pitfalls of a newly decentralised library service. The Tanzania Library Service librarian reported on his learning about the importance of good relationships between library branches and local authorities, who need to recognise the value of library services if they are to award budgetary support. This issue has particular relevance in Tanzania as a policy of decentralisation is currently being proposed. If it does go ahead it will be vital for the library service to be well prepared for the changes ahead and thanks to the south-south exchange visit they now have a model for comparison which can enable effective planning to take place. A further point of learning for the librarian in question related to book distribution mechanisms in place in Uganda. This has enabled Tanzania Library Service to build on the training received from Book Aid International staff members referred to above and to ensure the continuing evolution of their systems to ensure that books are targeted where they are most relevant and needed.

Learning is often most effective when organisations are brought together to share best practice. In fact creation of new partnerships to facilitate action and learning has also been a crucial aspect of our work and an example that illustrates this well is our book purchase grant scheme. Grants have been given to libraries to buy African-published materials, initially with a focus on local markets and local language books, more recently exploring cross-border trade and establishing new links, markets and mechanisms to enable greater intra-African trade. Workshops have been held at critical stages of these projects to enable sharing of the benefits, challenges and lessons learned. Workshop participants have then jointly planned and implemented the next phase of the project. The capability for shared learning has definitely been enhanced by broad participation from across the book chain. Booksellers, publishers and librarians joined together to build common ground and shared solutions to the challenges of book purchase in an African context. Exploration of both the differences and commonalities in perspectives from organisations representing participating countries. There is recognition that “in the past the key players in the book industry used to operate separately when in fact their end target is the same user of books” (Zambia Library Service 2004).

This new approach to learning and working together has also extended beyond the book chain groups that the project sought to link up. It has also enabled

external linkages that have strengthened the position of participating organisations in ways that we could not have foreseen. Two particularly strong examples have emerged. Firstly, Zambia Library Service's (ZLS) links with literacy groups, some of whom were chosen by ZLS as project beneficiaries, whilst others heard about the book purchase project and sought closer collaboration and links with the library service in the future, thus helping ZLS to work more closely with new literates and ensuring they can make the best use of resources in public library services. Uganda's National Library (NLU) then found that their participation in the project had resulted in greater recognition from the government of the important role that libraries can play in national development. As a result the NLU and public libraries have been included in the government's Social Development Investment Plan.

This is precisely the kind of policy recognition that many public library services desperately need. The challenge now will be to ensure that commitments to support libraries are realised in practice. Still there are others among our partner network who lack even the most basic government recognition of the importance of their work. For instance, the Zambia Library Service lacks the legal framework of a Libraries Act that could define the role and position of the organisation within the government's education, information and cultural development plans.

With adequate support and a coherent policy framework, libraries can provide practical solutions. They offer a unique and cost-effective means of providing access to information for all, because resources are shared. In the context of great scarcity that exists in sub-Saharan Africa, libraries have an even more vital role than in the North—they are the 'universities of the people'. Those who benefit from communally-held resources include distance learners, such as teachers studying to gain qualifications, as well as the poor, people with disabilities, women and girls.

Libraries can be at the heart of personal and community development, encouraging and sustaining literacy, and supporting education for all. Libraries also support non-formal education, and give equality of access to information to women and girls.

In the UK, the library network extends to every community (there are 3,500 public libraries including mobile services). It is very different in sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya, with its population of 32 million, and large literate population of over 15 million, has only 36 public libraries. Namibia has 48, and Zambia 22. Yet librarians have developed low-cost ways of extending the reach of their services, targeting rural and disadvantaged communities. In Kenya, 21 libraries were established when the local communities provided a building and equipment, and the library service provided training and books. In Malawi the library service has established 200 community library centres, as well as providing

resources for 900 schools. A similar programme operates in Zambia. This example illustrates well the untapped potential that exists in Africa's libraries. Creative solutions to resource shortages are possible but government and donor support is essential to realising this process. Existing library structures in Africa need investment of resources and new initiatives, so that libraries respond to the information needs of urban and rural people in Africa.

It is therefore encouraging to note that policy discourse is increasingly taking account of the importance of libraries. UNESCO's 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report draws attention to the fact that the literate environment is often overlooked by policymakers and the following recommendation is one of their nine concluding action points: "Focusing on literate societies, not just literate individuals. It is very clear that the EFA goals can be met only through the development of literate societies, in which all literate individuals have the means and the opportunity to benefit from rich literate environments. Policies to develop rich literate environments—alongside schooling and programmes that ensure that youth and adults become literate—are thus important. Such policies can include support for libraries, local language newspapers, book publishing, access of adults to school libraries and radio listening groups" (UNESCO 2005, 249).

Libraries also need recognition of their contributions towards reaching each of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Partner organisations of Book Aid International are requesting information across a very broad range of subject areas, from health information and environmental issues, to a broad range of formal and informal educational needs. Their work is vital if education goals are to be achieved and if all the world's children are to access a good quality education by 2015. They have an important role to play in the achievement of each and every one of the MDGs, through facilitating access to information and reading materials in all topics. For instance, libraries' contributions to the health MDGs include efforts to combat the stigma of HIV/AIDS through displays and information points in libraries, whilst also enabling health extension workers to access essential medical texts such as *Where Women Have No Doctor* (Burns, et al. 1997) to help them in their work to address high levels of maternal mortality.

Looking to the future Book Aid International hopes to work with partner organisations to reform librarianship training curricula, helping librarians to realise their potential role within the communities they serve. Those responsible for their organisations' information materials have a very important role. Not only must they look after these precious resources, but they need to ensure the resources are used. It is this latter aspect where traditional library training can sometimes be weak. Emphasis tends to be given to conservation of materials, and cataloguing and classification, the internal processes and procedures. All too

often insufficient attention is given to meeting the information needs of library users, and reaching out to potential readers. Librarians are not currently equipped with the skills to promote their libraries as a resource for the whole community, and to encourage people to read. In brief, they tend to be custodians rather than community information workers.

Conclusion

I'd like to conclude by returning to the World Development Report for 1998/99. Its authors may not have realised they were laying down a challenge to librarians with their emphasis on the importance of knowledge in combating poverty. They conclude with the following message, "As people grasp the ways in which knowledge can improve their lives, they are encouraged to seek out new knowledge and become agents of change themselves" (World Bank. 1999). I believe there is a message in that for all readers of this book whether librarians, funders, policymakers, NGOs or other interested parties. We all have a role to play, to act as agents of change through sharing and employing the knowledge that we gain. In particular, librarians, you are the professionals who manage knowledge and store information on behalf of communities and you are ideally placed to take up this challenge. You can enable people throughout Africa to access the knowledge they need to enable them to realise their potential and act as agents in their own development. I hope you will find ways of doing just that.

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Information for Action: The Approach Used by NGOs to Foster and Strengthen Civic Life: A Case Study from Argentina

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Introduction

NGOs usage of information demonstrates a remarkably different approach from that of other institutions which deal with information production and dissemination. While information agencies gather information with the intention of dissemination, conservation, or even profit, and academic scientific production calls for impartiality, NGOs focus on positive use in changing reality—i.e. information for action. Additionally, evolving technologies provide NGOs with valuable means to accomplish their goals, mostly through so-called cyberactivism. In developing countries such as Argentina, NGOs play a significant role in strengthening democracies. Convincingly displaying information and spreading it to targeted civil actors, NGOs confer a positive force to data, transforming awareness into social change. The Argentinean NGO “Citizen Power” exemplifies how advocacy organizations generate information. Some issues are raised in the conclusions about NGOs’ accountability as well as their contribution to the worldwide flow of information.

1. Fostering Awareness: Information for Action

1.1. Information Handling for Action: Differences between NGOs and Other Information Agencies

In different ways, NGOs continuously generate and spread information as part of their activities. From their own sources and beyond, these organizations call on people for civil responsibility through information awakening. However, there is a wide range of institutions that deal with information creation, storage, and dissemination. From journalism to media broadcasting, information generation and diffusion is big business in today’s society. Also, libraries, museums, and archives have a long history dealing with information, mostly in charge of the preservation of humankind’s cultural and intellectual heritage. Therefore, it seems necessary to start the discussion clearing up the differences between NGOs and other information agencies. Both kinds of institutions have different

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missions and goals, which become apparent in the way they deal with information spread and control. The differences can be classified as follows:

a. Business versus non-profit organization

NGOs are by definition non-profit organizations. Media, conversely, are businesses that make profit by offering publishing and broadcasting services. Therefore, the media's interests are strongly related to business and commonly linked to information that may be of interest for the masses or may cause an impact, or even information that may be "sold."

Conversely, NGOs are supported by their particular donors, members, volunteers, or grants from transnational organization (such as international foundations, The World Bank, or The United Nations). Even when in some cases they offer services for payment as a way of subsistence, the goal is not the profit itself. Media organizations not only support their activities with resources generated by their own sales, they also seek profit beyond sustainability.

b. Information for updating versus information for advocacy

Journalism and broadcast media deal with information mainly to keep people updated about news. Even with political or ideological points of view underlying their editorial policies, media claim to be universal, neutral, and objective. Their dissemination of information or news focuses on people in general rather than sectors of society in particular (such as minorities or politicians).

NGOs take a clear position regarding issues that affect citizens, such as government transparency, minority rights or environment protection. Their audience is the sector of society involved in the issue or idea, or with a particular role in decision-making.

c. Libraries, museums and archives versus NGOs

Libraries, museums, and archives play a fundamental role in strengthening democracy. Their mission is related to the storage and preservation of information—not to its diffusion. This role is quite different from that of NGOs as they do not generate information. Rather, they gather, store, manage, and provide users with access to data, information, and knowledge that is already available.

d. Information for awareness versus information for action

This is perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of information usage by NGOs. While mass media companies may (or may not) seek to promote citi-

zens' awareness by publishing news, the goal of advocacy NGOs is to foster action among citizens. The primary objective of these "advocacy NGOs" is the creation and dissemination of information to encourage citizens to take actions in changing society, respecting nature, and so on.

The relationship between the media and NGOs is a conflicted, yet necessary, partnership. Malan (2005) broadly discusses the complex relationship between AIDS NGOs and mass media companies in Africa. In Kenya, for example, AIDS NGOs are reluctant to take advantage of media as an advocacy tool because the media uses a sensationalistic, "yellow," approach to HIV information, "always looking for negative aspects which are not there" (Malan, 2005, p.182). Shapiro observes that "many media organizations support particular arms of government. In some cases, it does not matter how much you march or advocate for a certain issue, because only certain aspects of it will be covered [by the media]" (Shapiro quoted by Malan, 2005). As a consequence, "the relationship between health NGOs and the media is one of distrust" (Malan, 2005, p.178).

However, NGOs often take advantage of media broadcast to bring special attention to advocacy issues. For instance, Kenyan NGO director Asunta Wagura explained her personal case: "last year the bank denied me a mortgage because I am HIV-positive. I immediately told journalists about it so that they could file reports that would put pressure on the bank and inform the country about [the discrimination that] was going on" (Wagura quoted by Malan, 2005, p.178). The relationship became more strained following media reports which focused on revealing corruption within NGOs. As a result, NGOs have become averse to fostering further media links.

Beyond these specific cases in Africa, the dynamics of this relationship are replicated over and over again by other media and NGO actors in different places around the world. Despite the tensions, journalism, mass media broadcast, and NGOs need each other apart from their different, sometimes opposite, ways of approaching information dissemination.

1.2. Information Production for Action: Differences between NGOs' Information Generation and Scientific Knowledge

NGOs' approach to information should be equally distinguished from the production of information and knowledge by academic and research institutions, i.e. so-called "scientific" knowledge and/or information.

An activist for female rights in China, Kin Chi Lau, carefully differentiates her intellectual activity from academic research. In her words, what she does is "a process of interactive challenge to bring about positive change through concerted efforts in larger context than what is conventionally considered the

immediate locality” (Barlow, 2004, p.216). She points out the trade-off between rigorous scientific criteria and the intellectual contribution made by activists in a specific locale. “The reason why we still privilege the academic institution is because it has become such a hegemonic site of the production of knowledge. The question for me is to what degree this particular establishment displaces other forms of knowledge generation” (Barlow, 2004, p.228).

The case of environmental NGOs using scientific information concerning ecological issues is especially clear. Other kinds of NGOs deal with information related to legal and moral values such as justice, wealth distribution, or equal opportunities. Environmental NGOs’ advocacy is mainly based upon knowledge that should prove scientific and, at the same time, accomplish some change in reality, such as lowering pollution or reducing hazardous waste.

While analyzing environmental NGOs’ usage of information, Jasanoff (1997) classifies three ways in which NGOs recreate information for action: (i) criticism and reframing, (ii) epistemic networking, and (iii) technological transfer. Criticism and reframing, in particular, focuses on critical distinctions between scientific discourse and advocacy. A further discussion of this topic clarifies even more the concept of information for action.

a. Criticism and reframing

Founded on technical knowledge and independence from political or economic powers, NGOs are authoritative institutions with the ability to critique scientific assumptions and accepted frameworks, such as the epistemological origins of those assumptions. This ability is recognized whereas scientific discourse regarding environmental issues is often the arena of political and cultural commitments that decision-making actors have made beforehand, commitments that influence their scientific (and so-expected “neutral”) assertions. Jasanoff discusses a debate between scientific groups and a leading NGO, Greenpeace, during the implementation of the London Dumping Convention (LDC):

“Scientific groups operating under the LDC must deal with a host of problems that involve judgment and interests along with science: the interpretation of monitored data, the definition of ‘significant’ harm, the assessment of comparative risks, and the development of multimedia assessment frameworks. To insiders in these groups it becomes almost axiomatic that what they are doing is strictly ‘science’. Efforts by Greenpeace and other NGOs to highlight the value-laden character of such determination have proved effective in removing the blinkers of governmental expertise...” (Jasanoff, 1997, p.582).

In this case, the efforts of Greenpeace to reveal the underlying values of scientific statements instrumental to the making of public policy demonstrates the use of information for action. Through the language and methodology of established scientific discourse, this NGO brought about change in the actions of those with decision making power. This constitutes activism based on information for action.

b. The particular-general trade-off

A particular example of criticism and reframing is the awareness NGOs demonstrate of local differences regarding general scientific statements. Among all NGOs, grassroots organizations are the most strongly community-based institutions. Their actors work within small communities or neighborhoods. As a product of their activities, grassroots organizations accumulate a wealth of knowledge which does not qualify as “scientific.” Moreover, “precision in science is often achieved by narrowing or simplifying the field of inquiry, at times with serious loss of accuracy with respect to local conditions” (Jasanoff, 1997, p.584).

Kin Chi Lau describes this defeat of local knowledge in the case of traditional Chinese medicine versus Western medical treatment of a sexually transmitted disease in a peasant village. Lau’s NGO suggested a treatment for the disease according to Western medicine. The suggested treatment, however, was too expensive for most peasants. One of the infected women knew of an herb that grew on top of a hill that was said to have curative properties for the disease. The herb was in fact an effective treatment; though most women in their thirties had never heard of it. Lau explains that the local unawareness of Chinese traditional medicine is a consequence of the established Western standard for medicine which did not consider local knowledge to be “medicine” (Barlow, 2004, p.224). Once again, a general (in this case, alien) paradigm for science from the global level undermined the local wisdom of a community, while an NGO was able to gather that wisdom for the sake of activism.

Later in this chapter (section 2), a case study from the political arena illustrates the use of information for action by an Argentinean advocacy NGO, *Citizen Power (Poder Ciudadano)*¹. *Citizen Power* constitutes an example of an NGO that generates and disseminates information efficiently. During its short activist life, it has changed the way in which civilians care about politics in Argentina.

1.3. Fostering Information for Action Worldwide: Cyberactivism

Advances in telecommunication technologies bring new forms of advocacy, providing NGOs with access to worldwide movements. Ribeiro (1998) dis-

cusses how technology has changed the way NGOs recreate information forums to spread their ideas and network more effectively. The Internet now plays a fundamental role in fostering civil participation through so-called *cyberactivism*, the political militancy practiced by members of the virtual community supported by telecommunication technologies, such as the Internet.

a. Transnationalism and globalization

Within the current worldwide scenario, globalization has proved to be the imposed economic paradigm. Globalization conveys a characteristic political system, called “transnationalism” by Ribeiro. Transnationalism, the political and ideological counterpart to globalization, encompasses “the organization of people within imagined communities; their relationship to power institutions; and the reformulation of identities, subjectivities, and the relationship between the private and public spheres” (Ribeiro, 1998, p. 326). The spread of the Internet as a means of communication generates *imagined communities*, i.e., communities geographically spread out, joined by the common interest of their members through the virtual space of the net. These community members join to be stronger and to protest, condemn, strike for their rights, raise issues, and so on. They are aware, politically active, and they forcefully promote their ideas—they are *cyberactivists*. Cyberactivism is the politically militant behavior corresponding to transnationalism (Ribeiro, 1998).

Through this new space of communication and interaction, NGOs have found a powerful medium to promote ideas and commit people to activities. With this forum, they can not only publicize information, they can also take positive action through virtual activism or cyberactivism. Common ways of using the Internet for such purposes are to spread a poll, survey, raise funds through e-donation, and otherwise connect members of geographically disparate communities in unified action. The key point of cyberactivism is to take advantage of information technologies beyond communication or dissemination. For cyberactivism, information technology is a means of action. The Internet becomes a locus for voting and protesting along with communicating through virtual conferences, chatting and posting news. The media itself becomes the very arena of achieving action.

