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Strengths and Weaknesses of INGOs in Delivering Development Outcomes

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Question

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of INGOs in delivering development and other outcomes?

Contents

1. Overview

Compared to smaller or local NGOs, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have more influence or "voice" with decision-makers, funding agencies, and policymakers. As a result, INGOs are often better positioned to impact both domestic and international policy (Kreienkamp, 2017; Cooper, 2018; Morton, n.d.).

INGOs offer local CSOs valuable capacity-building opportunities as well as exposure to a broader range of expertise and development approaches. Many local CSOs see INGOs as a well-established and important part of the development industry. They collaborate with INGOs on funding or partnership arrangements, as well as non-funding collaborative approaches like knowledge and practice networks, or policy dialogue with governments, donors, or the private sector (Morton, n.d.; Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009; Green, 2015).

Overall, INGOs have several core strengths that stand out – when compared to smaller or local NGOs. Specifically, INGOs are good at:

- **Supporting CSOs**: Many local CSOs in developing countries depend on INGOs to fund their development efforts, and many of them also work on behalf of INGOs through partnerships.

- **Raising development financing**: INGOs are enlisting a growing number of donors and vocal supporters (or activists) to help make poverty a moral issue in the 'north'. Aid from large INGOs also makes up a significant and growing portion of funding directed at CSOs in developing countries.

- **Sharing expertise and knowledge**: non-financial resources, such as expertise and knowledge, can also be contributed by INGOs. They are becoming ever more important in programme delivery and policy influence research. Gender equity and 'local ownership' have become foundations of good development practice through the efforts of INGOs.

- **Influencing development policy**: they have become more involved in political processes and global governance, including transnational policymaking. Through advocacy and speaking out on behalf of the poor, INGOs have gained a seat at the global policy table. Evidently, large INGOs are more likely than small/local NGOs to gain access to local government officials and have more influence over decision-making.

- **Humanitarian response**: they have played a critical role in the development of global humanitarian norms. INGOs' long-term presence enables them to bring crises in developing countries to the attention of 'northern' citizens and governments.

Nonetheless, despite the unique contributions made by INGOs (and their peculiar characteristics that enable them to do so), these organisations have limitations that prevent them from reaching their full potential (Green, 2017; Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009; Cooper, 2018; Altahir, 2013).

- **Accountability**: INGOs' presumed independence, which emanates from the fact that they are 'only' accountable to their boards of directors, can lead to poor accountability. Further, increased accountability demands by donors may lead INGOs to choose safe partners (i.e., established local NGOs/CSOs or past partners) rather than new or innovative ones.

- **Difficult working environment**: INGOs have faced a hostile and restrictive environment in some partner countries. The closure of civil society spaces has been broadly linked to the rise of populism and repressive governments.
- **Balancing global INGOs with local NGOs**: it has been argued that the 'northern' offices of INGOs wield disproportionate power, while the 'southern' offices lack sufficient voice and representation. As such, some argue that the long-term presence of INGOs in developing countries can have adverse effects on local CSOs.
- **Coordination challenges**: coordination issues may arise because of increased competition among humanitarian actors and the trend toward alliances. In some countries, the 'Western-centric' image of INGOs may cause coordination issues with development actors, particularly in those countries with repressive regimes and narrow civic space.
- **Unequal power balance**: there is a significant power imbalance between INGOs and local NGOs, which may create tensions between them.
- **Unsuitable funding models**: some argue that the funding models of INGOs are frequently out of sync with their mission statements and objectives. INGOs are often forced to cope with donors who only fund projects for a limited time, despite strong advocacy efforts by INGOs for longer-term funding.
- **Too much operational subcontracting and delegation**: even if a short-term partnership or subcontracting is advantageous and cost-effective for INGOs (i.e., in terms of delivering quick results for one-time projects), it contributes less to the strengthening of local institutions because local NGO/CSO partners are primarily treated as implementers.

Although this rapid evidence review has identified some key strengths and weaknesses of INGOs (i.e., in relation to their development or humanitarian work), many of the important findings are linked to a few relevant reports. Overall, there is a limited evidence base on the topic – since the literature rarely provides systematic and explicit documentation of the strengths/weaknesses of INGOs. Nonetheless, there is a voluminous literature (mostly project reports) on the works of individual INGOs.

