

NGOs in East Africa

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Abstract

The involvement of NGOs globally is growing exponentially, primarily in developing countries. The actual amount of NGOs is unknown but predicted to be approximately 10million (www.quora.com). East African or Sub-Saharan African countries have a history of European and outside influence dating back to colonialism. It can be argued that NGOs are a continuation of European influence. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the work NGOs are doing and attempt to establish a rhetoric of transparency in the discussion of NGOs.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate Non-Governmental Organization involvement in several East African countries Including Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, and South Africa. NGOs across Africa and many other continents are involved in work ranging from providing healthcare to capacity strengthening efforts. It is my goal to compile data to create a somewhat conclusive understanding of the work being done. In no means is this compilation of NGO data complete or perfect. There are many limitations to a study of this nature such as the lack of transparency of NGO work and the very large and continuously growing number of NGOs. In this paper I take a quantitative approach to my analysis using specific analysis methods of central tendency.

First, what must be established is the definition of NGOs I will use in my analysis. I have created this definition of NGOs based on my own understanding and the context the acronym is used in this paper. NGOs are organizations developed based on a need found either by local communities or outside entities. NGOs are put in place to serve specific needs usually humanitarian in nature. NGOs receive their funds primarily in donations, fundraising, and grants. In this definition of NGOs I am including non-profits and faith-based organizations. NGOs in this paper then are discussed in a formal context, meaning they are recognized and funded as an NGO, not simply a self-proclaimed NGO. This definition and understanding of NGOs is crucial to the transparency of the work they are doing but again I would not in any way say that this definition is all-inclusive and the only way to understand NGOs and the work that they do.

What makes this topic relevant to the current climate of anthropological work is the history of the continent of Africa and its relationship with outsiders, generally Europeans. I argue, that although, there are some NGOs with the purpose of bettering a community, they are a continuation of European involvement. As described in the short article in the online journal the Economist, "A Scramble for Africa." The unidentified author, whom writes in the late 1990s, examines European involvement in Africa. They however, do not quite take the leap to discussing NGO involvement as a perpetuation of colonial influences. The discussion of NGOs in this context is the logical next step to this article. It is important to keep in mind the history of Africa with outsiders and what this means today and the large presence of NGOs in Africa.

In 2000, the estimated amount of NGOs was at about 819,008 (Guay 2004:129). Today the estimated amount of NGOs globally is approximately 10 million organizations, and this number only includes organizations that are currently registered (www.quora.com) not those who identify as NGOs or participate in the same realm of work.

A competing, and valid, point of the view of NGO involvement in the general continent of Africa is that they are providing services African governments are no longer capable of providing for their people. Such as, providing 'proper' education and health services necessary. As explained best by Michael Bratton and his article, "The politics of Government-NGO relations in Africa," Bratton states, "NGOs have entered the limelight as governments throughout Africa have begun to retreat from ambitious attempts to sponsor socioeconomic development from above"(Bratton 1989:1). NGOs have taken on the work that the governments in some African countries have seemingly failed to do.

Methods

The large majority of data used in this analysis is from the website ngoaidmap.org. This website is a compilation of United States based and funded NGOs that are local and internationally involved. NGO Aid Map provides the location, information about the type of work, and the number of projects in progress about each organization. Because the data pulled from NGO Aid Map consists of data that is self-reported, the data is not a full picture of the work NGOs are doing. Rather, it is a small fraction of NGOs based in the United States. However, with all the limitations that come

with the study of NGOs, I used this information to create comparable data about NGOs and the work they are doing shown in *Table 1* and *Table 2*.

The twelve Eastern African countries that I have chosen to examine and compare are Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, and South Africa. The range of the amount of NGOs in each East African country is very large. According to NGO aid map, Kenya has the most NGOs at 215 and Swaziland having the least amount at 19 NGOs.

Discussion and Results

Because of the variation found in the amount of NGOs the best way to determine a value of central tendency is using the median. The median number of NGOs reported on NGO Aid Map involved in the selection of African countries is 49. Considering the large prediction of approximately 10 million NGOs globally 49 seems to be a proportionally small median. Does this result a critique of the website or the transparency of NGOs in general?