An example of cyberactivism is the website of *The Association for Progressive Communications*, (APC, <http://www.apc.org>). As the website explains, APC “is an international network of civil society organizations dedicated to empowering and supporting groups and individuals working for peace, human rights, development and protection of the environment, through the strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), including the Internet” (APC website, 2004, About APC, Par. 1). Although APC defines their extension

as an “international network,” it is more accurately understood as the geographical (i.e., spatial) field of transnationalism. In fact, the organization does not proclaim a joint venture among nations (which could have been rightly called inter-national), but the cooperation among NGOs acting on common issues, disregarding national ownership. Moreover, throughout the site geographical locations are related to regional issues only—not membership. For example, the sub-site “Internet policy monitors” displays three sections corresponding to three regions: Africa, Europe, and Latin America. In each sub-site, articles related to issues within the region are posted and announcements are published. Information is distributed and classified geographically according to regional activities, not to the national membership of the network members.

APC also contains a sub-site titled “Capacity building,” which is devoted to training civilians and organizations to take full advantage of information technology tools. The sub-site publishes training materials and directions for the strategic use of the Internet and for managing NGOs in general. Furthermore, specifically related to training for Internet management and application, APC’s “Capacity building” sub-site provides a link to ItrainOnline (<http://www.itrainonline.org/>). ItrainOnline is a joint venture of APC, Bellanet International Secretariat, The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), Oneworld Network, and UNESCO. The project aims to cover the needs of civil organizations for training in both information technologies skills and content evaluation (ItrainOnline Web site, 2004, About ItrainOnline, Objectives and target users). The site has a wealth of free resources for online self-training such as web development classes, techniques for posting multimedia online (audio, video, radio, television), and sites for technical support. It includes a sub-site dedicated to resources for information technology trainees.

b. Issues related to cyberactivism: the digital divide

The “digital divide” is a problem for cyberactivism when trying to spread information to all of its intended audience. The term refers to “the problem of information inequality in the use of digital technology on computer-mediated communication (CMC)” (Van Dijk & Hacker, 2003, p.316). However, the problem of access to CMC is far more complex. As the authors discuss, the digital divide encompasses four kinds of barriers: lack of elementary digital experience (or *mental access*), no computers and network connections (or *material access*), lack of digital skills (*skill access*), and lack of significant usage opportunities (*usage access*) (Van Dijk & Hacker, 2003). Despite the fact that the problem is complicated, the debate mainly focuses on the problem of

having a computer and a network connection. Applied to the NGOs' information dissemination goal, the conclusion is that supplying developing countries with IT devices will narrow the digital divide. Following this reasoning, NGOs should concentrate efforts to help those countries to obtain funds to acquire technology. Once everything is set-up, more people will have access to public information and will become aware of social problems.

But the digital divide issue is far more complex than this analysis suggests. Robert Hunter Wade (2002) highlights that "efforts to bridge the digital divide may have the effect of locking developing countries into a new form of dependency on the West...As the developing countries participate in ICTs [Information and Communication Technologies], they become more vulnerable to the increasing complexity of the hardware and software and to the quasi-monopolistic power of providers of key ICT services" (2002, p.443). This is especially relevant to NGOs that are largely supported by external agencies and often have to accommodate their plans and objectives to donors' interests.

This overview of how NGOs approach information creation and dissemination shows how these organizations foster positive views of information, called "information for action" or the "knowledge-action link" (Jasanoff, 1997, 580). What follows is a case study of the Argentinean NGO *Poder Ciudadano* [Citizen Power].

2. NGOs and the strengthening of democracy in Argentina

2.1. From political activism to meeting social needs: brief overview of the NGO sector in Argentina

Traditionally in Argentina, the state as an institution took responsibility for a wide range of public sector needs and offered services aimed to satisfy them. Education, health and social security were run by the government through different administrative offices, such as departments and secretariats. Hospitals were primarily public and state supported. Education, from K-12 to universities and research agencies, was also publicly supported and free. The third sector made contributions to sustain social needs, but more related to advocacy, cultural development and public policy control (Campetella and González Bombal, 2000a).

In 1983, the consolidation of democracy arrived at the same time as a crisis in state support to these social services, which most authors largely attribute to the strength of liberal economic policies (Campetella & Gonzalez Bombal, 2000b; Kohen, 1998). Consequently, the state withdrew its responsibility from the public realm, leaving grassroots organizations, NGOs, and the third sector itself in charge of meeting social needs. The private sector was also compelled

to provide social programs under the “companies’ social responsibility” claim (Campetella & Gonzalez Bombal, 2000b).

Beyond this contemporary role, Argentina’s third sector has a long history related to civil life and the public realm in a terrain totally apart from social service. This history is related to the defense of democracy. As Smulovitz (1996) points out, taking shape in a region where corruption and authoritarianism often disrupted democracy, Latin American NGOs “have concentrated on the creation of social trust and on the improvement of accountability and representation mechanisms” (1996, I, Par. 19). Even when the adoption of liberalism as the state economic policy gave NGOs an undisputed role in strengthening social service, the development of these organizations in Latin America (including Argentina) is more related to political activism rather than meeting basic social needs. During the dictatorship (1976–1983) and before, civil organizations in Argentina were mainly involved in the fight for civil rights and workforce claims such as wages and labor hours (Campetella & Gonzalez Bombal, 2000b).

During the 1990s, providing social services became an activity that Argentinean NGOs were compelled to participate in due to changing state economic policy, that is, the adoption of liberalism. But it is not the mission of NGOs to be in charge of such services. Further, NGOs may not achieve them effectively because they represent the interests of different sectors within society, rather than a more general perspective. Considering that only an institution responsible for issues throughout society can meet all the needs of a civic society, NGOs should be excluded from social service as a mission since they concentrate their forces on a particular sector or aspect of social life. The state is the institution that holds responsibility for meeting social needs. Therefore, “in so far as constitutional and republican institutions are characterized by their universality and by their non voluntary character, and since NGOs do not have the legitimate monopoly of the use of force, then it follows that they are structurally unable to fulfill the task [of meeting social needs]” (Smulovitz, 1996, I, Par. 22).

Consequently, even though NGOs currently take on an important role in providing social assistance, their mission and tradition of services in Argentina have not been related to such assistance. Below I discuss the case of *Citizen Power* as an example that follows the tradition of NGOs defending democracy in Argentina and the region.

2.2. Information production according to types of NGOs in Argentina

Although each produces and spreads information in some way, NGOs could be classified according to the extent that both activities are important to meeting organization’s goals. Smulovitz (2004) distinguishes between two types of NGOs according to their role in information creation and dissemination. First,

there are *service organizations*, whose main goal is to solve social problems. Organizations such as homes for battered women or abused children target people's basic needs and provide them with services that satisfy that need (i.e., food, protection against domestic violence, etc.), or develop skills to do so, such as legal advice. Service organizations only generate information as a side effect of their activities, and mostly in an unsystematic way since their main goal is to provide services for meeting urgent social needs.

Second, there are *advocacy organizations*, committed to strengthening democracy through citizens' awareness and participation in the public realm. NGOs that fight for minorities' rights, survey environmental issues, and follow-up state activities and programs fall into this category. For these organizations, information constitutes a key factor in the pursuit of their goals. They generate and spread data related to controversial issues, seeking to increase peoples' understanding and support for their ideals.

The information that advocacy NGOs generate depends upon the kind of problem they aim to solve. Specifically, Smulovitz uses the example of the *Asociación de Víctimas de Accidentes de Tránsito*, AVAT (*Association of Traffic Casualties*). They process and disseminate information taken from external sources as well as producing their own information. With regards to external sources, they gather data mainly from official agencies (for example, the reports on causalities for traffic accidents by the *Dirección de Política Criminal*, the *Department of Criminal Policy*) and the media (such as newspaper articles). Additionally, AVAT produces information from two main sources: (i) the association's directory of follow-up cases (gathered from their members and associated), and (ii) reports on public policy applied to traffic casualty issues. For the purpose of advocacy, AVAT compiles data showing, for example, that traffic casualty rate in Argentina is one of the highest worldwide. Here, the intention is to determine to what extent public policy is effective in lowering the casualty rate. "[The Association of Traffic Casualties uses] the information available and their own sources in such a way that fosters public awareness about the issue" (Smulovitz, 2004, audio recording). In fact, the selected information was already available from several sources, such as the afore-mentioned Department of Criminal Policy or insurance companies' reports and statistical data. AVAT's key contribution as an NGO focusing on traffic problems is to process and display information highlighting the lack of a public policy to solve the problem, and consequently, the necessity for a solution (Smulovitz, 2004). Information display and dissemination raises citizens' awareness of an everyday topic in urban life, in this case, traffic accidents and their consequences. The NGO aspires to put pressure on state agencies and legislative powers to change public policy regarding the topic. Consequently, AVAT's contribution to the issue is twofold: first, they create and disseminate information for civil awareness;

second, they *prove the case*, i.e., they demonstrate that traffic accident casualties might be considered as murder cases in some instances (Smulovitz, 2004).

Smulovitz also cites CELS and CORREPI² as examples of NGOs which process and display information for awareness. Particularly, CORREPI (which stands for *Coordinate against Police and Institutional Repression*) files reports on victims of police violence and periodically publishes the number of cases of police violence it compiles. Therefore, CORREPI “reports the existence of this problem. They prove it is a real problem by showing the data they collect themselves, such as number or type of murders in any given month” (Smulovitz, 2004, sound recording). CELS does similar work for general human rights in Argentina.

The classification of Argentinean NGOs according to the role that information plays within their mission provides a frame for understanding the case study that follows: the NGO *Citizen Power* and its role in strengthening democracy.

2.3. The case of Citizen Power: transforming information into action

Citizen Power is a well-known example of an advocacy institution that goes further in the use of information as it transforms awareness into action. Citizen Power also follows the long tradition of defending democracy in Argentina, which was discussed earlier. This section is the result of an interview with Sandra Cesario, coordinator of the *Area de Participación Ciudadana y Recursos Humanos (Human Rights and Citizens' Participation Department)*.

Cesario describes Citizen Power as “a non party organization which shows citizens how they can affect public policy” (Cesario, 2004, sound recording). Citizen Power’s efforts concentrate on raising citizens’ awareness of their rights. According to Cesario, Citizen Power is an organization that creates and disseminates information to raise awareness and foster action, rather than one that produces academic research. Therefore, following Cesario, Citizen Power’s approach to information clearly demonstrates the differences between an NGO’s use of information and the scientific production of knowledge (see 1.2). Several programs within the organization bear witness to this purpose; this section describes a few of them as examples.

a. The House of Representatives Monitoring Program

This program audits the performance of senators and representatives in the course of their duties. The program follows up legislators’ performance within parliamentary commissions on issues such as: frequency of attendance (or non-attendance) at official duties, behavior during the commission meeting (for

example, paying attention versus speaking on their cell phones), level of commitment to the law under discussion, whether or not the law project is thoroughly discussed or its treatment is boycotted, and so on. The monitors are civil volunteers trained by the Politics Department within Citizen Power. Volunteers gather data from monitoring activities and then submit a report (Cesario, 2004).

Through this “watchdog” program, Citizen Power evaluates legislators’ performance and also determines whether those acts approved in sessions were consciously supported or not supported by legislators, and to what extent that choice was made because of political alliance. Additionally, because volunteers are responsible for monitoring reports, they become educated as citizens to follow up legislators’ activities and behavior. In this twofold way, Citizen Power promotes civil awareness and action through the creation and dissemination of information.

b. “InfoCívica” Program

Citizen Power hosts a web site dedicated to information dissemination, called *InfoCívica* (<http://www.infocivica.org/>). The program’s mission is “to facilitate direct access to information generated by NGOs to the mass media” (website, <http://www.infocivica.org/mision.asp>). The site publishes updated information processed by journalists working within Citizen Power, and about various NGO actions and achievements. The main contribution of InfoCívica is to generate news concerning third sector activities, issues and accomplishments, becoming a forum for the sector.

c. Candidates’ Database Program

This program gathers information about the legal and financial profiles of candidates for public positions in elections. A personal record is created for each candidate including properties (owned by the candidate and his/her relatives), annual income, membership organizations, legal situation, etc. There is also information about the campaign’s source of funds. When the candidate refuses to publish the information, the record shows it by leaving the corresponding data field empty (Cesario, 2004; Poder Ciudadano, 2003).

Through these three programs Citizen Power not only promotes awareness but also makes citizens take action for democratizing their society. Volunteers get trained to follow up public officers’ performance along with gathering and spreading data that increases civil participation. Clearly, the utilization of information by this NGO is distinguishable from traditional information agencies such as libraries, museums, and archives. It can also be distinguished from the production of social scientific knowledge, as its goal is not to discuss issues

theoretically but to change social reality. The NGOs information methodology collects and spreads data without seeking profit (as opposed to mass media). Their only mission is to advocate and promote citizen action.

3. Conclusions

NGOs have a clear role in the production and dissemination of information. Their approach is a positive one, since their primary objective in the handling of information is to foster awareness and promote a change in reality, whether in the natural environment or in the social arena. Such an approach differentiates NGOs from other information agencies as well as scientific knowledge production made by academic or research institutions. Completing this picture are the advances in the field of telecommunication technologies, which give NGOs a wealth of resources to promote activism worldwide, fostering the use of information for action.

In Argentina, the history of NGOs has been strongly related to political advocacy rather than social service or environmental issues, because the struggle for democracy against dictatorship was a civilian mission for many years. Currently, the NGO Citizen Power offers a clear example of an advocacy organization which promotes civilian participation to strengthen democracy. Citizen Power defines its production of information not as “academic”; rather, the usage of information which allows the institution to accomplish its goal is a positive one—i.e., information for action.

Critics of the role of NGOs in strengthening democracy in developing countries highlight a particular note. They refer to the accountability of these organization to the people they say they serve, i.e., the beneficiaries of their policies. Mercer (2002) points out that NGOs are losing their key role in supporting grassroots organizations because of donors’ conditions for funding. Most donors draw sophisticated technical conditions for funding requirements. Urban-based educated elites have the required skills to propose projects fulfilling these conditions, i.e. “professionals or civil servants with access to information and contacts only available in capital cities where donor organizations and foreign embassies congregate.” (Mercer, 2002, p. 15; Joseph, 2000). However, this elite is not often culturally involved with the poorest sector, which is located primarily in rural areas. As a consequence, the sectors delegated as the end-beneficiaries of NGOs mission statements and activities are not truly represented. “The irony here then, is that as donors attempt to ‘scale-up’ the impact of their work, to handle more (foreign) funding and take on greater roles in service provision, they are simultaneously forcing NGOs to loosen their connections with their grassroots constituencies. Strengthening NGOs may actually serve to weaken civil society” (Tvedt referenced by Mercer, 2002, p.16).

The previously mentioned digital divide issue makes this trade-off particularly apparent. Since the implementation of technology is overestimated in solving the divide problem, NGOs concentrate their requests on asking donors for funds to improve technology. These donors have their own agendas related to the dissemination of technology as business (Wade, 2002). Moreover, as Sangeeta Kamat adds “[NGOs’] dependence on external funding and compliance with funding agency targets raise doubts about whether their accountability lies with the people or with funding agencies.” (2003, p. 66).

Beyond the issue of the legitimacy of NGOs’ representation of society, their contribution to information creation and dissemination is remarkable and quite original. Information for advocacy is not just a passive diffusion of information, it stimulates positive action. That NGOs actively participate in public discourse through criticism and awareness fosters a political interpretation of scientific knowledge (sometimes far from neutral). To reach this goal, advocacy organizations often take advantage of techniques such as designing effective visual displays or compiling data to prove that there is a real problem to be solved.

In developing countries such as Argentina, NGOs that specialize in advocacy are crucial in helping to spread information, in turn empowering civilians to stand up for their own rights. NGOs foster activism and accountability within society, and we should recognize their outstanding contribution in the defense of democracy.

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NGOs and the Egyptian Information Society: New Partnerships, New Roles

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Introduction

The last decade has been characterized by a remarkable growth in the number of NGOs worldwide. Between 1994 and 2004, the number has increased fourfold, from 16,000 listed NGOs in the 1993–94 edition of the Yearbook of International Organizations, to 63,000 international non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations in the 2004 electronic edition (Rudasill 2004, 2). NGOs in Egypt, parallel to this international movement, have also increased in number and undergone many developments and transformations fostered by the promulgation of the new law 153/1999 for NGOs. This new law, which supersedes Law 32/1964, grants more rights to NGOs, broadening their fields of action and freeing them from the government's administrative control. As a direct consequence, NGOs experienced an exponential growth in number and diversification in activities, presenting themselves on the Egyptian landscape as a catalyst for social and cultural development. NGOs in Egypt operate in accordance to the above mentioned law regarding foundation and dissolution of associations, purposes, rights and obligations, and funding. The law also strives for the creation of federations and centers with the objectives of increasing NGOs' capacity to participate in country development. These federations usually take one of the following forms:

- **Activity-Specific Federation** consisting of associations and NGOs exercising or financing a common activity in a specific field nationwide.
- **Regional Federations** consisting of associations and NGOs existing within a governorate irrespective of their activity.

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- **The General Federation of NGOs and Foundations**³, drawing up an overall conception of the rule of associations and NGOs in implementing social development programs, carrying out the development of NGOs' financial resources, and contributing to NGO capacity-building through the organization of training programs in coordination with the *Activity-Specific* and the *Regional Federations*.

Many centers and bodies were also created with the primary and sometimes sole role of providing support to smaller NGOs, and consolidating NGO efforts such as the *Egyptian NGOs Support Center*, the *NGOs Service Center* and the *Arab Network for NGOs*.

This proliferation in number and the diversification of activities are accompanied by an increasing role of NGOs in the creation, organization and dissemination of information. This differs from the earlier type of *information-for-development*, which was traditionally diffused to local communities in given developing countries to deliberate organization-wide and inter-agency sharing of information for self-capacity building and better organization management.