2. What distinguishes INGOs?

CSOs include a diverse range of organisations, ranging from grassroots community-based organisations to highly professionalised international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) (Kreienkamp, 2017; Cooper, 2018; World Bank, 22).[1]

INGOs in donor countries differ from other typical CSOs (i.e., those in donor and recipient countries) in a number of ways, including their global operations, size, scale, geographic reach, access to funds, budgets, and development roles (Morton, n.d). The author stresses that:

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[1] "CSOs include non-governmental organizations, community groups, labor unions, indigenous peoples movements, faith-based organizations, professional associations, foundations, think tanks, charitable organizations, and other not-for-profit organizations" (World Bank, 2022:n.p.).

- The fact that INGOs have global operations distinguishes them from national CSOs in donor countries. In most cases, INGOs have multiple autonomous national offices.[2]

- As a result of their membership in global confederations, INGOs have a broad global programmatic reach. Individual national INGO affiliates may only manage or operate programmes in a small number of countries, but they can participate across the confederation's programme countries by providing financial resources or advice.[3]

- In terms of budgets, staff, and operations, INGOs are typically much larger than other national CSOs in donor countries.[4]

- INGOs have a stronger organisational structure. Because INGOs have larger budgets and staff contingents, dedicated staff can be assigned to a wide range of operations and programming, implying that INGOs have both broader and deeper capacities than national CSOs.[5]

- Even though most national CSOs in donor countries take a partnership approach to development programming, INGOs work with a broader range of partners and have the advantage of being able to bring more financial and other resources to these partnerships, particularly expertise and knowledge.

- INGOs have a higher level of legitimacy and influence. In the eyes of donors and the public, INGOs' size and scale, global reach, large staff contingents, variety of programmes and partnerships, and ability to demonstrate results give them a level of professionalism, credibility, and legitimacy. As a result, INGOs have a higher public profile than national non-governmental organisations (CSOs), both with the general public and with governments and other donors.

Increased capacity for fundraising from the public, governments, and other institutions, greater legitimacy and influence with government and other donors, and greater capacity to use funds at economies of scale are all factors that contribute to INGOs' much larger budgets. Large INGOs are also more likely to obtain core or framework funding agreements from donor governments, and in larger amounts as a result of these factors. INGOs at the national level can also access their confederations' global financial and human resources (Morton, n.d.).

Morton (n.d.) points out that any discussion of aid provided by civil society organisations (CSOs) must take into account the unique case of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). They are a significant player in the international development architecture and a powerful force

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[2] For example, Oxfam Canada is a self-governing organisation with its own governance structure, but it is part of the Oxfam International confederation, which includes 16 other organisations. CARE USA is part of CARE International, which is made up of 14 member organisations (Morton, n.d).

[3] Save the Children works in 120 countries around the world, World Vision International in 98, and Oxfam International in over 90. Many international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have a global reach that far exceeds that of many individual OECD official donor bilateral geographic programmes (Morton, n.d).

[4] In Australia, two of the largest INGOs (Oxfam Australia and World Vision Australia) employ over 200 people, whereas nearly every other national CSO employs fewer than 50 people (Morton, n.d).

[5] Many non-governmental organisations now have dedicated monitoring, evaluation, and learning staff. This enables INGOs to evaluate the outcomes and impact of their work, implement quality assurance and improvement measures, demonstrate accountability to partners, recipients, and the general public, and efficiently report to donors on how funds were spent and the overall impact of funded programmes. This type of work is specialized, resource-intensive, and time-consuming, and many smaller national CSOs lack the capacity to do it, focusing their efforts instead on reporting to official donors and fundraising publics (Morton, n.d).

in the delivery of aid. They are now providing more aid to developing countries than ever before, and some of the largest INGOs' budgets (such as World Vision International, Oxfam International, Save the Children International, Plan International, Médecins Sans Frontières, CARE International, CARITAS International, and ActionAid International) even exceed those of some OECD member donor countries (Morton, n.d.; Hammad and Morton, 2011).

INGOs have a variety of organisational profiles, according to Maietta et al. (2017). They argue that various INGOs' potential structures have different strengths and weaknesses, as well as different roles in the humanitarian ecosystem. The organisational profiles of INGOs provide a lens through which INGOs can consider what makes an effective structure, what resources, capacities, and relationships are required, and how different profiles are better or worse suited depending on the scenarios and types of crises to which they may be called upon to respond.