To examine further these data I have decided to select the three countries with the largest presence of NGOs, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. To understand the type of involvement NGOs have in these three East African Countries I will compare the sections in which there is the most involvement. In both Ethiopia and in Uganda the projects that have the most NGO involvement are in healthcare projects. In Kenya the health projects come second to educational based projects. In Ethiopia, out of a total of 319 projects offered by 103 NGOs there are 74 projects that focus on health or 23.2%. In Uganda, there are a total of 479 projects and 82 projects that focus on health or

17.12%. And finally in Kenya there are a total of 73 out of 559 projects or 13.06%.

These data are better shown in *figure 1*, a visual representation of the countries with the largest health project involvement. The similarities in the amount of projects and the large amount of NGO involvement could be because of the similarities in political and economic issues these countries face, as well as the proximity in location.

Using the same web site, ngoaidmap.org to obtain my data, in *Table 3* the categories of care given by NGOs is represented on a global scale. The same trend is seen here in *Table 3* as in both *Tables 1 & 2*. The top two sectors of work are health at 23.92% and education at 18.59% of the total number of projects. These results are not surprising to see in these data. For example to compare the global results to the results from just Ethiopia, where the percentage of health projects is 23.2%, the global percentages reflect accurately the involvement in individual countries such as Ethiopia. But what would be the actual percentage globally including all 10million or more organizations? Would health continue to lead for project involvement?

Conclusion

This paper only briefly covered the large scope of NGO work in East Africa. There is need for more research and data collection about the actual number of NGOs at work in this continent. Understanding political and economic climates of the countries in East Africa is very important to understand in full the work NGOs are doing. "Different methods apply different criteria to identify high-priority areas, and the methods have become increasingly complex, incorporating a broad range of biological and economic criteria..."(Holmes 2012603), meaning future studies must take on a mixed

method approach to produce holistic understandings of NGO work. It is difficult to draw any complete conclusions from the data provided without a much more thorough examination of the larger issues at play.

However as I hope I have made clear there is a need for transparency in the work NGOs are doing, as well as, clarity in the mission of NGOs and their involvement with the local governments. Health is the most developed section of NGOs as these data have shown. This paper has lead to many more questions about NGO involvement in developing countries in general. Such as, why is there more involvement in the health sector of NGO work than any other? Is it more practical? Is the large involvement in health because of the clarity and visibility of the issues? These questions and questions similar lead to possibilities to further the knowledge of NGO work in the developing world and even on a global scale.

References Cited

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<https://www.ngoaidmap.org/>

<https://www.quora.com/Non-Governmental-Organizations>

	Ethiopia	Somalia	Kenya	Rwanda	Burundi	Uganda
total NGOs	103	29	215	41	20	164
agriculture	33	2	34	14	4	42
health	74	14	73	15	12	82
education	27	7	88	14	5	64
water	22	0	22	5	2	31
human rights	0	1	17	3	1	2
protections	15	4	27	3	4	10
economic	20	5	32	12	3	41
social services	3	2	8	3	1	14
Humanitarian AID	10	4	3			2
Food AID	5	1	12		1	6
Environment	0	1	11		1	5
Conflict Prevention	0	2	1		1	1
Disaster Prevention	6	3	9	1		6
Shelter and Housing			1		1	4
Energy			1	1		1
Gender			1			
Capacity Strength			1			
Communications		1		1	1	1
Mining						1
Other	1		3	1		2

Table 1

	Tanzania	zambia	zimbabwe	mozambique	swaziland	southafrica	Lesotho
total NGOs	84	57	39	35	19	60	14
agriculture	23	21	13	15	6	9	7
health	36	31	16	23	16	20	12
education	27	17	13	10	5	26	8
water	5	9	3	8	3	2	6
human rights	4	1	4		1	3	
protections	8	5	7	3	2	3	1
economic	12	13	9	6	4	5	1
social services	1	4	1		1	7	
Humanitarian AID	1	1	2	1			
Food AID	5	1	5	1	1	7	
Environment	5	1		2		4	
Conflict Prevention	1						
Disaster Prevention	1	5	1	2	1		
Shelter and Housing	1					1	
Energy	2						1
Gender	2	1		1			
Capacity Strength			1				
Communications	1						
Mining							
Other					1	2	