Many Egyptian NGOs have developed small libraries or information centers within their administrative structure to serve the organization's information needs. However, the Internet has provided an effective tool and vehicle for the exchange and sharing of information. Rudasil remarks that "it is interesting, but not surprising that the rapid multiplication in the number of NGOs coincided with the expansion of the Internet as a tool for the dissemination of information" (Rudasil 2004, 2). A quick surfing of the Internet reveals that many Egyptian NGOs have their own Websites, ranging from simple homepages posting basic information about the organization, its news and activities, to comprehensive portals providing networked information linking various NGOs and developing databases with detailed information about them.

As information has become a global concern, it is important to see how NGOs are dealing with it in the Digital Age.

Information and Communication Technology as a Global Concern

"How well a nation performs in terms of knowledge innovation and diffusion of ICT determines its economic growth level.. Availability, accessibility, affordability, and [capability] need to be achieved through utilizing ICT and knowledge in our efforts to close the digital divide" 9⁴

In today's world, information has become "a precious resource equal in importance to the traditionally known resources of land, labor and capital" (Asamoah-Hassan 2004, 2). Brandin and Harrison observe that "information wealth is now

a new type of capital described as knowledge capital.” The lack of information is considered “a barrier to development” (Leach 2001, 51), as Bergdahl stated, “information has become such a precious resource that the fate of modern nations in all essentials is connected with their capacity to develop and exploit it. In the future, “countries that do not develop this capacity will be left behind in the cultural, scientific and economic development...such countries will neither be partners in the global production of information nor will they contribute meaningfully to the common future of civilization” (Nwalo 2000, 2).

It is then no wonder, that the terms “information rich” and “information poor” were coined. Using these terms refer to the nations’ ability to integrate knowledge and information technology into their infrastructure in order to achieve economic development. They also reflect accessibility to *quality* information resources, allowing their citizens to improve their lives.

Recognizing the importance of information and communication technology to the economic viability and development of countries in the globalization era, the international community, regional and sub regional organizations, and local governments were motivated to various action to close the digital divide and the information gap within and between countries.

Toward this goal, representatives from all over the world assembled in Geneva, 10–12 December 2003, for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Together, they declared their common vision towards the future of the information society in *The Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action*⁵, which reads:

1. A common desire and commitment to build a *people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society*; and (The Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, A1)
2. Recognition that education, knowledge, information and communication are at the core of human progress, endeavor and well-being. (The Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, A8)

In response to the challenges and opportunities of the Information Society, UNESCO has designed and launched two twin programs, the Education For All (EFA) and the Information For All Program (IFAP), with special focus on developing and transitional countries.

In addition to these international developments, in July 1997, the Dakar Declaration on the Internet and the African Media called on African governments to “instill an environment conducive to the rapid development of the Internet and other information and communication technologies.” The Declaration also called for “creating a culture of online communication and ensuring African content on the Internet” (Kagan 1998).

Egypt's Information Society Initiative (EISI)

In Egypt, the government has developed a national framework to move the country into the information age. The initiative has been fostering and promoting public-to-private and government-to-civil society partnerships towards the double objective of (a) building the Egyptian Information Society and (b) implementing a vibrant local ICT industry. The national framework revolves around six fundamental components: e-Readiness, e-Business, e-Learning (including ICT Training), e-Government, e-Culture, and the ICT industry. For our purposes the most important of the six components are the e-Readiness and the e-Learning.

Access For All is the Egyptian e-Readiness initiative geared towards minimizing the digital divide between the upper and lower socioeconomic classes, meanwhile preparing the environment for the integration of ICT into the country's infrastructure. This implies possession, by citizens, of the necessary computers and Internet connections, and mastering basic skills to effectively use the related technology. To achieve these aims, the government has launched the initiative, *A PC for Every Household*, in 2002, to develop cooperative agreements with the private sector to offer low-cost locally-assembled computers to households with easy payment plans. In order to promote access to the Internet, the government has reduced the cost of Internet access to the price of a local call and has also integrated ISDN, DSL and ADSL to enhance Internet connectivity nationwide. Furthermore, in cooperation with NGOs and other stakeholders, the government has created IT clubs to serve as community access points,⁶ as well as training centers to help the most vulnerable population groups achieve their full potential.

As a result, Egypt has witnessed a surge in IT and Internet usage. Lower income users are more likely to rely, often exclusively, on community centers for Internet access, than those with higher incomes, who own computers and can afford to access the Internet from their homes. Cyber cafés have become one of the most profitable small businesses in Egypt and are often frequented by children and teenagers who spend hours in front of the screen playing games or surfing the "Net." According to governmental statistics, the online population grew from 75,000 in 1997 to 4,500,000 in 2005, of which teenagers and young adults are the fast growing Internet demographic groups.⁷

Egyptian NGOs: From Societal Welfare to An Informational Role

In different ways, Egyptian NGOs have been continuously generating and spreading information as part of their activities. However, there were, and still are in traditional NGOs, some characteristics inherent to NGO information, such

as “being distributed through internal distribution channels” (Tadahisa 2002) like newsletters, brochures, handouts, or pamphlets. Additionally, NGOs information always focus on their specific areas of action, namely education, health, housing, environment, women, youth employment, income generation and human rights. On the other hand, while NGOs “tend to diligently disseminate information that helps promote their activities,” they are accused of having an “abysmal record” when it comes to transmitting results of their activities or sharing information among and cross NGOs⁸ (Reade-Fong and Gorman 2004, 6–7).

The Internet and ICTs have not only changed how information is disseminated by NGOs, but they have also broadened their fields of activities, created new dimensions, and offered new opportunities for their developmental work. Apart from societal activities such as health care services and awareness, social inclusion, human rights and political advocacy, deeply rooted in the Egyptian NGOs and civil community landscape, Egyptian NGOs have been involved in formal and non-formal education, through illiteracy eradication, which they carry out almost exclusively, or through para and post-classroom activities like private and group lessons for less proficient students. Their closeness to the grassroots, their flexible approaches, and their “tailor made education,” (Unesco 2000) place them in an exceptional position to understand and address the educational and the informational problems in underdeveloped areas.

Therefore, NGOs are appealing to the international community to play a new role in the arenas of lifelong learning, promoting information literacy, and spreading learning environments. This outlook was emphasized during the High-Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning, held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in November 2005, when attendees produced a proclamation stating that “Information Literacy is not a goal in itself, but a mechanism towards something more important: empowering people” (Garner 2005, 71). The Colloquium associated four developmental areas to Information Literacy and called them *Information Literacy Givens*. The four areas are, in essence, the traditional activity fields of NGOs:

- Learning and education;
- Health and human services;
- Economic development; and
- Governance and citizenship.

The Colloquium also stressed that “NGOs must be targeted as likely partners in the promotion of Information Literacy” (Garner 2005, 6). The Middle East and the North Africa (MENA) team expressed strong sentiments towards the possibility of the NGOs having a better position and hoped for their future intervention. “We cannot wait for a reformed education system,” said Hassouna, a member of the MENA team, “this work must be done soon. The business culture

must be changed now. It is true that we are in the stage of ICT, but we do not yet have an Information Literate society. [...] The key players to be targeted for such a venture are governments, communities, unions, business sectors, banking communities, and NGOs” (Garner 2005, 71–72).

On the national level, there is a strong desire to benefit from NGOs’ long experience in formal and non-formal education of citizens at the grassroots level. Some of the newly created NGOs want to take part in driving the national change to the Egyptian Information Society through their own work by reconsidering their policies regarding the type and purpose of the information diffused within their community. This requires a strategic change from just information and education for development to information for lifelong learning and, education transforming people from passive learners to active independent learners who are able to recognize their need for information, develop the ability to locate it, use critical thinking skills to evaluate it and, most importantly, use it.

The expansion of the technological and literate environment by the government required the development of strong, long-standing partnerships between the government and the NGO sector. While some NGOs support and fund the creation of public libraries and community information/development centers, others take the responsibility of developing ICT-based projects. Of these two models we will focus on two particularly interesting experiences: the Integrated Care Society, which established and continues to support a large network of libraries focusing on underdeveloped areas; and the ICT Trust Fund, jointly established by the Egyptian government and the UNDP as a mechanism to create public-to-private partnerships to support the use of ICT in fostering socioeconomic development. This type of governmental partnership ensures Egypt’s inclusion into the global plan. Moreover, such partnerships facilitate wide-spread acceptance by the public and thus, eliminate the suspicions linked to NGOs receiving funds and capital assistance from external agencies, that tend to impose their own agenda, and put the recipient at the mercy of the donor agencies.

The Integrated Care Society (ICS)⁹

ICS was established in 1977, through an initiative created by HE Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak with the aim of contributing to the cultural and social development of poor and disadvantaged areas through the establishment of a number of cultural and educational projects directed towards children and their families. The ICS is an example of an ever-evolving and ever-expanding NGO that seeks to continuously develop its activities and expand its fields of work. Through an evolutionary approach to change, it tries to achieve the best cultural and social development, taking into account the specific needs of each phase, thus adapting to the

change requirements. Its activities range from developing school, children, and public libraries, in mobile, portable, or traditional manners to designing and implementing the national *Reading for All* campaign.

School and Children's Libraries

*"There is a pivotal role to be assumed in the new electronic age by the traditional providers of information access for the general public—the public schools and libraries."*¹⁰

When first established in 1977, the Society concentrated its activities on developing school libraries in the lower income areas. It provided equipment and educational print materials to supplement the public schools' curricula, in addition to some works of fiction, and a variety of subjects, in order to enhance students' reading habits. It also supplied these children with their needed textbooks. What really made this endeavor an even greater success was the contribution of and the high sense of ownership of the residents in these areas. Today, the project is almost solely sustained by local community efforts.

Driven by the desire to reach a wider public, in less than ten years after launching the libraries pilot project, the ICS engaged in an ambitious project to implement a network of children's libraries. The new project was launched in December 1985 through the participation of one children's library that was followed by four libraries in the following year. Between 1985 and 1993, the Society had completed the implementation of eight children's libraries, of which six were located in the Greater Cairo area, one in the Fayoum governorate, and another in the Menya governorate (Upper Egypt). The new facilities are now full-fledged libraries that offer a multitude of services assisting and enabling children to enjoy reading, learning and discovering in a positive, healthy environment.

In these libraries, children are provided with open access to materials in all formats, including picture books, easy readings, contemporary fiction, encyclopedias, reference materials, audiovisual and multimedia materials, as well as magazines and newspapers. In addition to the reading halls, each library has a multi-purpose room serving as a venue for activities and programs, and a computer space named the *21st Century Club*, where children are taught basic computer skills by a specialist. There are also a number of computer training courses especially tailored for teenagers. As the name indicates, the *21st Century Clubs* serve as the children's gateway to the information age, as they contribute to their computer literacy, unlocking the Internet and digital universe and dissolving the digital divide.

In addition to offering various information resources, the ICS children's libraries aim at enriching the out-of-school time and the summer holidays with constructive activities and developing their aptitude for reading and learning. Activities and services in the ICS libraries vary from storytelling and puppetry for young kids, to reading and scientific competitions, exhibitions, craft sessions, author's visits and seminars for older children. The libraries implement many reading programs and organize reading competitions to promote the love of books and inculcate reading habits among children, meanwhile developing their writing skills through the organization of writing and abstracting competitions. Children can also take part in other activities, not directly related to reading in order to develop their artistic and critical thinking abilities, such as painting, chess competitions, and educational.

To reach children in the poorest areas, the Society uses mobile libraries, consisting of buses especially designed and furnished to hold about 4,000 books each. The mobile libraries also visit community centers such as daycares, youth centers, hospitals and Red Crescent facilities according to a fixed schedule.

Spreading Public Libraries

Public libraries are the community's building blocks. The role they play in their community circle is not just informational or educational, but also social and recreational. They serve as a place for meeting, interacting and socializing with librarians and each others, fostering learning, knowledge, hobbies, sharing, and the free flow of ideas. Public libraries are democratic by their very definition, they provide equal access to information and diverse materials, services and programs to inform, educate and entertain the citizens of the community, regardless of their socioeconomic or educational level, religion, race, age or gender. They also safeguard freedom of information. They are very flexible in adapting to the changes as they occur, and in integrating new services and programs as they become relevant. "For decades they have provided information for education, leisure and entertainment", and now, they tend to "become active partners in educational systems" by taking part in the citizen's lifelong learning (Nwalo 2000). Having recognized their crucial role in the community's development, the next step in the ICS's trajectory was to build larger, more inclusive public libraries.

Shortly after establishing the first children's libraries, the ICS started to implement a network of public libraries in order to reach more segments of the community, and to carry over the work done earlier through children's libraries and the schools. The primary objective was to provide a continuum of library resources and services to the generation that grew within the children's and school libraries, thus continuing the culture of library and reading previously

gained. With the first library inaugurated in November 1986, the Society today maintains seven public libraries spread in various locations of Greater Cairo; this is in addition to contributing a great deal of efforts and resources to the establishment of the *Mubarak Public Library*, that stands today as a model for the public libraries in Egypt. Each of these libraries contains an adult section as well as a children's section/area. The average library holds approximately 12,000 books and more than 20 periodical titles,¹¹ in addition to hundreds of CDs, video tapes and other audiovisual materials. The adults are also offered a collection of books in English and other foreign languages.

More important than the collections provided to the users are the services offered and the programs implemented. These include reading and writing competitions, cultural competitions, computer competitions, chess, and many other activities that strongly attract users to the library. In addition to the programs and services, which are available in all the seven ICS public libraries, the *Cultural Club's Library of Ain Shams* organizes many workshops and courses in such as painting, crafts and woodwork workshops, music courses including music education, music performance and compumusic, as well as sports and physical education activities including aerobics, body building and ballet.

Computing Services & Computer Literacy

Like in children's libraries, adult patrons are offered public access to computers and the Internet. As computing services are very well received by users, the libraries employ computer specialists to run the computer labs, and to provide one-on-one assistance. In addition to this informal one-on-one teaching and coaching, the libraries offer formal training courses on basic and advanced computing skills for children and adults alike. Beginner courses include training on IT basics, Internet, word processing, spreadsheets, PowerPoint and Access software. Advanced courses include html and Front Page, Photoshop, network essentials, hardware and maintenance. These courses are offered on a reduced fee basis, ensuring sustainability and efficiency of the service by recovering some of the maintenance and upgrading costs. Recently, the ICS public libraries have started to offer IT certification programs in partnership with Microsoft. There are three parallel tracks: the hardware and maintenance program, the small businesses program, and the workplace training skills program. These courses and their certificates are offered at a deeply reduced fee basis, to young people aged 18 to 35 years, who are tooling up to seek employment or who are engaged—or want to engage—in entrepreneurship. Other benefits of the program are unique loans from the *Social Fund* for qualifying graduates to start up their own projects. The program also offers a financial prize of 5,000 Egyptian pounds for the best project presented at the end of the program.

Furthermore, the ICS encourages the member libraries to remain competitive and commit to excellence in their management and services through competitions and awards for the most distinguished staff.

Supporting Model Public Libraries

These libraries, despite the fact that they play a great role in promoting reading, computer literacy, and lifelong learning, are relatively small facilities that have limited collections, and are operated by a small number of staff,¹² and are not fully automated. It is only *Maadi Public Library* that has a bilingual Website which they use to post information about their services and program and provide access to their OPAC. Nevertheless, one of the ICS libraries stands above the rest, as a model of how public libraries in Egypt should be: the *Mubarak Public Library (MPL)*. The Society took part in its establishment and continues to support its activities.

The *Mubarak Public Library* in and by itself is a network of libraries. The *MPL* consists of a Central Library in Giza (inaugurated in 1995), and six other libraries in different governorates of Egypt. The Library also plans to add four other regional libraries. The *MPL* is fully automated, has more than 150 networked computers, a number of servers to manage the network, and uses an Integrated Library System (UNICORN) to perform its several functions. Their Website visitors can use the online catalog to locate materials in the central library or any of its six branches. The Website also posts information about the library's collections, services, and policies (i.e. membership and circulation, collection development, cultural activities), as well as some users' guides, and provides the users with a selection of free web resources. The library plans to subscribe to relevant databases and other electronic resources in the near future and to be actively involved in national and regional digital library projects.

Promoting A Reading Culture

The ICS designed and implemented the *Reading for All Program* in the summer of 1991 with the main objective of promoting reading among children and families. The program has two main components: book publishing and the spread of public library outlets. The ICS has provided existing public libraries nationwide with new collections of books, and has spread a large number of mobile and portable libraries into parks, and other similar places, to encourage people to read and raise awareness of the value of reading. In addition, the ICS established the *Family Library*, a publishing house responsible for reproducing books in a more economic edition and availing them in large quantities and at low prices, thus making them affordable to the greater public. Books published

in such editions encompass classical Arabic and translated international works of literature, complete works by eminent and contemporary Egyptian authors, in addition to books in a variety of subjects. The national campaign was a great success in promoting reading and has encouraged many families to buy these affordable books to build their own home libraries.

The ICS has also established the Egyptian Board on Books for Young People (EBBY), the Egyptian national section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), which brings together experts in children's book publishers, including authors, illustrators and editors, to maintain literary and artistic standards, and to produce quality children's books. To this aim, EBBY organizes three annual competitions, one for children's drawings and literature (for amateurs), one for the best children's book (for professionals), and the third one for the best children's Arabic software or Internet application.

Finally, the Society is also involved in community development projects and other activities geared towards serving gifted and handicapped children.