3. Key roles of INGOs in delivering development outcomes

INGOs play a variety of roles in development cooperation, and their approaches are based on a range of development models. However, they have a lot in common in terms of the goals they want to achieve and their overall mandates. INGOs' main goals are usually to reduce poverty and inequality, realise rights, promote gender equality and social justice, protect the environment, and strengthen civil society and democratic governance (Morton, n.d.). For instance, Morton notes:

- CARE International wants to "fight poverty and injustice to help create a more equal and gender-just world."[6]
- Oxfam International sees itself as a "global movement of people, working together to end the injustice of poverty. That means we tackle the inequality that keeps people poor."[7]
- World Vision claims to focus on "helping the most vulnerable children overcome poverty and experience fullness of life. We help children of all backgrounds, even in the most dangerous places, inspired by our Christian faith. Together we can protect children today, and empower them for tomorrow."[8]

Jayawickrama and McCullagh (2009) also highlight some key strengths ("distinctive contributions") of INGOs in development and humanitarian crises.[9] They argue:

- INGOs enable their supporters to express solidarity with people in some of the world's poorest communities by raising significant private resources that would otherwise not go to relief and development efforts.
- INGOs play a critical role in bolstering civil society in developing countries and promoting the role of civil society actors in the international arena.

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[6] https://www.care-international.org/who-we-are

[7] https://www.oxfam.org/en

[8] https://www.wvi.org/

[9] The authors explore the distinctive contributions that INGOs have made in development and humanitarian crises, the characteristics that enable them to make these contributions and the limitations to their effectiveness.

- INGOs serve as conduits for knowledge and innovation transfer both within and between countries.
- INGOs can influence policy change by leveraging their presence in developing countries and their constituencies in developed countries.
- INGOs respond quickly to humanitarian crises around the world, mobilising "northern" publics and governments to help.

4. Which strengths of INGOs stand out?

Supporting CSOs in developing countries and promoting their role globally:

Through both their funding and non-funding roles, INGOs provide a variety of opportunities and relationships for local CSOs. Many local CSOs rely on INGOs to fund their own development efforts (through core, programme, or project funding), and many also work on their behalf (through project subcontracting work). INGOs offer local CSOs valuable capacity-building opportunities as well as exposure to a wider range of expertise and development approaches. Many local CSOs see INGOs as a well-established and important part of the development environment, and collaborate with them on funding or partnership arrangements, as well as non-funding collaborative approaches like knowledge and practice networks, or policy dialogue with governments, donors, or the private sector (Morton, n.d.).

Local NGOs have benefited from INGOs' assistance in establishing, developing, and scaling up their operations; they have received training (in organisational governance, strategic planning, financial management, fundraising, advocacy, and other areas); and they have been "accompanied" by serving on their boards, helping them gain access to global expertise, and connecting them to funding and networks. Despite the fact that the relationships formed between INGOs and local organisations are frequently fraught with power imbalances, INGOs have played a significant role in the development of a local capacity infrastructure – including professionally managed local NGOs – to implement development programmes (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

INGOs have provided a training ground for thousands of citizens of developing countries (especially women) who have gone on to become leaders in civil society, government, and academia as employers in developing countries. INGOs have gained a seat at the global policy table by engaging in advocacy and speaking out on behalf of the poor. Local NGOs and civil society organisations may find it easier to claim a seat at the table as a result of this (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

There is a great deal of evidence showing INGOs' support for CSOs in developing countries:

- A large study commissioned by a group of international non-governmental organisations based in the United Kingdom looked at collaborations between INGOs and local civil society organisations (Ramalingam et al., 2013, cited by Ortiz, 2016). According to the research, there are a slew of advantages to collaborating in this way. Ramalingam et al. note that partnerships helped to:

- o Make humanitarian responses more relevant and appropriate. The ability of national and local actors to comprehend the context and internal dynamics allows them to tailor programmes accordingly;
- o Ensure accountability to disaster-affected populations to improve the effectiveness of assistance;
- o Make the transition between the various elements of the disaster cycle as seamless as possible. Local NGOs typically work in all of these spaces, unlike the international system, where different teams and organisations may carry out tasks such as resilience, response, and recovery. This allows them to improve connectedness and ensure that responses are made in ways that are considerate of long-term goals.

- INGOs, organised civil society groups, and loosely networked civil society groups participate in the G20 and UN official consultation processes, as well as monitoring the SDGs' implementation through the Together 2030 civil society alliance (Cooper, 2018; WEF, 2013).

- By assisting local CSOs and NGOs, the German Development Service (DED) has contributed to the strengthening of civil society in Nepal. Its efforts are also aimed at raising public awareness of CSOs/NGOs as valuable members of society. DED's efforts include increasing the independence and effectiveness of local NGOs in achieving their objectives (Kobek and Thapa, 2004).