Table 2

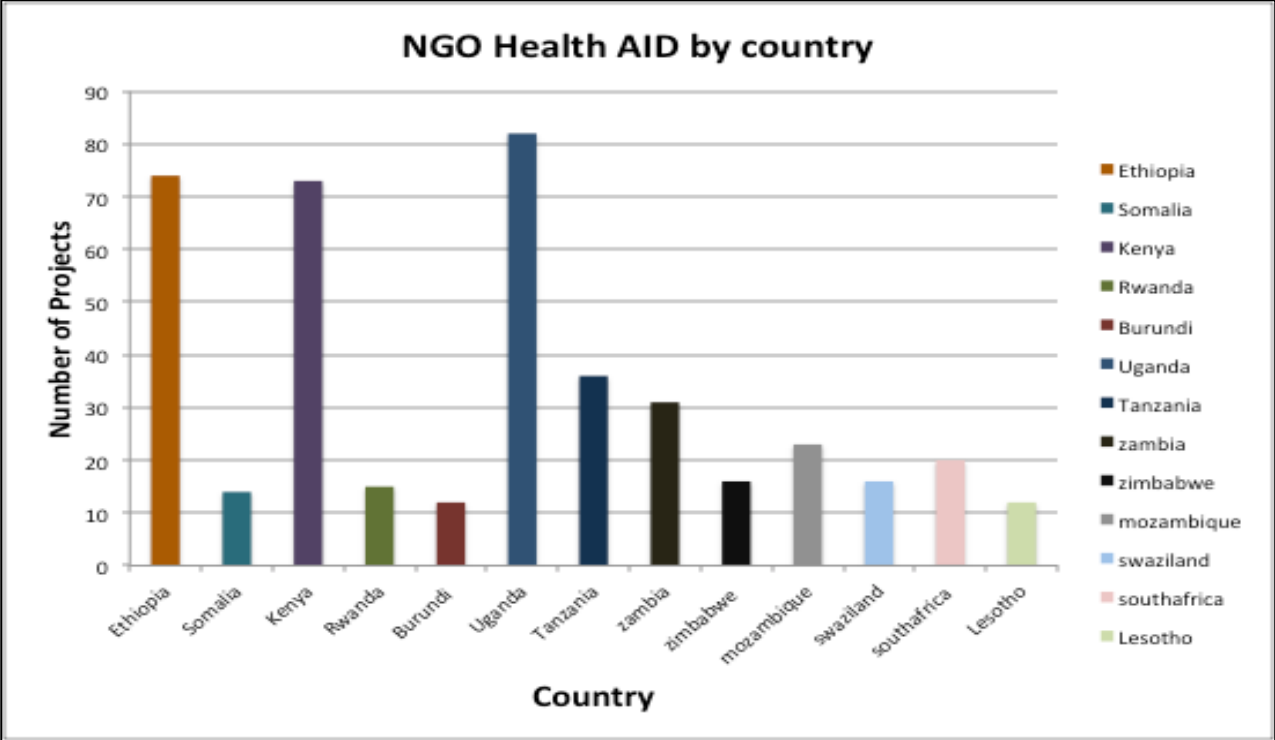


Figure 1

	Global	Percentage of total
Agriculture	812	9.30%
Health	2089	23.92%
Education	1624	18.59%
Water	444	5.08%
Human Rights	327	3.74%
Protections	546	6.25%
Economic	833	9.54%
Social Services	447	5.12%
Humanitarian AID	383	4.39%
Food AID	256	2.93%
Environment	241	2.76%
Conflict Prevention	149	1.71%
Disaster Prevention	113	1.29%
Shelter and Housing	85	0.97%
Energy	34	0.39%
Gender	21	0.24%
Capacity Strength	23	0.26%
Communications	12	0.14%
Mining	4	0.05%
Other	291	3.33%
Total Projects	8734	

Table 3: Global total of NGO projects, ngoaidmaps.org