The ICT Trust Fund¹³

Established jointly by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in January 2002, the Egyptian Information and Communication Technology Trust Fund (ICT Trust Fund) aims to create and foster public-to-private partnerships in support of the widespread use of ICT, to achieve socioeconomic development. The UNDP aided the Egyptian Government develop a vision for the role and the use of ICT-for-development and citizens' capacity building. While the Fund is originally financed and supported by the Egyptian Government, the Italian Cooperation in Egypt finances some projects through a bilateral financing program. The Fund is also open to contributions from the private sector, as well as other bilateral and multi-lateral donors, under the UNDP coordination. Contributions can either be oriented to a specific project or assigned to the Fund in general. The Fund can finance proposals and projects as long as they are inline with its objectives. Qualifying criteria for projects to be funded are: a) to contribute social development, b) to have an entrepreneurial element, and c) to promote ICT use and deployment.

The Fund also aims at empowering citizens by providing access to appropriate information through a series of projects. To achieve this, it works with a number of partners such as other NGOs, community associations, and IT clubs across Egypt, in addition to cultural, educational and youth organizations. Areas of cooperation include training, illiteracy eradication (through providing learning materials and devising literacy classes), provision of equipment, and subsidizing costs of effective deployment.

The ICT Trust Fund program focuses on five main projects: 1) ICT for Illiteracy Eradication, 2) Mobile IT Clubs, 3) Smart Schools Network, 4) Community E-Library Initiative-Information for all, and 5) Community Development Portal.

The ICT for Illiteracy Eradication or “ICT 4 IE”¹⁴

“NGOs/nonprofit organizations, many of which are dedicated, in principle, to the eradication of illiteracy, must embrace this latest dimension of ICT development in order to reverse the continued international growth of the Digital Divide.”¹⁵

The project aims at using the potentials of the ICT to produce simple educational tools, thus addressing both basic illiteracy and technology illiteracy on the same footing. The ICT 4 IE is a simple, self-based, interactive tutorial that employs learning objects techniques and is distributed on a CD. It requires minimum input from the learner and is quite easy to use to the most novice user. The CD is distributed in adult literacy classes, through NGOs and IT clubs and its usage is always guided by trained professionals. The lessons address everyday life topics with a focus on development-related subjects such as health, family care, education, environment and political rights. Since the CD is essentially addressing adults in rural regions, it employs appropriate means of communication, using drama and songs to carry messages. Other functions that benefit user's capacity-building are also added. Among the success stories of this project is that of an illiterate woman who, after joining the program, was able to read, write and do mathematics. She is now able to read the holy book and is helping her 9 year old son with his homework.

The IT Mobile Clubs:¹⁶ Shipping IT Services to Under Served Areas

Another project supported by the UNDP is the IT Mobile Club. It consists of using buses and caravans equipped with fully functional media labs to visit remote areas, schools and community development centers, in order to teach citizens basic IT and Internet searching and usage skills. The project aims at motivating people in under-served areas to use the advancements of ICTs and increase students' exposure, within these communities, to computers while achieving the planned educational goals. The IT Mobile Clubs provide many services such as teaching basic and advanced IT skills, as well as advanced computer applications, to citizens. Courses taught include word processing, spreadsheets, and graphics, in addition to primary information literacy skills like

web browsing, web searching using search engines, and retrieving information from the other Fund projects' Websites, as well as creating email accounts and learning how to utilize this for effective communication with others. It also offers specialized training for the public sector and government employees, providing them with needed modern workplace skills.

Smart School Network (SSN): An IT-Based Learning Experience¹⁷

This pilot project was launched in 2003 and implemented in 50 public and experimental schools distributed throughout 12 Egyptian governorates. The objectives of the project include, introducing ICT in students' preparatory education (middle school), transforming schools into community learning centers, improving teaching and learning methods, and qualifying teachers and students to obtain the International Computer Driving License (ICDL). The project has three main axes: computer literacy, computer aided learning, and school management system. The Smart Schools have computer classes or labs equipped with PCs connected to the Internet and are open to students ages 11 to 15. Subjects such as Arabic, English, science and social studies are taught in these labs. Students can also use the computers to do their assignments. The project also integrates electronic and distance learning by making selected lessons and teaching materials, as well as video lectures, available on the Website. Schools participating in the project are networked, a thing that fosters communication, knowledge sharing, and the exchange of expertise on the national level. On the international level, the Smart Schools participate in international exchange programs and learning activities, like IEARN,¹⁸ and develop common projects with other schools all over the world.

Community Knowledge Generation E-Library (FekrZad.com):¹⁹ An Arabic Online Content Initiative

If poor countries are to electronically "leap-frog" over stages of library development, they will have to find the resources to also provide their own relevant information content.²⁰

Recognizing that the electronic content generated and produced by Arab countries is meager as a percentage of the total available, the Fund launched FekrZad.com, as an initiative to develop Arabic relevant electronic content and publish it on the Web. The project also tries to overcome the language barrier that deters local citizens from accessing the world's knowledge. FekrZad.com is a project that uses ICTs to form a knowledge base for community-development projects and success stories in the Arabic language. The project has developed a

mechanism for enabling the generation of electronic content in Arabic and delivering it through the Internet. The Website is also accessible to users with disabilities, allowing the illiterate and visually impaired users to use Text-to-Speech (TTS) software in order to facilitate access to the content. In addition to the community-development library established by the pioneers of the project, the site encourages users to share their experiences, knowledge, and stories, by submitting articles to the portal.

Community Development Portal (Kenanaonline.com)²¹

The objective of the Community Development Portal (CDP) is to achieve sustainable human development by empowering citizens of rural and suburban regions through the provision of electronic access to relevant information. The portal provides a suite of development-related information and tools in the following areas: agriculture and husbandry, small businesses, small industries, education, health, culture, vocational training, managerial skills, IT skills, and career advice. The CDP is promoted via specific IT clubs, the Community Development Centers (CDCs), which are also used as hubs to access public computers by citizens in the underdeveloped areas. The CDCs contribute to citizens' capacity-building, maximizing their technological and information skills and providing them with workplace training needs. In addition, job seekers accessing these centers can get personalized help in finding employment by exploring job listings and other job opportunities. They are also given hands-on training on email, creating personal homepages, filling out online job applications; resume writing, and the different mechanisms of posting one's own applications on the Internet.

The Community Development Centers were created through a joint venture between the ICT Trust Fund and the National NGOs Center for Population and Development (NCPD). The venture consisted of selecting some of the NGOs operating in rural and suburban regions, providing them with the necessary ICT equipment, and appointing and training the information officers—who will be responsible of running the CDCs—on the necessary workplace skills. The Fund carried out the training of the new information officers, whom were recruited among recent university graduates, on basic IT and Internet skills, as a first step towards qualifying them to lead and assist the community in technology adaptation and usage.

In January 2005, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) was approached by the NCPD, the parent organization of these NGOs, to provide a two-day intensive training course to the future Information Officers on the principles of information seeking as well as understanding of the various resources. Based on the

pioneering efforts of the BA in the information literacy arena, NCPD officials entrusted the curriculum development for this intensive training to the BA.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina was also requested to offer a venue for the whole training workshop which will be carried out jointly between the library and the ICT Trust Fund. While the first part of the training carried out by BA librarians aimed at building the information skills of the trainees, the second part, piloted by the ICT Trust Fund, intended to teach them the principles of managing CDCs, including dealing with various users and their unique information needs, handling difficult situations, and developing different policies and social marketing strategies.

The following section will highlight, in details, the training workshop, with a focus on the role of the BA.

Information Literacy: The Role of the Library in Supporting NGOs Effort

“The rapid deployment of ICTs without appropriate acculturation for users to comprehend their complexities has contributed enormously to the ever-widening chasm of the Digital Divide.”²²

The rapid and wide expansion of ICTs without the inclusion of proper training strategies has presented individuals and organizations with critical problems and challenges. These challenges are multifaceted. On one hand, there is an information overload that makes it very difficult, if not impossible; to keep abreast with published materials on a single topic. According to Lenox and Walker “there is more information in a single edition of the *New York Times* than a man or woman in the sixteenth century had to process in the whole of his or her life” (Mednick 2004, 13). On the other hand, the ever changing technology makes this sheer volume of information not presented in a single format, nor stored in uniform information systems that enable its retrieval. This requires users in the information age to have a broad range of skills in order to deal effectively with the different media and the “abilities to navigate different information systems, vehicles and highways” (Mednick 2004, 7).

Computer literacy and the ease of computer usage are often a problem in itself, and present many obstacles in acquiring the adequate information skills. Users, especially the young, often use computers to chat, play games, email friends, and “with the same spirit they are satisfied with whatever information a quick search produces” (Breivik 2005, 22). Information literacy studies in higher education in the USA have observed that “students’ ease with computers can hinder the mastery of information literacy skills because those students

overestimate their ability to effectively search for and access information. The difficulty of this situation is further compounded by the Internet's making so much information available that students believe research is less complicated than it actually is" (Warnken 2004). This paradox was observed in many of colleges and universities around the world: "Today's undergraduates are generally far less prepared to do research than were students of earlier generations, despite their familiarity with powerful new information-generation tools" (Breivik 2005, 22).

Jill D. Jenson sees that users born in the Internet and digital age, "lack hands-on experience in an actual library and with actual library materials, the type of experience that the vast majority of [people] in the teaching sector [...] enjoyed and now rely on to guide [their] electronically based searches" (Jenson 2004, 108). According to Jenson, these users miss "analogies" and "points of contact" with traditional search methods and traditional forms of information. "Although today's students have spent extensive time using computers, they have spent little or no time in an actual library, nor have they worked with actual hard copies of the items they would find there." As a result, these users don't "necessarily understand the distinction between Internet resources and information available from electronic databases," (Warnken 2004) nor the "differences between journals and popular magazines, articles and abstracts, and annotations and advertisements" (Jenson 2004, 107). Jenson concludes that "even a fast-paced technological learning environment may require taking a few steps back to move many steps forward" (Jenson 2004, 112). For the Information Officers, these steps were taken at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

Because many of the developing areas where NGOs offer their services lack adequate library facilities, resources and services, these organizations must avoid the pitfalls of using technology to find information and assist their communities without the benefits of an actual library and/or training by a librarian on the usage of such resources. NGOs must make the investment through transporting those who will perform such a mission to a library to train them on the information literacy mechanics and are encouraged to maintain a strong relationship with a local library and if possible, develop their own certification program to guarantee the adequate accumulation of knowledge related to the information services they offer to the public.

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina Information Literacy Workshop

In cooperation with this NGO, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina offered the Information Officers their first information fluency program.

The training workshop was a good opportunity to impart the knowledge and skills acquired by the BA librarians through the development of an integrated

information literacy program. To ensure success, the BA librarians developed a mechanism for content development and delivery, as well as some assessment tools.

The training approach included the following components:

- Developing instructional materials to meet the learning objectives as identified by the NCPD and the ICT Trust Fund;
- A survey that was intended to measure the trainees' skills and knowledge before the course;
- Instruction through lectures and hands-on, with the possibility to adjust and fine-tune the course based on learners' feedback during the sessions, and on the survey's results;
- Pre- and post-tests, as assessment mechanism to measure the gained skills and knowledge;
- A training evaluation form, to collect trainees' feedback and opinions on the training.

Taking into consideration that the training will be addressing non library professionals with basic English language skills, the materials used in the instruction had to respond to certain requirements:

- being basic, simple, and clear;
- using easy language with short sentences;
- since query languages for most online retrieval system are *English-like statements*, the training team chose not to exclude common English language terminology from instruction, but rather to mix Arabic and English in lectures and handouts;
- where appropriate, provide Arabic translation/interpretation of the English text in the handouts, and always give Arabic equivalents of the terminology used.

Other guiding principles for the materials developed included:

- One topic per lesson: each lecture/presentation must cover a training topic, and must introduce to the next topic;
- Flexible learning materials: with consideration that some topics or techniques taught could be augmented or modified based on trainees' feedback and ability to learn;

- Learning objectives: the learning objectives must be stated at the beginning of the course, and the lesson objectives must be clearly identified at the beginning of each session;
- Cumulative knowledge: the knowledge acquired throughout the course must be cumulative and the lectures must be logically ordered and related: they must build on each other, and the whole course must prepare for the next part of the training by the ICT Trust Fund.

The developed course aimed at assisting the information officers to acquire basic and advanced information skills, including the ability to conduct needs analysis, effective strategies for retrieving and evaluating information, online searching and browsing, and accurate recognition of authoritative sources. Since the information officers will be primarily using the Web as a source of information, they must be able to use the Internet efficiently and be able to evaluate the information retrieved. One of the lectures was dedicated to introducing the trainees to the Arab and international development gateways in order to provide the trainees with many important Websites in development-related fields such as health, agriculture, small industry, gender and the environment.

Based on pre and post tests, the training results were quite encouraging. The trainees as well as the ICT managers expressed a great deal of satisfaction. A follow up session is being planned.

Conclusion

NGOs are, more than ever, motivated by international instances and local governments to take a leading role in shaping the future of the information society. Their partnership is targeted by governments, international agencies, unions, the business sector, educational institutions, and libraries, not only for their closeness to the grassroots, but also because they are unburdened by long traditional inefficiencies and can be a catalyst for change, as well as provide quick remedies to the chronic educational and informational problems of the community. They also work as training agencies to enable people to learn how to access useful information and communication technologies for their development and well being.

This paper demonstrates how NGOs could be the perfect partners for libraries in spreading information literacy as well as many other kinds of literacies and build, as in the Integrated Care Society case, small efficient public libraries where none existed.

While NGOs can provide a continuous flow of information for libraries as the originator of particular information, offer valuable experience in problem-solving and fund raising opportunities, join in partnership on grant proposals,

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and sponsor some programs and activities, libraries can provide information competency and other professional development programs for NGO staff similar to those of training the trainers. Libraries can also assist in sharing their experience of information organization and providing NGOs with unique information sources and services.

Networking between libraries and NGOs presents great potentials and promises for both parties. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina's information literacy course was a case in point and the Arab InfoMall (www.arabinfomall.org) is another living example of NGOs/library partnership in developing a mechanism for collecting and delivering information generated by these organizations to the public at large through a careful and well studied gateway design.

NGOs neither contest the role of the public libraries in society, nor compete with them. On the contrary, they assist each other in promoting lifelong learning, information literacy, and delivery through a very flexible mode of education accurately targeting their community members. In the end, it is important to underscore the fact that there are still many other areas to explore where NGOs and public libraries can build fruitful collaborative relationships.

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NGOs, ICTs and Information Dissemination in Asia and Oceania

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It can be no accident that there is today no wealthy developed country that is information-poor, and no information-rich country that is poor and underdeveloped.

- Dr Mahathir Mohammed

Introduction

NGOs working in developing countries are engaged in information dissemination at two levels. One is purely informational, the sharing of information within the organisation in order for the organisation to function. The other is more directly developmental: the use of information for sustainable capacity-building initiatives in a range of fields, including education, health, housing and agriculture. Focusing on the situation in Asia and Oceania, this paper looks at the way in which NGOs utilise information, and to some extent ICTs, for sustainable capacity building.

The Questions Asked

It is hypothesised that communication strategies that take into account the social nature of access, recognise the interaction between face-to-face and online communications, and combine Internet use with a broad range of other new and old media provide the best opportunities for sustainable development initiatives through the use of ICT.

To address this hypothesis, we ask a series of questions in the paper: How have NGOs' roles changed in the creation, validation and dissemination of information? What are the barriers to ICT adoption, and how might its potential be realized? What is an appropriate mix of ICT-based information dissemination and traditional print-based information? How do different cultures react when information is accessed remotely rather than face-to-face?

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We also ask some potentially embarrassing questions, based primarily on our experience of the development scene in our region. Specifically, how well do NGOs collaborate with one another in sharing development-related information? What are some of the facilitators and barriers to more effective collaboration?

‘NGO’ Defined

For purposes of this paper we define ‘nongovernmental organisation’ or NGO as the third sector of development activity, that is, nonstate, nonbusiness, not-for-profit organisations with a global or regional outreach. According to some commentators, these NGOs have themselves developed at a phenomenal rate, especially in the final decades of the 20th century. Salmon, for example, refers to this as a global ‘associational revolution’ that is ‘...as significant to the latter twentieth century as the rise of the nation state was to the latter nineteenth century’ (Salmon 1994, 109). Indeed, anyone who spends time in some of the most needful countries in our region, Cambodia as an example, may be forgiven for thinking that NGOs have taken over the world—every vehicle, most office premises and even a number of hotels bear the logo of an NGO, ranging from the genuine heavyweights, to some of the very small organisations engaged in a single project of short duration.

NGOs in Asia-Oceania

These NGOs have evolved in the Asia-Oceania region against a rich backdrop of varied ethnic, economic, political systems (democracy, monarchy, communism, military rule) and indigenous values and philosophical traditions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Islam and Christianity). NGOs were initially established in response to emergency relief provision and welfare services. Over time, this changed, and ‘many [NGOs] subsequently moved into increasingly multi-sectoral, development-oriented programmes aimed at promoting the self-reliance [sustainable development] of their disadvantaged target groups’ (ESCAP 1994, 1).

The establishment of telecommunication infrastructures that formed the basis of ICT development in Asia and Oceania was the result of the work of colonial powers and their efforts toward the advancement and perpetuation of their interests. This was later reinforced by national development and the brand of economic development labelled ‘globalisation’ that is advocated in the 21st century.

From wireless and radio/radio telephone, to the message services of Morse code, cable and telex, to video and TV and satellite communications, the Internet and CD-ROM technology, mobile telephony, with the advent of the ICT

revolution, national governments, multilateral agencies, regional development agencies, private corporations as well as nongovernmental organisations have collaborated to assist the development of countries in the Region. Among the notable outcomes of these initiatives are the rapid development of the telecommunications industry and the emergence of new ICT and multimedia industries.