- With a small grant from ActionAid, Uganda's AIDS Service Organization was founded and is now highly respected in the global HIV and AIDS arena. CARE's microfinance programs in India, Peru, and the Philippines have evolved into independent entities that now play major roles in the microfinance sectors of those countries (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

Raising financing for international development:

Aid from large INGO families accounts for a significant and growing portion of CSO aid financial flows (UNDP, n.d.). For instance, only eight of the largest INGOs (including World Vision, CARE, Oxfam, Save the Children, and the Red Cross) accounted for nearly a quarter of all CSO funding reported to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)10 (UNDP, n.d.: p.35).

INGOs have amassed a growing number of donors and supporters, enlisting their help in making poverty a moral issue (and, in the case of faith-based groups, a spiritual issue). Hundreds of millions of dollars have been raised for development and humanitarian relief around the world as a result of this collaboration (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

To attract new supporters and retain existing ones, INGOs have refined their branding, marketing, media relations, and fundraising strategies. INGOs use a variety of models, from child sponsorship to issue-based campaigns, to help people in developed and developing countries connect, instil a sense of responsibility for and engagement in building a better world, and enable

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[10] DAC is currently composed of 30 donor countries, including: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States (DAC, 2022).

people to stand in solidarity with those who are less fortunate (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

However, Green (2015) stresses that INGOs could also provide support to local CSOs to help them become financially more independent. Since reliance on government contracts, foundations, or foreign aid is the Achilles heel of authentic civic action, INGOs should train grassroots organisations to strengthen their financial independence. It is especially beneficial to support locally endowed, independent grant-making foundations or community foundations.

Sharing knowledge and innovation within and across countries:

INGOs can also contribute more non-financial resources – in particular, expertise and knowledge. They are playing an increasingly important role in research. For both programme delivery and policy influence work, INGOs rely on the global reach and collective experience of their confederation members. They conduct research and learn to ensure that their development programmes and policy influence work are informed by their own programme experience and knowledge, as well as their relationships with developing-country partners and communities. Some non-governmental organisations are increasingly commissioning research to build a stronger evidence base for both programming and policy influence. Many national INGO affiliates, as well as teams in the international secretariat of INGOs, now have dedicated research units (Morton,n.d.).

INGOs can identify innovations and promising knowledge or practices in specific contexts, share ideas across borders, and help adapt approaches to other contexts because of their long presence in many developing countries. This could include "technical" areas such as basic education or maternal health, or it could refer to principles such as gender equity or collaboration. INGOs are most effective in this role when they focus on being a transmission channel and facilitator rather than the owner of knowledge or the innovator. INGOs have helped to establish values like community participation, gender equity, and local ownership as cornerstones of good development practice by adopting and refining approaches learned from working in thousands of poor communities. INGOs have aided in the mainstreaming of more people-centred and rights-based approaches to development thinking (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

- Oxfam International, for example, has research units that produce reports on climate change, food security, the arms trade, and other topics (Morton,n.d.).
- Microfinance innovations pioneered by Grameen Bank, BRAC, and others in Bangladesh were absorbed by INGOs, then adapted and advanced around the world, providing financial services to millions of poor people, particularly women (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

Influence policy change (in donor countries) by leveraging their presence in developing countries:

Large INGOs (i.e., those with a high profile in developing countries) are also more likely to gain access to local government officials and have more influence over decision-making (Morton, n.d.; Hammad and Morton; 2011).

From agenda-setting to implementation, evaluation, and monitoring, INGOs have become increasingly involved in political processes and global governance, including transnational policymaking (Cooper, 2018; WEF, 2013; Kreienkamp, 2017).

- The Better Safer World campaign, which later evolved into the ONE campaign, was founded by a group of INGOs. ONE has since enlisted the help of tens of thousands of people in "northern" countries to aid in poverty reduction efforts. Despite the recession, child sponsorship revenue has remained stable in many US NGOs, demonstrating donors' strong commitment to sponsored children (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

- World Vision raised awareness among its evangelical Christian constituency and mobilised that constituency to press the US government to commit major resources to an AIDS response after seeing the toll HIV and AIDS were taking in Africa. The Jubilee 2000 campaign mobilised a constituency that effectively advocated for debt relief for the world's most heavily indebted countries by tapping into the concept of debt forgiveness among the world's major religions (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