In Asia and Oceania, where country populations range from significantly overpopulated (India, Indonesia) to small isolated islands states with low per capita incomes (Tonga, Tokelau) and with urban populations growing through rural-urban migration, information acquisition and dissemination is, or at least should be, a principal tool of sustainable development for NGOs. In the process of achieving sustainable development utilizing ICTs, NGOs have had to critically examine (1) issues of access (2) the forms of ICT that are relevant and sustainable vis-à-vis local resources and (3) the availability of information and technology skills to sustain any system implemented.

NGOs with a Focus on Women as an Example

The women's movement, amongst others associated with human rights, social justice, reproductive health and gender issues have been a dynamic force in the ICT awareness raising arena by NGOs, through the employment of a dynamic mix of ICT strategies based on technical assistance and advice, supporting community access, sharing best practices, advocating information standards and low-cost technologies and supporting local innovations.

The number of web sites established by women's NGOs and national machinery for the advancement of women has increased rapidly in recent years. Through new information technology, women's organisations are now able to network with one another beyond national boundaries and share information and resources with less expense. Local groups have become part of regional and international group networks, and have strategized networks, thus strengthening their capacity for sustainable institution building.

For example, of the 83 NGOs which registered in 1999 for a regional high-level intergovernmental meeting to review regional implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Asian and Pacific region, 68 had their own email address, which was used for communication with ESCAP, the meeting organizer. Considering that in 1995, at the time of the Fourth World Conference on Women e-mail communication among the majority of women NGOs in the Asian and Pacific region was virtually non-existent, that number is significant. At the time, of the entire United Nations system, only the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) maintained a server with web and gopher sites. The Beijing

Conference was the first UN world conference to actively use on-line information dissemination.' (Horie 2003, 1)

On the other hand, while new information technology has given women the opportunity to share information and interact on a scale that was hard to imagine at the time of the Beijing Conference, in terms of political, economic and social participation women's worldwide presence in this new information technology remains low. Women in developing countries, among other minority groups, are especially challenged in terms of effectively accessing the information highway to reach alternative sources of information.

The Asian Women's Resource Center (AWORC), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Isis International Manila are conducting research which seeks to assess the situation of women's organized groups in Asia, the Central Asian Republics, and the Pacific; their level of ICT use, how ICT is used in their work, and what their training and networking needs are, towards furthering women's empowerment through the use of ICT. For countries in the Central Asian Republics and the Pacific subregions, which are less developed than other subregions in terms of the Internet accessibility for women's organisations in-depth, subregional studies have been conducted to make situation analysis on the Internet use and access among women's groups. Women's organisation in this research is defined as non-profit and non-government women's groups at grassroots and national levels which work on any aspect of women in development.

In 2001, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Pacific Women's Bureau, in collaboration with AWORC, conducted the Pacific section of the baseline survey which revealed that within national women's machinery's in the 22 Pacific Island member countries and territories of the Pacific Community, the use of ICT as an advocacy tool by Pacific women in both government and civil society is limited (Cass and Williams 2002).

Elizabeth Cass, a member of the survey team reported that the survey also highlighted a need, outlined by the respondent countries, to provide ICT training in order to improve the use of ICT so that advocacy and networking on gender inequality could be achieved with multi-layered spin-off benefits such as the creation of online networking and proactive use by Pacific women of electronic/online media. The publication assessed the use of ICTs by women's groups in Asia & 8 Pacific Island countries (Federated States of Micronesia, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu & Fiji). The survey found that very few Pacific women's organisations used the Internet as a networking tool and highlighted the need to improve the capacity of women in the Pacific to make full use of ICT to support their policy &

advocacy work. High cost of access, and skills & training were factors that prevented women's groups from using ICTs. Three phases: research, train the trainers and two week online advocacy workshop for Pacific women who meet the selection criteria: i.e./ are in information roles, which can best benefit from ICT technology and share online advocacy through information and innovative use of ICT and content. (Cass, e-mail communication, 2004)

The NGO DAWN (Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era), whose base was in the Pacific from 1998–2002, is composed of women in academia from Africa, Asia, the Pacific and Caribbean. DAWN analyses economic development policies and their implications for women. It has a strong information power base that includes research as a normal part of its activity. DAWN has four themes: the Political Economy of Globalisation; Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; Political Restructuring and Social Transformation; and Sustainable Livelihoods and Environmental Justice. Its target audience is government and the international arena, and its role is to determine and recommend alternatives for the development of women. The DAWN website is well developed and its links with other online advocacy units through DAWN's association and strategic partnerships with specific development networks and organisations that work on similar issues as DAWN are important to the achievement of the network's goals. These working partnerships, through ICT links, provide a wider outreach for DAWN, and the opportunity of focused impacts. Through such partnerships, DAWN seeks to engender influential development organisations.

The Ecumenical Centre for Advocacy and Research in Fiji (ECEA) and the Pacific Concerns Research Centre obtained funds for an automated integrated library system (Alice for Windows) for their resource centres. This is an excellent example of collaboration between NGOs in terms of funding and personnel expertise. The resource centre is accessible through the website at <http://www.ecea.org.fj/>.

Internet Access and ICTs in the Region

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003 was an opportunity for government and NGOs, institutions and private and business sector organisations to take stock of ICT development goals. This exercise confirmed the degree to which certain barriers to ICT exist, and the extent to which NGOs are caught behind these barriers.

It must be remembered that in developing countries of Asia and the Pacific Internet access has become available only recently. In the Pacific, for example,

the Internet arrived as a viable communications technology in Fiji in 1995 and in Tuvalu in 2000. At present approximately 25 per cent of Pacific islanders have regular access to ICTs, primarily through their workplaces, a few secondary and tertiary educational institutions and a few public centres and Internet cafes (PIFS 2003, 3).

The number of Internet subscribers ranges from very high (on average 1:5) in Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Niue (where access is free), to very low (1:1000) in countries such as the Solomon Islands (PIFS 2003, 3). Users in only three Pacific countries (Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga) have a choice of ISPs, while users in other Asia-Pacific countries are served by monopoly ISPs. And then there is the matter of control, with Viet Nam as a good example—there the government has recently introduced even stricter controls over what may be accessed on the Internet, and the general public have been enlisted as observers of Internet use. Internet café owners are now required to report any ‘suspicious’ use of the Internet by their customers (as reported in *Viet Nam News* in June 2004). One could list several other countries where Internet use is heavily proscribed, and where alleged misuse can lead to serious consequences. Whilst NGOs may feel safely outside this net, they may be rather surprised about how much is known of their Internet traffic, and how various government authorities regard them as a result.

ICT development is largely an urban phenomenon. Nearly all Internet users are located in capital cities and a handful of secondary urban areas. In rural Viet Nam, for example the more remote villages often have no electricity, or a very sporadic power supply, and about 40 per cent of the population is without a telephone. In terms of affordability, Pacific islanders as an example typically face connectivity charges that are among the highest in the world. Subscription and usage charges for dial up access to the Internet range from US\$3 to US\$175 per month, with an average of US\$50 (PIFS 2003, 4). On an annual basis this amounts to one quarter to one half of the average annual per capita GDP in many countries and is clearly unaffordable by the majority of people. This scenario differs from region to region.

The price of full-time Internet access via a 64 KBPS leased line varies much more widely than does that of dial-up access, from US\$700 to US\$5000 per month (PIFS 2003, 4). These prices are, on average five times higher and range to as much as 20 times higher, than in APEC developing countries (PIFS 2003, 4). Where aid is involved in *access*, many developing countries have problems with continuation of the project. Projects often lock countries into technology and equipment brands that may hinder development.

Institutional use of the Internet in the Pacific falls behind the ASEAN countries but is more in line with the SAARC countries and is slowly catching up with the rest of the world. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for government

departments to lack access to basic e-mail, and to continue to rely exclusively on fax and phone services. As a rule, telecommunication links are poor (e.g. inadequate bandwidth). Whilst the links may exist, the quality and speed varies throughout the region, and it is these variations that prevent access to and the exchange of information

All of this is exacerbated by an often negative government view of ICT developments, and efforts to hinder these developments. This might include, depending on the country, the deliberate application of outdated regulatory frameworks, or the failure to introduce appropriate legislation guiding ICT developments.

Furthermore, there is a lack of trained personnel with knowledge of ICTs for the organisation and dissemination of information. This also is more applicable to some developing countries in the Asia-Oceania region than others. Viet Nam now has a very energetic and well-trained cadre of computer and ICT professionals, whereas for the Pacific the lack of trained personnel and the migration of such personnel are significant problems—this is equally true of many countries in Southeast and South Asia, such as Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar.

Zwimpfer (1999), commenting on trained personnel, stated that there was a notable change in this arena is the presence of information officers and the like who are responsible for information acquisition, validation and dissemination. Those NGOs fortunate to have donor agency funding are the ones who have been able to include such a position in their structure. This means qualified personnel in information provision which has enhanced the capacity of many NGOs to meet their information and advocacy needs. The awareness of the activities of NGOs has increased hundred fold in developing countries in the last ten years

What we have, then, is a set of pretty effective barriers to more widespread ICT use by NGOs in the region, as well as government departments and the general population. To summarise, these are:

- Urban focus of ICT development
- High cost of access
- Limited bandwidth
- Unreliable/limited electricity supplies
- Lack of trained personnel
- National priorities in other areas of basic need
- Government suspicion of the Internet, and repressive controls

Information Dissemination by NGOs

No one with any experience of NGOs in the Asia Pacific region will doubt that, for the most part, they do an excellent job of disseminating high quality information to their constituents. This can be observed in every field in which NGOs are engaged, from agricultural development to housing, clean water, health care, education and family planning. They recognise the value of information in formats accessible by their constituents and work very hard to provide this information in the form of pamphlets, videos, radio broadcasts, training sessions—whatever is effective in their specific circumstances. In many countries this is the only information available to people, especially in rural and remote areas, and in general it is well received because it has been geared to the literacy and comprehension levels of the local population.

On the other hand, NGOs have an abysmal record when it comes to inter-agency information sharing and dissemination. In most instances with which we are familiar the NGOs working in the same field and same countries never share information beyond the most superficial level. This applies to the largest UN agencies and the smallest single-issue NGOs. In Viet Nam, as an example, there are several agencies involved in development programmes for children. In some of the largest agencies there is an intensely competitive spirit, which mitigates against any sharing of information. This strikes us as unreasonable and a waste of resources; since these are not commercial enterprises, they should not regard their information as restricted or commercially sensitive, but rather should be sharing in order to strengthen what they do through better quality information that results from cooperation. The smaller organisations often do not share information because, in their view, they lack personnel and cannot afford the time involved in collaboration. The returns of sharing, of course, may include more efficient delivery of services, and therefore a saving in both time and money.

What the NGOs must do is reassess their view of information sharing and come to an understanding that by collaborating with one another there can be significant gains in service delivery without loss of autonomy. This is a key priority for them. And one good source of information to help achieve this priority is Fahamu <<http://www.fahamu.org.uk/index.html>>, an NGO dedicated to strengthening the work of not-for-profit and other non-governmental organisations through the use of information and communications technologies. Fahamu produces and publishes CD-ROM-based learning materials especially for this sector, designs and manages websites, runs training courses (including online courses), and provides support for Internet-related work.

The Information Mix in NGOs

What the current picture demonstrates in the Asia-Pacific region is a wide diversity in the use and application of ICT initiatives for sustainable development. Whilst for some, access and use of ICT is integral to achieving their development goals and objectives, there are those NGOs for which this is a purely hypothetical issue. In the middle are those who have access and use ICT and are much in need of training, financial assistance, changes in national and regional telecommunications policies, etc. Regardless of the category into which an NGO falls, due consideration and thought needs to be given to this issue and reflected in plans for ICT development of the countries of the Asia-Pacific Region through a set of guidelines.

In discussions on the development of availability of and access to ICTs for NGO information dissemination in the Asia Oceania region, an appropriate mix of ICT and traditional modes of information dissemination must be undertaken in order to fit both the local situation and the information dissemination needs of the NGOs. Based on what we know of NGOs and on our experience in the region, the following are some possible scenarios:

High Level Capability

In this scenario NGOs linked to international networks and donor agencies. There is regular funding with qualified full-time (paid/volunteer) and/or part-time personnel with specialist skills (e.g. research skills and management knowledge of NGOs). ICTs (e-mail and limited Internet) are an accepted part of daily work for database management of office resources, and an organised information resource collection of print and multi-media. Examples in this category are UN-associated NGOs, DAWN and ECREA. *Goal: 50 per cent print-based, 50 per cent ICT-based*

Medium-level ICT Capability

This category applies to many national and local urban-based NGOs that rely on a combination of local and overseas funding. They might use PCs for office management, and have a working collection of print and multimedia materials. There would be a minimum of one full-time, multi-skilled staff member plus a combination of part-time and voluntary workers with ICT and information experience. *Goal: 70 per cent print-based, 30 per cent ICT-based*

Low Level Capability

Here we are looking at totally rural-based informal NGOs operating with voluntary personnel. They may or may not have access to any ICT, and if so this is likely to be shared—e.g. phone and fax. There is a very limited (file and a few pamphlet boxes of handouts brochures) collection of print and multimedia works, if any. *Goal: 80–100 per cent print-based, 20 per cent ICT-based*

The degree of combination of ICT and print resources will affect the attitude of information seekers and users. The reaction of people to the different forms of information disseminated by NGOs will, amongst other issues, be strongly influenced by cultural factors in their preference for face-to face or remote access communication. For the larger sectors of populations in Asia and Oceania ICTs are both daunting and exciting. In some cultural settings the face-to-face can often be more comforting, but this is dependant on the subject of the issue and context in which the information is being accessed or shared. In certain instances, the face-to-face can be culturally uncomfortable, and remote access is the preferred way of dealing with a sensitive or difficult issue at hand. On the other hand, for cultures where the face-to-face may lead to stigma of a sort—e.g. a man seeking counselling for violent tendencies will appreciate the remote access format of advice using audiotape, film and e-mail. An NGO focussing on domestic violence issues is likely to use a combination of the two—remote access to disseminate information generally, combined with face-to-face counselling for greatest effect.

Conclusion

Non-government organisations are vital components in the development process. Their ability to communicate with those whom they serve, national governments and local, regional and international organisations is heavily dependant on their capacity to inform all stakeholders of issues related to their objectives and purpose. ICTs are a means to facilitate this. However, in acknowledging the different levels of development of ICT capability of NGOs the best opportunities for sustainable development initiatives rest with a combination of ICT- and print-based initiatives. The presence of qualified information providers in NGOs is no longer a luxury but an essential part of their personnel needs. For many NGOs this is a reality, for some a dream that could come true and for many not even something that they can dream about. Our responsibility is to try and bring all NGOs onto a level playing field.

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The NGO Response to HIV/AIDS Information Provision in Zambia

Christine W. Kanyemgo*

Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the HIV/AIDS NGOs information infrastructure in Zambia. It identifies some of the NGOs active in this sector and examines their aims and objectives. It discusses the challenges and opportunities in the creation and dissemination of HIV/AIDS information in Zambia. The thrust of the chapter analyses the NGOs information management practices in the Zambian context taking specific cognisance of the cultural sensitivities and diverse disparities of the society in terms of literacy levels; access to information and communication technologies (ICTs). It highlights the best practices in information management (creation, validation and dissemination) by the NGOs in Zambia with a view to recommend successful strategies into practice and policy. It takes stock of the successes and challenges of the NGO's as a means of information delivery strategies.

The emergence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a major public and social health issue has demanded a multifaceted approach. Governments, NGOs and whole communities in general are using diverse but complimentary strategies in mitigating its effects. Since the onset of the pandemic in Zambia, there has been a resurgence of NGOs specifically dedicated to the fighting and prevention of HIV/AIDS disease. These NGOs have a particular focus in information and advocacy mostly looking at prevention and more recently treatment and access to Antiretroviral (ARVs) treatment. The NGO's have taken the opportunity of their local presence in the communities to work in partnerships with governments and research institutions in the country.

Zambia is country of a population of approximately 11.5 million people. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS/ World Health Organisation (UNAIDS/WHO, 2004) estimates that 16.5% of people aged 15–49 years old are living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Of these 820,000 adults, 57% are women. The 1980, 1990, and 2000 national censuses reported total populations of 5.7 million, 7.8 million and 9.9 million respectively. According to the 2000 Census of Population and Housing, 65 percent of the population lives in rural areas, while 35 percent live in urban areas Forty-five percent of the population is below the

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age of 15, resulting in a median age of 17 years. Hence the country has a young population with an in-built potential to grow for many years to come.

Table 1. Country Profile

Demographic data	Year	Estimate
Female population aged 15–24 (thousands)	2004	1188*
Population aged 15–49 (thousands)	2004	4829*
Annual population growth rate (%)	1992–2002	2.1*
% of urban population	2003	35.8*
Average annual growth rate of urban population	2000–2005	1.93*
Crude birth rate (births per 1,000 pop.)	2004	41.7*
Crude death rate (deaths per 1,000 pop.)		28*
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	2000	750+
Life expectancy at birth (years)	2002	39.7!
Total fertility rate	2002	5.7!
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	2000	111!
Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	2000	185!

Source: *United Nations population division database; + WHO (World Health Report 2004) United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); ! World Health Report 2004, WHO

Zambia generally suffers from low levels of health care provision. This requires significant investment in both infrastructure development and personnel to provide efficient and effective health care services to its people. Health care provision in the country is generally very low as few people can access it. This

is based on a variety of factors such as the non-availability of health personnel nurses or physicians. Where nurses or physicians are available, their numbers are too few to support the population within their catchments area. Statistics shows that for every medical doctor, there is a population of 16,130. In addition, people have to travel vast distances to be able to reach a health facility such as a clinic or hospital. The table below shows the distribution staff by population by Province respectively.