Many INGOs have developed a capacity to transform field experience into policy influence (via policy analysis, evidence building and advocacy). They have also invested in building constituencies in support of their "causes" and mobilising these constituencies to press lawmakers and other actors to take specific actions. Increased NGO engagement in public education and policy advocacy has been driven by an evolution in INGOs' understanding of the nature of poverty and their commitment to address root causes of poverty. This is coupled with an ambition to contribute to change at a much larger scale than the aggregation of NGO projects would allow. INGOs have come to understand that root causes of poverty sometimes lie in "northern" countries, the home bases of the same NGOs. To varying degrees, INGOs are leveraging their reputations, constituencies and access to advocate for more consistent and effective development policies and practices on the part of industrialised countries (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

Green (2015) admits that the size of a CSO does matter – and that, unlike smaller CSOs or local NGOs – major INGOs have advantages such as large knowledge bases and economies of scale. However, he also points out that a group of more agile local CSOs (dubbed "guerrilla organisations" or "single-issue institutions") may be better at achieving specific development goals in some areas.

Rapid response to humanitarian crises:

Apart from their important contribution to development outcomes in the global south, INGOs also make critical contributions in dealing with humanitarian emergencies. In fact, many INGOs were founded in response to humanitarian crises and have strong capacities to respond quickly to natural disasters and conflict. Their long-term presence in countries provides them with valuable context for improving emergency response quality and transitioning from relief to rehabilitation to development (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

The long-term presence of INGOs especially allows them to bring crises in developing countries to the attention of "northern" citizens and governments, as well as mobilise resources for action. Because of their relative independence from governments, INGOs have the freedom to speak out about situations they witness. It may be difficult, if not impossible, for local NGOs to do so. By

leveraging their experience, INGOs have also played a key role in the development of global normative standards for humanitarian action (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

- Altahir (2013) notes that the biggest donor agencies and INGOs often have two funding mechanisms: one, particularly for humanitarian crises and the other for long-term development assistance. For example, he notes, the United States Agency for International Development, which often focuses on long-term development aid, has a unit called the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance that primarily focuses on and funds disaster and emergency response.
- INGOs have helped to raise early awareness of Darfur's atrocities (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).
- Several INGOs worked together to draw a link between Sudan's dire poverty and recurrent humanitarian crises, as well as the north-south conflict as an underlying driver and pressed for a just peace (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).
- The research and advocacy of the International Rescue Committee shed light on widespread rape and deprivation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

5. Which weaknesses of INGOs stand out?

Strict accountability demands:

Critics argue that INGOs' independence, which stems from the fact that they are only accountable to their boards of directors, can lead to poor accountability. The politicisation of aid has also raised concerns about how independent INGOs actually are from institutional donors and policies (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009). Accountability, autonomy, and distancing from the grassroots are all intertwined issues. A prominent question is whether INGOs can still design and pursue a development alternative under donor conditions that minimise the importance of local ownership and participatory design and implementation (Banks and Hulme, 2012; Edwards, 2010; Hulme, 2008).

Some INGOs, on the other hand, are making changes to their governance and management structures to allow for greater stakeholder representation and ownership in developing countries. Furthermore, meeting donor accountability requirements is an important part of INGOs' relationship with their official donors. INGOs must demonstrate fiscal accountability, which means they must show that funds were spent for the intended purpose and that they can be tracked. INGOs must also show accountability in terms of agreed-upon outputs and outcomes. This is a more complicated and time-consuming process; in some cases, demonstrating a causal relationship between the provision of funds for development activities and specific outcomes (for example, in programs to strengthen women's rights or build CSO capacity) can be difficult. To meet programme accountability requirements, many INGOs have established dedicated staff teams (Morton, n.d.).

Others (e.g., Huyse et al., 2010) have warned that increased accountability pressure could cause NGOs to choose established partners and potentially less innovative programmes because they are less risky.

Difficult working environment:

INGOs (and broadly CSOs) are being forced to quickly adapt to deteriorating operating environments. Recent safeguarding scandals, such as the actions of Oxfam workers in Haiti, have sparked debate about the role and value of NGOs in the UK and around the world (Cooper, 2018; Green, 2017; VanDyck, 2017).

INGOs have encountered a hostile and restrictive climate in some developing countries (e.g., Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, and Sudan), in part because their actions to stand in solidarity with marginalised groups have been perceived as overreaching and intrusive (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009). Nicaragua is another example of a rapidly closing civil society space and repression. The government has passed legislations limiting NGO funding and other activities (especially in political spaces) of INGOs (Cooper, 2018; ICNL, 2022). Largely, over 100 countries are claimed to have imposed various restrictions on the operations of INGOs or CSOs in their territories, such as making registration more difficult, cutting off foreign funding, interfering in internal affairs, and prosecuting CSO leaders (Green, 2017; Mendelson, 2015).

Broadly, the rise of populism and repressive governments – especially those excessively asserting national sovereignty – have been linked to the closing of civil society spaces (CIVICUS, 2018; Cooper, 2018). According to the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law, governments around the world passed several restrictive new laws and regulations, severely limiting global civic space (Kreienkamp, 2017; Cooper, 2018).

In some cases (e.g., where INGOs worked in environments where military operations were taking place – especially by "northern" militaries), humanitarian aid becomes politicised. INGOs have found it difficult to develop rules of engagement that ensure independence, security, and effectiveness despite concerted efforts (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

However, Kreienkamp (2017) warns that the concerns about the legitimacy, transparency, and accountability of INGOs or CSOs should not be dismissed out of hand – despite the fact that they are frequently used by repressive governments to discredit and restrict undesirable organisations.

Balancing global INGOs with local NGOs/CSOs:

It has been argued that the long-term presence of INGOs in developing countries can have negative consequences for local civil society organisations. The larger programs, budgets, and staffing contingents of INGOs, as well as their use of foreign consultants, can 'crowd out' local development organisations, which may have knowledge, skills, and capacities that are more closely linked to, and better informed by, 'on-the-ground' realities (Morton, n.d.).

It has also been argued that power is concentrated in the "northern" offices of INGOs, and the "southern" offices do not have enough voice or representation in INGO governance. Their accountability systems frequently focus on reporting to "northern" donors and "northern" country headquarters. Inadequate mechanisms for "downward" accountability have been developed, which empower and acknowledge the importance of field staff and poor communities (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

INGOs' trans-nationalising tendencies, particularly in the form of global advocacy networks and campaigns, may exclude certain actors and groups (for example, local NGOs and CSOs) from

such processes. As a result of these scale-up efforts, the distance between constituent parts of the sector has grown, and international civil society elites have emerged to dominate the discourses and flows that pass through this transnational community. This raises serious concerns about whose alternatives are given more prominence in these processes (Bebbington et al., 2008).

Some experts (e.g., Green, 2015; Booth, 2013) also warn that local knowledge and networks created by local actors could potentially matter more (at least in some contexts or development projects) than best practice imported by INGOs. Rather than getting involved directly in complex local processes, large INGOs (or donors in general) may be better served by funding intermediary organisations that are better able to develop local networks and adapt to changing circumstances.

Coordination challenges:

The standard model of coordination, which is primarily used by INGOs and international organisations, has flaws. As traditional and new humanitarian actors find ways to collaborate, alliances will need to become more inclusive. This is due to the emergence and empowerment of new humanitarian actors such as private companies and local NGOs. The increased competition among humanitarian actors, as well as the trend toward alliances, forces NGOs to look for ways to diversify their traditional operations, advocacy, and fundraising modalities (Maietta et al., 2017; Altahir, 2013).

Although their track record on this front (especially in emergency situations and policy advocacy) has improved in recent years, INGOs do not coordinate well enough. They have also been inept at collaborating to capture and share promising practices, learn from setbacks and failures, establish rigorous impact measurement standards, or even collect and share basic data (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009; Shin et al., 2018; Comfort and Kapucu, 2006).

INGOs are gaining a reputation for being Western-centric, and their effectiveness is being questioned; national governments see them as interlopers. National governments prefer or tolerate interventions by national, local, and faith-based NGOs if they are coordinated by them (Maietta et al., 2017).

Unequal power balance:

Large INGOs are also more likely to win grants and contracts available in developing countries than local CSOs. Because they offer higher salaries and better terms and conditions, INGOs are sometimes seen as a source of 'brain drain' from local CSOs and governments. These disparities between INGOs and local CSOs create an unfavourable dynamic that could result in resentment and strained working relationships (Morton, n.d.).

INGOs, as powerful international humanitarian actors or organisations, may occasionally fail to use their power responsibly by taking into account, accounting for, and being accountable to the people they seek to help (Sulaiman, 2020; STAIT, 2017).