Table 2. Population per Staff Member in each Province – 2000

Province	Population	Pop. per Doctor	Pop. per Registered Nurses	Pop. per Registered Midwives	Pop. per Nurse	Pop. per Midwife	Pop. per Clinical Officer
Luapula	728,898	145,780	22,780	48,590	3,000	60,740	9,110
Eastern	1,477,907	86,940	43,470	134,360	2,980	17,390	12,960
Central	1,042,603	24,820	6,770	24,250	1,700	9,740	6,810
Northern	1,399,666	37,830	17,500	466,560	3,370	29,780	10,140
Western	789,898	34,340	22,570	112,840	3,760	18,810	9,080
Southern	1,532,937	19,650	7,440	46,450	1,950	4,220	7,940
N.Western	606,879	16,400	7,590	121,380	1,940	22,480	7,310
Copperbelt	1,735,802	9,040	3,820	20,910	1,490	6,680	11,500
Lusaka	1,717,176	6,660	3,120	16,840	1,490	7,500	7,010
National*	11,031,040	16,130	6,860	36,530	2,040	8,870	8,870

*Excludes staff of the Special Units, Ministry of Health (MoH, Central Board of Health (CboH), Provincial Medical Offices (PMOS) and Provincial Health Offices (PHOs)

The HIV/AIDS Burden

Today, approximately 16% per cent of the adult population aged between 15–49 is infected with HIV in the country. As shown in Table 3, the peak years of infection among females is 25 to 34 years whilst that for males is 35 years to 39 years. This suggests that for females there is earlier onset of sexual activity as compared to males. It also indicates that young women aged 15 to 19 are more likely to be infected compared to males in the same age group. It is also estimated that for pregnant women attending antenatal clinic 25% percent of them are HIV positive. Of the babies born countrywide, estimates say 39.5% per cent of them are born to HIV positive mothers (GRZ, Ministry of Health: 3).

The HIV/AIDS burden is extremely high and has brought many changes in the social support system. This burden is exerted both on the health care system nationally as well as on the social family networks on an individual level. Nationally, there has been increased demand for health care services both for treatment and long-term care. It has meant that the nation has lost a huge number of human resources that will take long to replace. For example in the education sector HIV/AIDS has had an impact on teacher mortality, teacher productivity, teacher costs, teacher stress and well as on the number of pupils attending school. Kelly argues that in 1998, "the HIV/AIDS deaths were equivalent to the loss of about two-thirds of the annual output of newly trained teachers from all the training institutions in the country. He concludes that in addition to the loss of the teaching personnel HIV/AIDS affects the demand for education because there will be fewer children to educate, fewer children will be able to afford the costs of education and for social economic reasons, more children will drop out of school without completing the normal primary school cycle" (*The impact of HIV/AIDS on Schooling in Zambia*, 1).

On the household levels there have been an increased number of orphans to be looked after. For example, women carry a much greater burden of care created by HIV/AIDS, as well as being more vulnerable for both physiological and social reasons. In addition to the everyday work that they do, they are the ones who are left to care for the terminally ill whether they are in hospital or at home. They also look after the HIV/AIDS orphans.

Table 3. HIV/AIDS Country Profile

Percent of HIV Prevalence among Women (15–49) and Men Aged 15–59, by Background Characteristics, Zambia 2001/2002			
Background Characteristics	Women (15–49)	Men (15–59)	Total
<i>Age Group</i>	<i>%</i>		
15–19	6.6	1.9	4.6
20–24	16.3	4.4	11.4
25–29	25.1	15.0	20.4
30–34	29.4	20.5	25.1
35–39	22.6	22.4	22.5
40–44	17.3	22.5	18.9
45–49	13.6	20.2	16.5
50–54	na	7.3	Na
55–59	na	11.7	na
Residence			
Rural	12.4	8.9	10.8
Urban	26.3	19.2	23.1

Source: 2001-2002 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey, Central Statistics (CSO), CBoH, ORC Macro, 2003

In the Health Sector, the impact of HIV/AIDS has been both on the health care providers and health care consumers. It has led to a decline in labour productivity, which includes loss of skilled labour, loss of experienced staff due to illness, and loss of man-hours due to continually unwell staff. The loss of experienced staff has a big negative effect on the delivery of quality health care because training new medical personnel too expensive and the training takes too long.

Table 4. Adults and Children Living with HIV/AIDS

Estimated number of adults and children living with HIV/AIDS, end of 2003		
These estimates include all people with HIV infection, whether or not they have developed symptoms of AIDS, alive at the end of 2003:		
Adults and children	920,000	
Adults (15–49)	830,000	Adult rate (%) 16.5
Women (15–49)	470,000	
Children (0–15)	85,000	
Estimated number of deaths due to AIDS		
Estimated number of adults and children who died of AIDS during 2003:		
Deaths in 2003	89,000	
Estimated number of orphans		
Estimated number of children who have lost their mother or father or both parents to AIDS and who were alive and under age 17 at the end of 2003:		
Current living orphans	630,000	

Source: WHO/UNAIDS epidemiological fact sheets on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2004.

Overview of the HIV/AIDS NGOs information infrastructure in Zambia

Since the onset of the pandemic, there has been a resurgence of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) specifically dedicated to HIV/AIDS issues. These NGOs have a particular focus in information and advocacy mostly looking at prevention and more recently treatment and access to Anti-Retrovirals (ARVs) treatment. The NGO's have taken the opportunity of their local presence in the communities and work in partnerships with governments and research institutions.

The emergence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a major public and social health issue has demanded a multifaceted approach to solving the problem. Government, NGOs and the community are using diverse but complimentary strategies in mitigating its effects. The NGO's themselves are just as diverse as the complexity of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. There are NGO's that specifically

focus on: general health issues, HIV/AIDs, other focus on children and the youth; disability, gender and workplace programmes. Others focus on food and nutrition, human rights and the law, information and media services, testing, treatment and positive living.

Examples of NGOs active in this sector

Afya Mzuri

Afya Mzuri aims to reduce HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevalence in the workplace, and to mitigate the socio-economic and cultural impact of HIV on employers, employees and their families. In the course of six years, it has developed programmes in over 35 workplaces spread over the country. The resource that was established since the inception of the organisation provides access to HIV/AIDS in support of the Afya Mzuri workplace prevention and wellness programmes. The demand for HIV/AIDs information in the workplace has steadily increased, and it has since opened resource centres in addition to the main one in Lusaka; in Choma in the Southern Province and Kitwe in the Copperbelt Province.

Audience

The target audience for the Afya Mzuri resource centre are: People living with HIV; Health workers; Students / researchers; Community groups; Employers, employees and their families; and members of the general public.

Type of Materials

The range of the information materials collected by the resource is diverse. It includes among others: books, reports, leaflets / brochures, posters, slide shows, electronic materials, training materials, videos, male and female condom models. The diversity in the type of information materials collected is a manifestation of the diversity of the resource centres target audience.

Subject Coverage

The subject coverage of the resource centre includes among others the following; HIV/AIDS, Sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis (TB), malaria, sexual and reproductive health, psycho-social and lay counselling, stigma and discrimination treatment e.g. anti-retrovirals (ARVS) drugs, nutrition and positive living, health services, human and legal rights, gender, culture, orphans

and vulnerable children, community development issues, workplace policy and guidelines, statistical information, research, project planning and management. These are aspects that have to do with HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

Zambia National Aids Network (ZNAN)

ZNAN is an umbrella organisation that aims to promote and facilitate liaison and coordination among HIV/AIDS service organisations and provide assistance in strengthening member organisations' capacities to respond to the challenges of HIV/AIDS in Zambia. ZNAN does this in collaboration with government and other cooperating partners.

Target Audience

People living with HIV, youth / children, health workers' students / researchers' community groups, faith-based groups, employers, employees and their families and members of the general public

Types of material

Books, reports, leaflets / brochures, posters, electronic materials, training materials and videos.

Subject Coverage

HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, malaria, sexual and reproductive health, psycho-social and lay counselling, stigma and discrimination, ARV treatment, nutrition and positive living, health services, human and legal rights, gender, culture, orphans and vulnerable children, community development issues and workplace policy and guidelines

Zambia Association for Research and Development (ZARD)

Zambia Association for Research and Development is a non-governmental organisation whose mission is to advance gender development and the empowerment of women and girls in Zambia through participatory action-oriented and gender sensitive research, advocacy, training, networking, publishing and information dissemination. It was founded in 1984, ZARD also does training in research methodologies, gender analysis, proposal writing and documentation and research management.

Target Audience

People living with HIV, youth / children, health workers, students / researchers, community groups, faith-based groups, employers, employees and their families, women and girls, policy makers, women's organisations and members of the general public.

Types of material

Books, reports, leaflets / brochures, posters, electronic materials, training materials, videos and journals.

Subject Coverage

HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, sexual and reproductive health, human and legal rights, gender, orphans and vulnerable children, community development issues, workplace policy and guidelines, statistical information, research, project planning and management

Challenges of HIV/AIDS Information Provision in Zambia

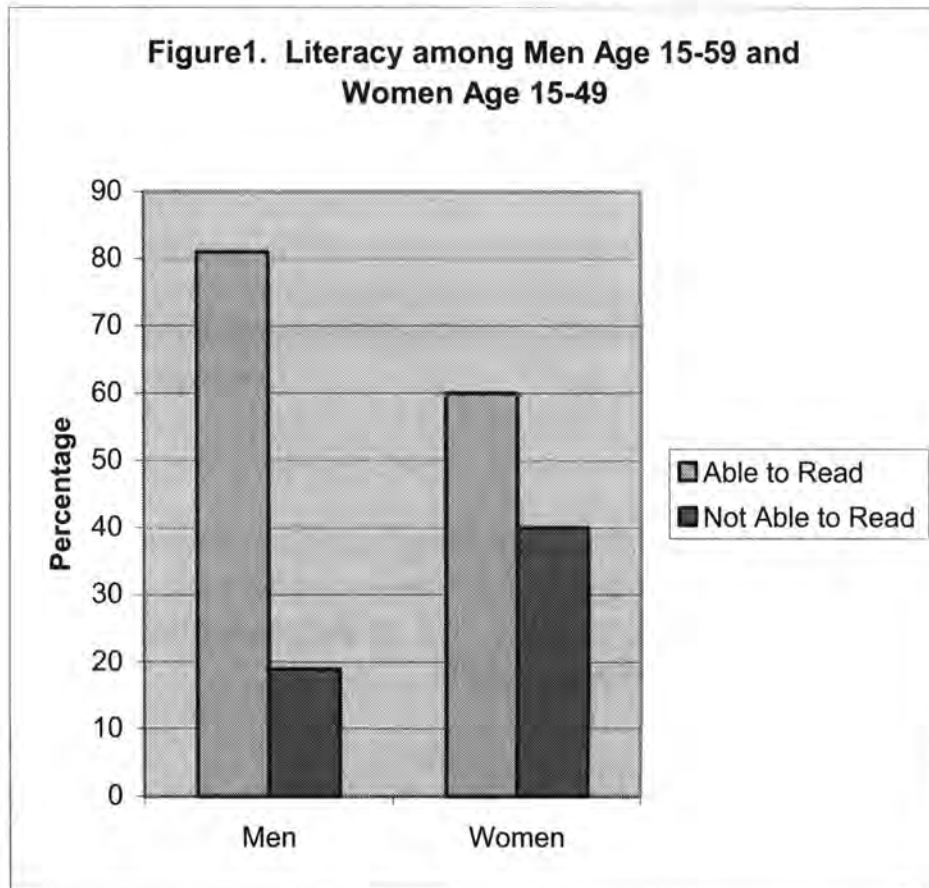
Lack of Trained Professionals

NGO libraries or resources largely suffer from lack of qualified professionals. In of the resource centres, responsibility of managing the resource centre is often left to people with low skills or qualifications, most often people with clerical skills. In other instances, the people in charge of administration, such as personal assistants or secretaries, are left to run the resource centres. In places where they have trained, usually the organisation can only afford to have one member of staff.

Low Appreciation of Information by Management

In NGO's where management places low value on information provision, the recognition of the role resource centres play in complimenting the mission of the parent organisation is often not appreciated. In such instances, planning for information provision is usually done in a piece-meal fashion as opposed to it being a long-term strategic vision of the organisation. This is usually reflected in the non-existence of a qualified library professional or no budget is reserved for library materials.

Literacy Levels



Although literacy levels seem to be improving in the country as shown the figure below there is still a significant number of both male and females that cannot read and write. This figure shows that about 40% of the female population can not read and write. In such a situation, NGOs have to come up with innovative ways of reaching this particular constituency. Coupled with finding innovative ways of reaching the women who cannot read are issues of devising content and formats that are both culturally relevant and also available in an appropriate format.

Inadequate Financial Resources

NGO's in Zambia lack financial independence. There are a very few NGOs that are self financing without resorting to donor assistance be it from the local environment such as those programmes that are funded the government or from outside. Most NGOs base their operations on funding from various multilateral funding agencies. This means that programmes and activities are really dependent on the funding cycle of the funding organisation. Once a particular organisa-

tion ceases to fund a programme or activity then, the NGO is either forced to look for alternative funding or cease the programme. In other instances, NGOs tailor their programmes on what the funding organisation is interested in supporting. As a result there is a mismatch between what the funding agencies is interested in supporting and what the community needs are.

Poor Communication Infrastructure

The Zambian communication infrastructure is virtually undeveloped. Tele-density in Zambia, similar to other countries, is higher than average in urban areas. In four major cities, tele-density reaches 2.01 per 100 persons whereas in rural areas it is estimated at 0.09 per 100 (i.e. 9 telephone for every 10,000 people). Household penetration, on average, is approximately 5.63% while the average annual growth rate in teledensity of 3.7% has barely kept up with the population growth rate of 3%, (Kakubo, 2000).

Internet penetration is also slowly increasing. However it has been beset by the high connection costs both wireless connection as well as huge telephone bills to those connected by dial up. Despite these problems, there is an increasing environment where Internet connection both in urban and rural areas. In a study to “on Improving access to Health care workers in Zambia, Hoppenbrouwer and Kanyengo (2001) found that the biggest challenge for increasing e-mail connectivity, however, does not seem to lie in technical or communication constraints, but in a lack of sensitisation on the advantages of e-mail. Often, staff will highlight the “high cost” of e-mail, without seeing the potential of actually cutting down on telephone bills.

Seizing the Opportunity for HIV/AIDS Provision

Tailoring Information Services to the Needs of Users

The importance of tailoring HIV/AIDS information to the needs of users cannot be overemphasized. HIV/AIDS is a diverse and complex situation that needs careful planning when designing information services for the community. For instance since the inception of the government programme of ARV provision, NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS need to include components of treatment as people who have access to ARV treatment might require information on side-effects rather than more general information. Other people might be more interested in prevention strategies or perhaps nutrition aspects in people that are on treatment.

Expansion of Services

The services provided have included both the traditional library services such as the borrowing and lending services as well as more innovative ones. The innovative and new services that are really contextually relevant to the needs of the communities. This calls for the involvement of the local communities in the planning of the range of the information that libraries deliver. For example, Afya Mzuri is one of the few NGOs that have a library committee that gives advice to the Resource Centre. Other libraries hold field days where they invite members of the community to come and interact with the employees and therefore exchange ideas.

Promotion of Linkages

Libraries and Resource Centres in Zambia operate in a very resource poor environment. This makes the need for forging partnerships and linkages of paramount importance. This arises out of the need to share resources and therefore be able to maximise on the few information resources that the NGOs have and able to mobilise from various sources. In this instance the HIV/AIDS Resource Centres have come up with an organisation called the Zambia Association for HIV/AIDS Resource Centres (ZARCH) whose main aim is to maximise partnerships and collaboration in sharing of HIV/AIDS information.

Marketing of Information Services

Continuous marketing of HIV/AIDS information is cardinal. The local community needs to be periodically made aware of the different resources at their local library. The Zambia Association for Research and Development holds information fares to let the community know what kind of information services they can access from their institution. This is done in different ways; such as exhibition at different fora such as the Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show that is held annually. In other instances, the organisation holds open days where the local community is invited to come and spend an afternoon with the staff of ZARD so they can share and exchange information. This serves a dual purpose of both soliciting for information needs as well as informing the community of the various programmes being undertaken by the organisation.

Quality of Information Services

Use of information service is largely dependent on both the quality of the information resources the users are able to access and also on the quality of the

service on delivering that information. The HIV/AIDS information resources that the resource centres collect must be of high quality in the sense that it is 'tried and tested' scientifically. See table 5 for a compilation of best practices among the identified NGOs.

Its relevance to the needs of the community must not be questionable. In this regard all efforts must be made to repackage certain information and translate it into the local language. For instance Afya Mzuri translates its posters and leaflets into some of the local languages.

The services must be given in a timely manner so that the information provided is current.

Table 5. Best Practices in NGO HIV/AIDS Information Provision

NGO	Activity
<p>Afya Mzuri</p>	<p>Electronic Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daily eBulletin of HIV/AIDS news ▪ Internet access for research ▪ CD-ROMs collection ▪ E-resource collection
	<p>Capacity Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Video facilitation skills ▪ Resource centre development and management ▪ Peer education and focal person training
	<p>Information, Education and Communication Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Posters and leaflets from around Zambia ▪ Design and development of materials
	<p>Seminar Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HIV/AIDS awareness sessions
	<p>Research Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books and reports for reference ▪ Photocopying, printing, binding, lamination services ▪ Reading room and video viewing facilities ▪ Searchable databases of all materials ▪ Searchable contact database for HIV/AIDS organizations in Zambia ▪ Newsletters and journals

NGO	Activity
Zambia Association for Research and Development	Electronic Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computerized women's resource centre ▪ Database/directory of members ▪ Internet access
	Capacity Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk-top publishing, publishing/editorial advices ▪ Design and production
	Information, Education and Communication Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Posters and leaflets from around Zambia ▪ Design and development of materials
	Seminar Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training courses in research methodologies ▪ Computer appreciation skills
	Research Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books and reports for reference ▪ Photocopying and reading room
Zambia National Aids Network (ZNAV)	Electronic Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Database of people living with HIV/AIDS ▪ Private sector organizations on HIV/AIDS ▪ Digital publications produced by the organisation such as manuals, reports etc
	Capacity Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training of member organizations
	Information, Education and Communication Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Production of leaflets and posters

Afya Mzuri is demonstrating how a combination of various information delivery strategies, long-term information policy development and planning supported by the good technical expertise can improve and change the range of information services that are delivered by the resource centre. It also has employed high skilled personnel to devise and deliver the information services.