Partnerships between international non-governmental organisations and local organisations reveal significant power imbalances. Because INGOs channel funds to local NGOs, they frequently serve as both a donor and a monitor, as well as a facilitator and capacity builder. When partnerships are based on project implementation, the international NGO's focus on results can take precedence over the development of a relationship sensitive to local aspirations,

knowledge, and capacity. This can lead to conflict in "partnerships." These tensions are exacerbated when local NGOs believe that INGOs are taking seats at the policy table (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

In light of this, the Accountability to Affected People (AAP) theory contends that the best way for an INGO to intervene is to be accountable to the community for which it will provide assistance (Sulaiman, 2020; STAIT, 2017).

Unsuitable funding models:

Traditional INGO funding models are changing in tandem with economic and geopolitical shifts in Europe and North America, as well as dramatic shifts in social engagement and political pressures. In many countries, all of these changes are limiting the space available for civil society activities (Cooper, 2018; WEF, 2013). Looking ahead, civil society leaders must understand how changing external contexts (financial or otherwise) will shape their ability to achieve impact, as well as what this means for their relationships with businesses, governments, and international actors (WEF, 2018).

INGOs' funding models are frequently out of sync with their mission and goals. Despite their best efforts at advocacy and donor education, INGOs must contend with donors who only fund projects for short periods of time (e.g., 1-2 years), despite the fact that the issues they address require long-term (e.g., 5-10 years) commitments that leverage systemic change (far beyond projects) and rely on local ownership. This keeps INGOs in a constant grant-seeking mode, which takes them away from their long-term goals and makes it difficult for them to be strategic and focus on deep impact (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

INGOs must ensure that they are representative of the people they claim to represent in order to gain and maintain critical public trust and support. Because a heavy reliance on external funding can lead to a lack of connections with local populations, some INGOs and CSOs may need to rethink their funding models (Kreienkamp, 2017; Mendelson, 2015). Experimenting with crowdfunding, providing paid services, reaching out to corporate or high-net-worth individual sponsors, soliciting in-kind contributions, or switching to a membership model are all possibilities (Kreienkamp, 2017; Rekosh, 2017).

Many academics argue that the grant-based funding model has contributed to or exacerbated the shrinking of civil society space (Green, 2017, Mendelson, 2015).

These negative funding effects are amplified when donors prefer short-term funding periods and one-time contracts, which do not provide the stability required for building and maintaining expertise and long-term planning, ensuring that 'chasing funds' becomes a permanent priority consuming the majority of time and resources (Banks and Hulme, 2012; Elbers and Arts 2011).

Too much operational subcontracting and delegation:

Relationships defined by 'principal-agent' and strict contract management arrangements are not suitable for addressing complex development problems, according to both INGOs and donor governments. They limit the ability to respond to unforeseen circumstances and rapidly changing development contexts, as well as the ability to learn from experience and improve practice and outcomes as a result of that learning (Morton, n.d.).

While international NGO staffing models rely on expatriates far less than multilateral organisations or private contractors (in most INGOs, the vast majority of staff are citizens of developing countries), their use of expatriates is still striking when compared to local organisations. As a result, in low-income countries, expenses and cost structures stand out, causing resentment and creating the perception that INGOs are "outsiders" (Jayawickrama and McCullagh, 2009).

A short-term partnership (subcontracting) is beneficial to INGOs for delivering quick results for one-time projects such as school construction/rehabilitation or food distribution. Furthermore, during the onset of an acute emergency, when the nature of the situation necessitates immediate impact solutions, a short-term partnership may be more useful. Subcontracting may also be less expensive because it eliminates the need for INGOs to lead capacity-building programs for local partners. Short-term partnerships, however, do not contribute to the strengthening of local institutions because local partners are treated primarily as implementers (Altahir, 2013).

6. How do the strength and weaknesses of INGOs compare with local NGOs?

Comparative advantages and disadvantages:

Van Bruaene et al. (2013) argue that the main perceived strengths and weaknesses of INGOs and local NGOs are as follows.[11]

Table: Strengths and Weaknesses of INGOs Compared to Local NGOs

	INGOs	Local NGOs
Strengths	o Access to funds and donor trust, adherence to donor requirements, financial strength and management skills, report writing skills (in English), INGO families/alliances, continued support after humanitarian funding ends, knowledge transfer, technical assistance, M&E, internet access to e-tools. o Respect for humanitarian principles (neutrality, impartiality, and independence) as well as procurement procedures has been ensured.	o They have a local presence, cultural sensitivity, acceptance by beneficiary communities, participatory approaches, sustainability, and resilience. o Because they are "from" the community and can stay in times of uncertainty, local NGOs are frequently respected and trusted. The technical work and reports (which are frequently written in the local language) are generally of high quality.