Zambia Association for Research and Development has established itself as one of the foremost organisations that deliver information on gender and development in Zambia. In order to meet the need of its members and the general

public, it has employed a comprehensive approach of both being producers of knowledge, keeper of the knowledge as well as disseminators of the knowledge.

Zambia National Aids Network has approached the issue of information delivery with a concentration of electronic delivery of information aids to their membership.

Conclusion

Lessons learned of over the past few years are to be taken as best practices. Libraries also need to collaborate with more organisations that deal with the subject matter of HIV/AIDS rather than continue to focus on partnerships with other information focused organizations. There are enough organisations currently involved in HIV/AIDS work in Zambia that collaboration to share resources and information would yield significant cost savings. Effective and efficient information services will require close collaboration and coordination with other key stakeholders, in order to be able to build on and maximise each institution's comparative advantage. Nationally there is need for concerted efforts by libraries to form consortiums so they can maximise on their available resources to help in the prevention and mitigation of HIV/AIDS in their communities. This will entail analysis of each library's strengths to ensure there is little duplication of services especially for those in the same locality who are targeting the same audience, for instance information services to the youth.

The role of government libraries and institution in HIV/AIDS information provision is to work in partnership and collaboration with the NGOs in assisting them with accessing government information. This is information that pertains to government policies and how to translate those policies at the local level. By articulating and translating government policy, the NGOs will be in tandem with the overall goals on the fight of HIV/AIDS in the country. Academic and research libraries complement the work of NGOs by providing a link between research and practice. Internationally, there is need to increase the pool of organisation with funding to library and information services especially for those developing countries that are struggling to meet their mandates because of financial difficulties. Information is a resource that needs to be shared by all stakeholders; therefore working in collaboration and partnerships between NGOs, government, and research institutions is the key to a successful fight against HIV/AIDS.

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Information System for NGO Libraries in Pakistan: A Proposed Model for Organizing the Grey Literature

Syed Attaullah Shah
and
Humera Ilhaq*

Introduction

In recent years, especially in developed countries, various systems have been created to advance the management and organization of grey literature. Such systems use the latest communications technology and electronic and digital resources, and have developed huge networking systems like SIGLE (System for Information on Grey Literature) and NTIS (National Technical Information Service) to distribute and manage grey literature. Because of the scarcity of a global standardized organization system for grey literature and often limited access to computer technology, however, awareness of existence and access to grey literature is still seriously lacking, particularly in developing countries. Based on a survey of selected Pakistani NGOs from various sectors, this study proposes a new model. This paper explains the current usage patterns of grey literature in Pakistani organizations, then assesses their needs and resources for grey literature, and finally recommends a new, standardized model for organizing grey literature in the developing world.

NGOs in Pakistan

NGOs are facing new challenges in developing countries due to their increasing numbers, sizes, and interventions. NGOs in Pakistan, for example, are involved in social development and have continually learned from the experiences of the world in the field of crises, disasters, and other events management. These NGOs are playing a vital role in managing, creating, and disseminating information, ideas, and solutions for rehabilitation and social development. They serve as an active partner of the Government and International agencies. For the production and dissemination of current information, grey literature is the most suitable, efficient, and cost effective medium for both NGOs and Community Based Organization's (CBOs). Four major factors are involved in the changing usage of grey material by NGOs: (1) Environmental, political, and economic

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changes in the world; (2) the increase in the number of NGOs; (3) increased funding for NGOs; and (4) technology influences. These are the driving forces in the changes and development of literature and information systems.

As technology, especially computer technology, has been introduced to and commonly used by NGOs in Pakistan, more grey literature is being prepared and produced than ever before. Individual authors of grey literature and their organizations have become, essentially, their own publishers. They produce different types and forms of literature and disseminate it by new and efficient methods.

A number of NGOs in Pakistan are working for advocacy, policy issues, social welfare, community developments, rehabilitation, and capacity building while others provide basic services in education, health, water, sanitation, and other fields of social and community based development. Still other NGOs play an important role in increasing awareness of population and environment issues, and human, legal, women and children rights. Combined, these NGOs also provide a significant source for employment. The NGOs in Pakistan are small to medium sized and focus mostly on social welfare work.

According to an Asia Development Bank study, "there are less than 100 effective NGOs [in Pakistan] but there are thousands of generally weak CBOs that are working." Many small NGOs and CBOs look towards the government and other agencies for funding, direction, and mentorship. The majority of mid-level NGOs view the government and other agencies as collaborators and facilitators. These small to mid-sized NGOs are really needy and deserve for more finance, education, organization, planning, and management. The NGOs involved in community-based projects also need to improve linkages, unification and coverage of their work by documentation, proper literature organization, and a good dissemination mechanism.

Survey of Pakistani NGOs

Two different questionnaires, one for the NGO management or publication department and the other for the library in-charge, were prepared. Eight mid-level NGOs and twelve small NGOs and CBOs were selected for the survey.

We conducted a survey of selected (A) NGOs' Management and of the (B) Library In-Charges to determine the following:

(A) Creation of Grey Literature from the NGO's Perspective:

1. Why does your organization produce grey literature (benefits)?
2. Who uses your grey literature?
3. How do you produce your grey literature (procedure)?
4. What types of grey literature do you create/publish?
5. How do you disseminate the literature?

(B) Organization, Preservation, and Dissemination of Grey Literature:

1. Is the Librarian qualified or some non-professional is looking after the library?
2. Who uses the library? How many daily library users?
3. What types and approximately how much grey literature are available in the library?
4. How do you keep and organize the printed and electronic grey material? (Information about the grey material on website is not required)
 - a. Do you use any standard literature classification and cataloguing schemes? Or do you use an in-house scheme?
 - b. How do you disseminate grey literature or bibliographic information about the grey literature?
 - c. Do you feel need of an appropriate and simple system to organize and disseminate grey literature for your library?

Creation of Grey Literature

Librarians—especially those in developing countries with limited budgets, technology, and expertise—have always faced problems organizing and disseminating grey literature. NGOs in developed locations create their literature electronically, for example, on websites, CDs, floppy disks, and audio and video cassettes. Very few NGOs in Pakistan have developed websites and therefore cannot upload catalogues and bibliographies of their literature; the bulk of grey literature is in printed form. Keeping in mind the limits of internet access in Pakistan, information available on the internet will not be part of our proposed system. The proposed system will organize only literature which has physical format including print, CD-ROM, DVD, audio and video cassette, and floppy disk, etc.

Most of the NGOs have similar motivations for creating grey material. According to the survey results, reports are the primary means to highlight NGO performance and progress, and are prepared mainly for government and funding agencies. The reports are also major instruments for promoting their projects and plans in the NGO world. These are also helpful for the researchers and professional workers who do similar chores for transmission of knowledge. The training material for health and other social sector workers and for people to create awareness regarding any current health, environment, disastrous and other developmental issues and their solutions is generated by NGOs. Some NGOs also use electronic media for example CDs, Floppies Audio and Video Cassettes, Internet etc... For demonstration they also use charts, transparencies, and electronic slide show etc... during training programs. The other type of grey literature describes the mission, operation, research plan, programs and projects,

institutional repository, mechanism and system of the organization, and to share their knowledge and experiences.

Many NGOs, however, do not publish their reports in journals or books because it is too expensive or because they prefer to make information immediately public rather than to wait through the publication process. (Another factor: many NGOs are not equipped with a skilled workforce to deal with the literature according to the appropriate standards of a recognized journal or book publisher.) Indeed, one of the main objectives of NGOs is to disseminate information quickly, effectively, and efficiently. To submit literature for peer-review and publication, to a great extent, undermines these goals. NGOs create and produce, often mid-project and before completion, pre-refereed versions of grey literature for rapid dissemination. After achieving a particular target, some NGOs will compile all the relevant literature as a comprehensive report or other document. There are, however, some affluent NGOs that value their reputation and consider it beneficial to publish on both commercial and non-commercial bases.

In Pakistan, a larger number of NGOs and CBOs have limited finance, skill, technology, and human resources. As a result, these groups create their literature in-house. The few NGOs that have computers use them to generate information, photocopy printouts, and to disseminate pre-published material. Most NGOs, however, do not have computers and use typewriters. Many NGOs and CBOs in rural areas of Pakistan prepare hand written documents in English, Urdu (the national language of Pakistan), and other local languages. Sometimes they distribute their literature as micro-photocopies on oversized paper. Regardless of the production method, these are primary documents written by people who live with and have the same frame of mind as the local population. Such documents are therefore significant and quite useful in understanding the actual state of human and social development, humanitarian needs, problems, and many other issues facing rural and urban areas in a developing country such as Pakistan.

Dissemination of Documents

In general, NGOs have mailing lists of government departments, funding agencies, sister organizations, other NGOs, CBOs, and individuals. They also provide their literature, as requested, to other NGOs and CBOs, researchers, students, individuals who are involved in relevant projects, reporters, and sometimes business organizations. NGOs distribute and disseminate documents in full or in part and also distribute bibliographical information and document lists. NGOs with more technology send information via e-mail and upload the information to their websites. Computer technology is sparse in Pakistan and documents are most commonly circulated through the postal service. Many

NGOs will have literature on hand for individuals to collect during a visit. Some actively deliver their literature to locations in the city and to nearby areas. They also disseminate the catalog and list of their literature with other documents or separately. Some affluent NGOs are seeking new collaborative associations and maintaining partners' directories and have also developed computerized and manual networks among the similar NGOs, other organizations, and individuals. Some NGOs advertise their documents and sell them through the book vendors. NGOs that have their own libraries will keep multiple copies of their documents on the shelf for library users.

Almost all mid-level NGOs have their small libraries in some form or shape. Some have a separate library with qualified librarian(s) while others keep a publication collection with another department's room (full room or portion of a room) with non-qualified librarian. Normally these libraries are supervised by a full time or part time staff member of another department of the organization. In some cases the librarians must take a three-month certificate course in Library Science. In others, the staff already has some level of training in Library Science. Whereas some support NGOs provide resources and training for capacity building to intermediary NGOs, and also provide, technical help to the libraries and librarians.

Libraries

Estimating the amount of available grey literature in a given library is very complicated. Most librarians would hardly be able to approximate the amount of grey literature in their collections. The difficulty is in recording and tracking many documents of very few pages on continuous bases.

Most of the small NGO and CBO libraries, especially in rural areas, are working without a standard classification and cataloging scheme. Furthermore, they do not use computers in the library. Some librarians record their documents in a register, and then use the same register to issue and return the document. Some mid-level NGOs maintain their libraries in a professional manner with the help of a professional librarian, library systems, and computer technology. CDS/ISIS (a type of library software) is popular in NGOs' libraries in Pakistan. Other locally developed library software is also being used in NGO libraries. Some NGOs are using spreadsheets or Access database to record and retrieve the library data including grey literature.

More organized and better maintained libraries use library software mostly for book or journals, not grey literature. There is no proper system in NGO libraries to organize grey literature. According to the survey of NGO libraries, most of the librarians are helpless against the organization of grey literature. In libraries where some sort of classification scheme is being used for books, the

grey literature is being organized in a strange manner. If the document looks like a book in size and shape then the library would treat it as one; it would issue a call number and keep it with the books.

There were some commonly used methods to keep and organized the grey literature found in the result of survey:

1. The grey literature was treated like a book and shelved with books according to subject.
2. The grey literature was kept in horizontal file boxes (like a briefcase) with or without a cover, subject, theme wise, or in alphabetical order.
3. They used vertical boxes to order grey literature by subject, theme, or in alphabetical order. They pasted alphabetical tags or numbers on both types of boxes. In some libraries the boxes were kept without any tags.
4. The bulky literature which can stand on the shelves, they kept them separately subject wise, or serial wise and the other (slim or not so sturdy) literature was stood on the shelves with the help of book supporters (by self allotted serial numbers or according to the broad number of DDC).
5. In some libraries we found grey literature (especially the newsletters) on display shelves in alphabetical order by the title or by organization.
6. In some libraries they tried to sort the literature according to its type and format.
7. Most popular system was found where they piled the literature in a corner without any proper storage and no proper procedure was followed to organize them as well. Most of the libraries, especially the smaller libraries, simply made piles of grey literature on shelves, tables, or floor. In most cases, important material was kept separately at conveniently accessible place.
8. A large amount of the literature was found in the offices of Heads of the NGOs, or in the rooms of other senior officers. Normally, when they get the material they make piles on their tables and in other places of the room instead of sending it to the library. In response to the question, Why don't you send the material to the library?, one respondent answered, "We seniors share these materials amongst us." They believe it more difficult to search out the literature in the library because of the lack of a proper system. They did not care that the literature would be out of reach of other library users.

Some libraries are using broad classification Scheme of DDC. They labeled boxes and documents with broad subject numbers, for example, 330 for Economics. Some libraries used in-house classification schemes. They assigned alphabets, numbers, or both to a subject or to an organization/NGO and labeled them on the boxes. Most of the librarians were unable to understand all types of grey literature. They were unable to identify and sort out the grey literature separately according to its type, format, and subject.

The Proposed Grey Material Management System will make it easy for low-skill library staff to identify and sort the grey material.

Due to lack of proper scheme and proper management, Pakistani NGO librarians are having little success with grey literature. They are struggling with proper organization, retrieval, and dissemination. Exacerbating the mismanagement of grey literature is the scarcity of skilled library workforce. For the above mentioned reasons, most of the important literature is hidden and out of the general users' reach.

We asked librarians, library in-charges, or any senior NGO officer, "Is there any need of a proper and simple system to manage the grey literature, by which you can organize the literature and could retrieve and disseminate it professionally and efficiently?" Most of them were excited and wanted to know about the system. Some NGOs asked if they would be able to run the system without any qualified librarian. Some asked when do we get such a system and how much would it cost?

Proposed System to Organize the Grey Literature

Most classification schemes are based on subjects. In the culture of Pakistani NGOs, where the scarcity of the expert librarians has become a serious issue, few could understand all the subjects of NGO-related literature and classify them, which is why the subject classification scheme is not more suitable for grey literature. The grey literature consists of many types and formats of material, and these formats, from organization and searching point of view, themselves have their own identification and importance. Usually the users of grey literature come to the library for a particular document rather than to browse. A document may have more than one subject and sub-heading, and reports normally cover many projects and themes of the organization. So it is not an easy task to determine the subject simply by looking at the document, nor is it easy to categorize each document under a single, proper subject. (It is, however, far more simple and easy to categorize documents by format.) It is also difficult to assign a proper classification number for searching purposes for a large number of documents by their subjects which would be very complicated for less com-

petent librarians. This is problematic because subjects and subject headings remain very important from user's perspective.

According to our indigenous perspective and culture and because of problems in managing the grey literature due to variety in work nature of NGOs in Pakistan, there is an imperative need for a new and innovative Literature Management and Classification system for the easy access and availability of the grey literature. To address the problems faced by professional and non-professional librarians in managing the grey literature, we have devised a grey literature management system; a separate classification scheme that simplifies locating, facilitates maintenance and retrieval of the literature.

Keeping in view the importance of subject of a document, we propose that the first document be sorted and assigned a broad Subject Heading, then classified according to the literature type and format. To make searching simple and efficient, the important keywords of the document will be recorded with the citation record, which allows for easy search and retrieval. In our proposed system, after assigning a broad subject heading, the literature should be classified according to its format.

Some Major Subjects of NGOs in Pakistan

According to our proposed scheme, the literature will be classified according to major Subject Heading. In Pakistan the majority of NGOs deal with limited number of subjects. A list of commonly used subject areas with their abbreviations is given below. These abbreviations are very simple based on the sound of full name of subject. The Librarians who need to change the abbreviations of the subjects heading or want to add some more subjects in this list can change and add according to the requirements. By sorting the literature according to subject areas, the vertical boxes of one subject can be kept together at one place.

Subject of NGOs

CBOs	CBO
Child Abuse & Child Labor	Child
Civil Society	Civil
Community Developments	Com
Micro Credits	Credit
Economics	Econ

Information System for NGO Libraries in Pakistan

Education & Training	Edu
Environment	Env
Public & Community Health	Health
Human Rights	Human
NGO Management & Capacity Building	NGO
Rehabilitation	Rehab
Rural Development	Rural
Social Developments	Social
Urban Development	Urban
Water & Sanitation	Water
Women Issues	Women

After labeling by subject heading (see table above), the material will be sorted and categorized according to its format. For instance, “R” for Reports “R-Anl” for Annual Reports, “P” for papers, “CON” for Conference and “P-CON” for conference papers. Classification should be chronologically ordered. For example, if a library receives three Annual Reports from different organizations, the 1st Annual Report will be classified and treated as No. 1, the annual report received after that should be allotted No. 2, and so on (the label would read: R-Anl-1, R-Anl-2, R-Anl-3, etc.). The year of publication should also be the part of the Call Number that is written under the call number. After including the subject abbreviation the complete call number will be as follows:

1st Line: Subject Heading.