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[11] However, Van Bruaene et al. (2013) note that there was often little commonality between the operating environments and therefore the needs of local NGOs in different countries or even areas of the same country.

Weakness	o The added value isn't always cost-effective (it's sometimes limited to contract signature, overall quality control, and access to e-tools) and diverts project funds away from the end users. o Subcontracting local NGOs for the duration of a project rather than establishing long-term partnerships, which often translates to "outsourcing workload and problems" to local NGOs.	o Short-term subcontracting (as described above) leaves local actors with no room for long-term institutional development; they are forced to fight for survival from contract to contract, and opportunism tends to supplant mandate and values. o There are often a limited number of eligible local partners in a country or region, who could easily become overburdened by multiple donor commitments, especially in the case of acute and/or large emergencies, risking losing quality. o Below the upper echelon of a few key executives, corporate structures can be rather frail. A lack of technical expertise is often compounded by low educational skills (and the 'poaching' of the best staff by international organisations) as a result of high staff turnover. This leads to poor administration, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, procurement, narrative (in English) and financial reporting, as well as ongoing capacity building needs.

Source Author's Own Created using data from Van Bruaene et al, 2013

Complementarity:

INGOs and local NGOs may compete for development funding (often from the same pool of donors). For example, according to Greene (2015), local NGOs used to look for funding from international NGOs. However, they have recently expressed a desire for direct access to funds and more control.

INGOs and local NGOs, on the other hand, could complement each other because they frequently collaborate or have complementary strengths and weaknesses. Local NGOs have been involved in every step of project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation by

INGOs. In short, local partners have become an integral part of the development project management cycle (Altahir, 2013).

For example, PACT, a U.S.-based international NGO, developed a theory of change for "capacity development" that states: a) stronger local organisations and networks (b) do better work (c) have a greater impact on health, the environment, and livelihoods in their target communities as a result. Mercy Corps, another INGO, also has a portfolio of civil society strengthening programming tools that it uses in its local partnerships. Oxfam is attempting to work more closely with local NGO partners and government actors, as well as to improve the quality of those partnerships while assisting partners in developing their capacity (Ortiz, 2016; Gingerich, 2015).

INGOs and local NGOs, for example, have been working to reshape, improve, and strategise the relationship between the two in Sudan (Altahir, 2013). The author argues that, in the case of Sudan, these efforts to rebuild long-term partnerships between INGOs and local NGOs have not yet reached their final and positive form. He goes on to say that it is an example of potential success because it reflects a growing awareness of the importance of long-term partnerships among INGOs, local NGOs, and the Sudanese government.

Despite a difficult working environment in Nepal in the 2000s (i.e., the country was going through a difficult phase in its development due to political conflicts), INGOs (e.g., from Germany) continued to operate – thanks in large part to their effective partnerships with local NGOs and CSOs (Kobek and Thapa,2004).

Many local NGO implementing partners accept the added value of INGOs, according to Van Bruaene et al. (2013). Furthermore, most INGOs consider the participation and comparative advantage of local implementing partners to be critical to project success.

INGOs from the north can have various modalities of partnership or relationships with local NGOs or CSOs in the global south, according to Huyse et al. (2010). This, they note, may take the form of:

- Collaborative operations: There is a decision-making process that is shared. The Southern NGO implements joint programs with support and funding from the northern NGO.
- Contracting: The local NGO (partner) offers a well-defined payment package that is determined by the northern NGO.
- Dependent franchising: The local NGO (partner) functions as a field office, operating independently but relying on the northern NGO for guidance and funding.
- Mutual governance: At both the organisational and programme levels, each organisation has significant decision-making power over policy and practice.
- Spin-off NGOs: Over time, the dependent franchise or field office is expected to become self-sufficient.
- Visionary Patronage: There is a common vision and shared objectives. The southern NGO (partner) is in charge of implementation, while the northern NGO is in charge of funding and other resources.

The most common types of partnerships used to systematise the relationship between INGOs and local NGOs, according to Altahir (2013), are either short-term (subcontracting) or long-term. He adds that it is critical to recognise when each type of partnership is appropriate in different

situations. Despite the fact that donors and the humanitarian community frequently seek high-impact, quick results to alleviate suffering, donors are also interested in long-term development and assistance improvement and sustainability.

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