2nd Line: Format and number.

3rd Line: Publication year.

The example below uses three Annual Reports from different environmental organizations received in 2005.

Call Numbers

Env R-Anl-1 2005

Env R-Anl-2 2005

Env R-Anl-3 2005

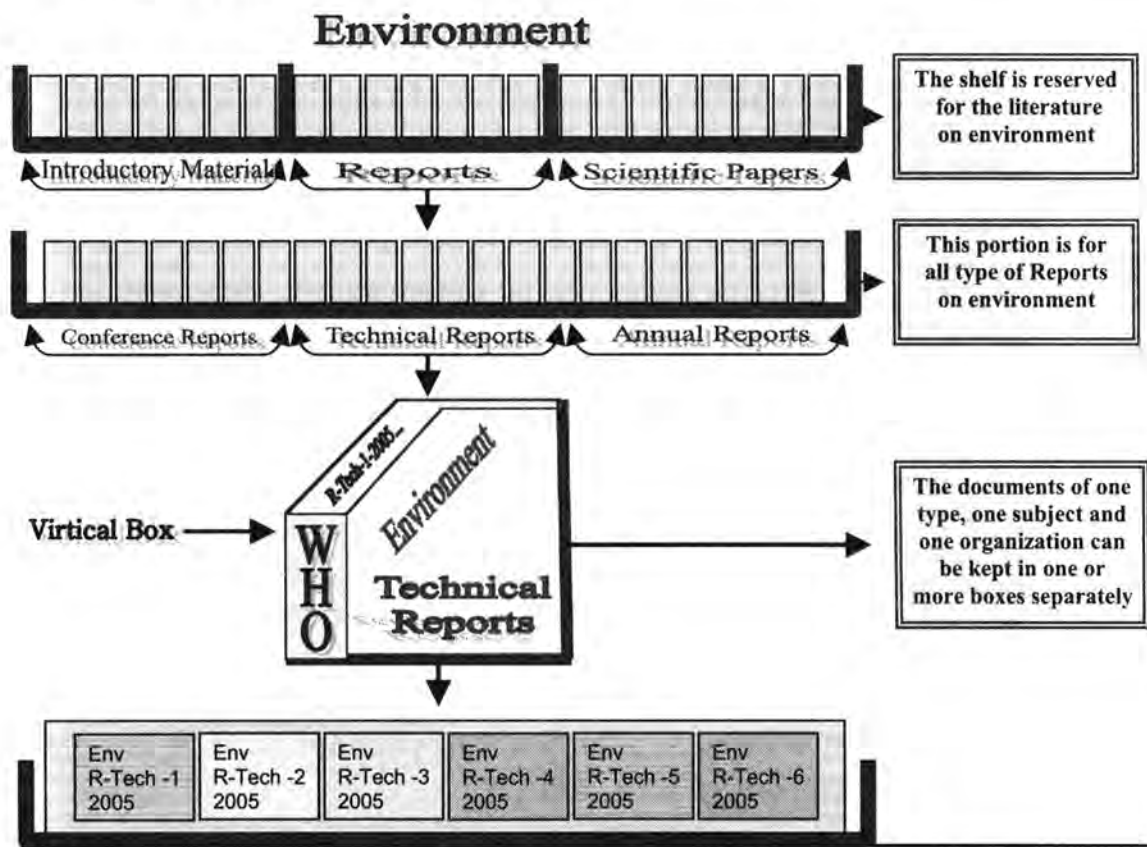
Classification Scheme for Non-Book Printed Material			
LITERATURE TYPE	LOCATION	LITERATURE TYPE	LOCATION
ABSTRACT		MANUSCRIPTS	MNS
Papers	AB-P		
Research Papers	AB-RES	PHOTOGRAPHS/ IMAGES	PHT
Technical Papers	AB-TECH		
		POSTERS	POS
ATLASES/MAPS	ATLS		
		PRESENTATIONS/ TRANSPARENCIES	PRT
BIOGRAPHIES	BIOG		
		PROCEEDINGS/ PAPERS/PROG.	
BIBLIOGRAPHIES	BIB	Conferences	P-CON
		Workshops	P-WKS
CURRICULUM/ SYLLABUS	CLM	Seminars	P-SEM
		Symposiums	P-SYM
DIRECTORIES/ DICTIONARIES	DIR	Research	P-RES
		Collective Work	P-CW
GUIDES/TUTORIALS/ UPDATES	GTU		
		REPORTS	R
HANDBOOKS	HBK	Annual Reports	R- ANL
		Conference Reports	R- CON
INTERVIEWS	INTW	Research Reports	R-RES
		Seminar Reports	R-SEM
INTRODUCTORY MATERIALS		Symposium Reports	R-SYM
Booklets	BKLT	Technical Reports	R-TECH
Brochures	BROC	Project Reports	R-PROJ
Flyers	FLY	Program Reports	R-PROG
Leaflets	LFT	General Reports	R-GEN
Pamphlets	PMP		
Prospectus	PROS	REVIEWS	REW
		SURVEYS & STATISTICS	SS
LECTURES/NOTES	LNT	TRAINING MANUAL	TM
LOOSE MATERIALS	LM	YEAR BOOK	YB
MANUALS	MNL		

Physical Location/Arrangement

1. Portions in the shelves will be assigned and reserved according to prescribed subjects in alphabetical order for placing in vertical boxes. For example, all literature on public health will be grouped together; literature on environment will be at another; etc. In this manner, all other literature can be kept according to the subject.
2. Within a given subject, boxes will be sub-organized, alphabetically, according to the literature format. Conference reports and technical papers, for instance, on a particular subject will be grouped separately under that subject heading, with conference reports preceding technical papers.
3. After the classification of literature. The literature will automatically be sorted according to its format and one type of literature should be kept separately in a logical order. For example, by this method all the conference reports will be kept together and arranged according to the call number and the year. The earliest year's report will be placed first and after completion of one year, the next/following year will start. Therefore, all the Conference Reports of 2005 will be placed together at one place, and will follow reports of 2004, 2003, etc.
4. If a reasonable number of any one type of document of an organization/publisher is available in the library, that organization's documents can be placed in a separate box. For example, all the technical papers of one organization can be kept in a separate box.
5. Oversized and thick literature can be placed outside the vertical boxes beside them.
6. This is a multi-approach literature access scheme. The user can search the literature by different approaches, i.e., by organization, call number, format of literature, and by major subject headings. The user can also retrieve the required document without taking help of computer search or catalogue cards.

Brief summary of the document organization scheme: First, a separate portion in the shelves will be allotted to major subjects. Within each subject each type (format) of literature will be placed separately. In each type of literature, the arrangement of the documents will be according to the call number. If the number of one type of document of one organization has increased then a separate box can be allocated for that.

Shelving Arrangement Chart



Why Vertical Boxes:

Unlike books, grey literature is normally thin and difficult to stand on the shelves and the labeling of tag of call number on its spine and read it at searching time is also a big problem.

There are certain advantages in using the vertical boxes:

1. Proper Storage: Vertical boxes are most suitable to keep documents in upright position.
2. Facilitates organization; all documents of one type can be kept together.
3. Identification: Tags with call numbers, organization, format of literature, and subject heading can be placed on the spine of the vertical box.
4. Protection and Transport: Users may take out one or more boxes of one type of required literature from the shelf and read it at a different location such as a reading room.
5. Usage and Neatness: Vertical boxes are easy to handle and re-shelve and also give a neat look because of similarity in shape, size, and color.

Accession Register

Ours is like all other accession registers used for library books. Only column of “Material Type” will be added. It is up to the user’s requirements, if the user feels the need of more columns they can be added. Any unnecessary columns can be deleted as well from the following table.

Entry Date	Acc. No.	Author	Title	Publisher/ Organization	Publication Year	Publication Place	Illustrations	Material Type	Call No.	Remarks
------------	----------	--------	-------	-------------------------	------------------	-------------------	---------------	---------------	----------	---------

Register for Call Numbers

This is an important register. We assign call numbers according to the register’s sequence and mention its accession number before each call number. A separate page will be allotted for each type or format of the literature, i.e., one separate page for Annual Reports, another for Technical Reports, and so on. Each page will consist of only two columns. The first column will be for the call numbers, the second for accession numbers. The first document will be allotted first call number and first accession number. The second document of the same format will be assigned the next call number. The accession number may be jumped a few numbers ahead, because other documents may be added between call numbers 1 and 2.

For example, first annual report received in 2005, we allotted it the call number R-Anl-1-2005 and its accession number was 100. Before receiving the second annual report, the library has entered ten other documents the accession register and allotted up to 110 numbers and call numbers accordingly. Now we will enter the second annual report in the accession register. Then we will have to assign it the accession number 111 and the call number will be R-Anl-2-2005. It means that the increase of numbers in call numbers will be the one part and the accession numbers will be the total of all call numbers. For this purpose spread sheet and any small software to maintain and auto generate call and accession number can be used.

Environment

Call. No.	Accession No.
R-Anl-1-2005	100
R-Anl-2-2005	111
R-Anl-3-2005	132

Cataloguing

A separate worksheet is used for Grey Material data entries. It consists of two screens of basic and necessary information of grey literature citation. The document can be retrieved by any entry of the screen. This retrieval and searching can be done by software or online or both. The following are two screen prints of the data entry sheets:

Data Entry Sheet -1

20/04/06		----- Enter/Edit Non-Book Material -----		atta
+-----+				
Call No.		Active	[Y]	
Material Type		-		
ISBN No.				
Title				
Author		Co-author	[N]	
Volume		Number		
Publisher		-		
Series		-		
Language	[ENG	-		
Subject		-		
Pages				
C/W/S/R Title				
C/W/S/R Date		C/W/S/R Duration		
C/W/S/R Venue				
C/W/S/R Organized by 1.		2.		
Keywords				

Data Entry Sheet - 2

20/04/06		----- Enter/Edit Non Book Copy Material -----		atta
Accession No.		0 -		
Active		[Y]		
Call No.				
Entry Date				
Donor		-		
Status		-		
Location		-		
Remarks				

Digital Organization:

Software:

Librarians who are already using library software CDS/ISIS or any other software for books and journals can use a separate worksheet for grey literature. Through call numbers, subject and type of literature searches can be made easy. Keywords search can be used to obtain highly effective search results.

SDI Service

The problems of the required literature have already been discussed. To provide quick information with full citation of newly-arrived literature to the users and to give information of single literature at one time in the age of information explosion, a low cost with simple technology a system of information dissemination can be introduced. This system has already been introduced at Faculty of Health Sciences Library of Aga Khan University and is running successfully.

Few changes in existing software were required for this system. First the customer's fields of interest or subject preferences and e-mail addresses were taken through a customer survey and feed them in the system. As the newly received document is entered in the system the software matches the preferred subject of the customers with document's subject from its call number. The system automatically generates an e-mail and sends it to the user with full citation and other necessary information of the document. If a user registers with many NGO libraries of same or different subjects, he/she can be apprised of newly received documents in these NGO collection.

Networking

With fewer resources, a simple networking system will be more suitable for persons with average computer skills.

Proposal to Create an Electronic Network among NGOs' libraries in Pakistan

The proposed information sharing system will be software-based through NGO websites (Internet Server). Backend software will be working through a server. At the front end will be the website of the Network. The website will collect and disseminate the data. Through this website and backend software, an option will be created which will give access to members to feed and retrieve (search) information, obtaining membership and request for articles (ILL, and Document

Delivery Service), and a software tutorial. This system will give access to bibliographic information (citation) of books, journals, and other printed and electronic material. Such information could be fed and retrieved by any member library. The Software will also manage membership record and will send Email automatically to acquire document from other member library.

A Plan for Computerization of Pakistani Health Libraries—In a Few Days

In Pakistan, hundreds of NGO libraries are neither automated nor computerized. Instead they are run manually due to the scarcity of finance, difficult in availability of good library software, and computer skills and shyness.

This proposed networking system can solve the problem of all Pakistani NGO libraries. They may computerize their libraries within a few days without extra financial burden and computer expertise. These libraries have very small data in their libraries which can be uploaded with in few days. For this purpose it will not be necessary for a member library that it should be computerized before acquiring the membership. To join the network one PC and Internet connection will be required. The member libraries will be able to download the software with a simple tutorial. They may feed their library's data in the software offline (without connecting to the main database), and whenever they want they could upload their data into the main database by connecting to network via internet. They can also download their own data and the data of other libraries.

No need to be connected with Internet

In this system there will be an option to upload and download the data of all End user clients. There will be a facility available that the data from a member library can be feed without connecting the Internet and main server. If a library is not able to purchase more internet hours for data feeding and retrieving, the member library will be able to download all the data available on server by connecting the net, and they can search and feed the data offline. After a certain period they can download and upload to update their database.

Already Computerized libraries will have no problem to be a part of the network:

The libraries that are already computerized and have compatible software for their library will be able to be a member. They can merge their data and download the network's data by the software, or they can run both software parallel in one computer.

End User as a Server:

An End user may become a Server and may extend connections to other library users inside or outside the library.

Sub-Networks:

The NGOs of same field and same nature, for example NGOs working on health may evolve sub-net work for sharing their resources.

Through the proposed information system, the NGOs of Pakistan will be encouraged to share to create, use and maintain an information system at the least possible cost, while the existing information resources and literature of NGOs will come within the range of users, that same can be circulated as National NGOs Data. This network can be extended to outside the country.

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Notes

Palomino, Information for Action

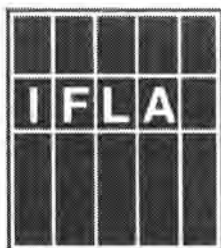
- ¹ “Poder Ciudadano”: <http://www.poderciudadano.org/index.asp>
- ² “CORREPI”: <http://www.correpi.lahaine.org/>
In English: <http://www.derechos.org/correpi/eng.html>

Ouf/Wastawy, NGOs and the Egyptian Information Society

- ³ Established in 1969 by law 32/1964.
- ⁴ Lana W. Jackman and Lorna D. Jones. “Information Literacy, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Nongovernmental Organization (NGO)/ Nonprofit World: A Practitioner’s Perspective“. (White paper prepared for UNESCO, the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and the National Forum on Information Literacy, for use at the Information Literacy Meeting of Experts, Prague, The Czech Republic).
- ⁵ Geneva WSIS 2003.
- ⁶ The Geneva Plan of Action “promote e-literacy skills for all ... taking advantage of existing facilities such as libraries, multipurpose community centers, public access points and by establishing local ICT training centers with the cooperation of all stakeholders. Special attention should be paid to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups“. (The Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, C4c)
- ⁷ Cabinet of Ministers: Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) (<http://www.idsc.gov.eg>).
- ⁸ Reade-Fong and Gorman regret that “the NGOs working in the same field and same countries never share information beyond the most superficial level. This applies to the largest UN agencies and the smallest single-issue NGOs. [...] In some of the largest agencies there is an intensely competitive spirit, which mitigates against any sharing of information. [...] The smaller organizations often do not share information because, in their view, they lack personnel and cannot afford the time involved in collaboration.“ (Reade-Fong and Gorman 2004).
- ⁹ The Integrated Care Society (<http://www.ics.org.eg>).
- ¹⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce. “FALLING THROUGH THE NET: A Survey of the Have Nots in Rural and Urban America“ (Washington D.C, 1995).
- ¹¹ Except for “The Cultural Club’s Public Library of Ain Shams“ which maintains subscription to more than 1,400 periodicals of which more than 400 are dedicated to the children and Suzanne Mubarak Public Library which holds more than 500 subscriptions.

Notes

- ¹² Six to twelve people including the director, the librarians, and the IT specialists.
- ¹³ The ICT Trust Fund (<http://www.ictfund.org.eg>).
- ¹⁴ ICT 4 IE (<http://ietest.ictfund.org.eg/main.html>)
- ¹⁵ Lana W. Jackman and Lorna D. Jones. "Information Literacy, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Nongovernmental Organization (NGO)/ Nonprofit World: A Practitioner's Perspective". (White paper prepared for UNESCO, the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and the National Forum on Information Literacy, for use at the Information Literacy Meeting of Experts, Prague, The Czech Republic).
- ¹⁶ Mobile IT Club (<http://mitc.ictfund.org.eg>)
- ¹⁷ Smart Schools Network (<http://smarschools.ictfund.org.eg>).
- ¹⁸ A global network that enables teachers and young people to use the Internet and other new technologies to collaborate on projects that enhance learning. International Education and Resource Network: iEARN (<http://www.iearn.org>).
- ¹⁹ FekrZad.com (<http://www.fekrzad.com>).
- ²⁰ Alfred Kagan, "The Electronic Information Gap" (Social Responsibilities Discussion Group Paper, World Library and Information Congress: 64th IFLA General Conference and Council, Amsterdam, Netherlands, August 16-21, 1998).
- ²¹ Kenanaonline (<http://www.kenanaonline.com>)
- ²² Lana W. Jackman and Lorna D. Jones. "Information Literacy, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Nongovernmental Organization (NGO)/ Nonprofit World: A Practitioner's Perspective". (White paper prepared for UNESCO, the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and the National Forum on Information Literacy, for use at the Information Literacy Meeting of Experts, Prague, the Czech Republic).



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Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are growing exponentially. In 1993, the Yearbook of International Organizations listed 16,000 internationally recognized NGOs. By 2004, this number was 63,000. With this increase comes a staggering growth in the activities and intellectual output of NGOs working on a local and international level. As the mission of both libraries and NGOs increasingly intersect, these organizations must collaborate to provide essential services that revolve around the creation, dissemination, and storage of information.

This volume's eight essays focus on collaborative work between NGOs and libraries in the study and resolution of global issues ranging from AIDS to food security, and social transformation.

