

## **Managing Non-Governmental Organizations in Botswana**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the extent to which non-governmental organizations are managed in the context of Botswana. The paper is based mainly on secondary data analysis. The results indicate that NGOs are efficiently managed in Botswana, particularly in the areas of human rights. One of the major factors impacting management efficiency of non-governmental organizations is reduced international funding, particularly after Botswana was re-categorized as a mid income country. The research concludes that the previously held fact, that NGOs in Botswana enjoyed international funding, has now elapsed. This has affected their capacity to effectively lobby, develop, deliver and sustain themselves. Furthermore, reduced financial resources have impacted the NGOs' financial and human resource bases.

### **Key Words:**

Non-government Organizations, Not-for-profit Organizations, Strategic Management, Human Rights, Democracy, and Good Governance.

## **Managing Non-Governmental Organizations in Botswana**

### **Introduction**

This paper aims to explore and evaluate the management of non-governmental organizations in Botswana. The paper critically assesses the extent to which these organizations are managed. The paper is organised as follows. First, it gives an overview of the concept of NGOs. Second, the paper delves into the discussion of the relations between NGOs and the state. This discussion is important as the interaction between the two can easily have an impact on the management and operation of NGOs. Third, we look at the governance and management issues within NGOs. Fourth, the development of NGOs in Botswana is examined. Five NGOs in Botswana were selected to be used as case studies. These are the centre for human rights, a women's civil organization, a youth NGO, a trade union, and the national association of civil organisations in Botswana. Fifth, we consider factors which impact the efficient management of NGOs in Botswana. Sixth, the paper examines the management reforms taking place within the NGO sector; this includes lessons learnt and suggestions for improvement. The last section concludes and summarises the issues discussed.

### **Methodology**

This research is mainly based on secondary data analysis. Various organizational documents obtained from the selected non-governmental organizations were reviewed and analysed.

### **What are Non-Governmental Organizations?**

All over the globe there is an upsurge in the establishment of private, non-profit or non-governmental organizations. We are witnessing an unprecedented global associational revolution that is likely to prove significant in the twentieth century, as was the rise of the nation-state in the late nineteenth century. The role of development aid in this upsurge has been phenomenal, aside from the fact that such developments have been adversely affected by the absence of a generally accepted transnational or trans-historical definition of these organizations (Chimanikire, 2003).

The term NGO is broad and ambiguous. It covers a range of organizations within civil society, from political action groups to sports clubs. Its clear definition still remains contested. However, it can be argued that all NGO's can be regarded as civil society organizations though not all civil society organizations are NGO's. The concept of NGO came into use in 1945 following the establishment of the United Nations Organizations which recognized the need to give a consultative role to organizations which were not classified as government nor member states (Willett, 2002). NGOs take different forms and play different roles in different continents, with the NGO sector being most developed in Latin America and parts of Asia. The roots of NGOs are different according to the geographical and historical context. They have recently been regarded as part of the "third sector" or not-for-profit organizations. Although there is contestation of the definition of an NGO, it is widely accepted that these are organizations which pursue activities to relieve the suffering, promote interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, and undertake community development (Cleary, 1997).

Such organizations should have certain fundamental features which distinguish them from others (Stephenson, 2003). For organizations to be recognized as not-for-profit, they should satisfy the following criteria:

First, an NGO should be privately set up and sufficiently autonomous in its activity, that is independent of direct governmental control. Secondly, an NGO should also be non-profit, which would clearly define its voluntary character. Thirdly, it cannot be considered a political party with an aim of attaining political power. Fourthly, an NGO should support development which demonstrates its public interest character (Schiavo-Campo et al, 2001).

According to Turner and Hulme: “NGOs are generally registered organizations, community groups, professional associations, trade unions, cooperate charity organizations whose aim is to improve the well being of their members and of those areas in which they exists” (Turner and Hulme, 1997: 200).

The World Bank, on the other hand, sees NGO’s as private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, and/or undertake community development (WB, 2001). In this paper the terms non-governmental organization and not-for-profit organizations will be used interchangeably under the umbrella of civil society.

There are a mix of forces which have fuelled the rapid rise and prominence of NGOs. The prevalence of weak states and declining markets in Africa has led to the proliferation of NGOs as the only alternative to promote grassroots development. Thus, the development oriented NGOs are not only located between the state and the market, in terms of institutional space, but are also emerging as, what Levy calls, a critical ‘third sector’ that fosters the development of the marginalized groups. The received wisdom is that NGOs are more flexible and adaptive than governments, are quick to respond to people’s needs and are also cost effective. According to Salamon, 1993, the ascendancy of neo-liberalism in the late twentieth century also created a global environment for this third sector. The poor performance of the public sector in developing countries has led to a search for more effective and efficient organizational forms of the delivery of public services.

There are certain features which differentiate NGOs from government agencies, even when they are performing similar roles. NGOs have the capacity to experiment and learn from experience, linking processes to outcomes and are also able to enlist the energies and commitment of intended beneficiaries. Fowler (1988) has identified two key distinctive characteristics of NGOs.

Firstly, the relationship of the NGO with intended beneficiaries is based upon principles of voluntarism rather than those of control which is typical of government. This means that intended beneficiaries are involved in program design and management and if this happens, the programs stand a better chance of success as they are more likely to be relevant and attractive. (Korten,1980; Oakley and Marsden, 1984). Secondly, it is argued that NGOs have a task oriented approach that permits them to achieve appropriate organizational development, which encourages change and diversity rather than control and uniformity, which may hamper progress.

The growth of this third sector is therefore influenced by its comparative advantage over governments. More specifically, the advantages that NGOs or not-for-profit organizations have over governments include some of the following:

- i) achieving the correct relationship between development processes and outcomes;
- ii) reaching the poor, targeting their assistance on chosen groups;
- iii) obtaining true meaningful participation of the intended beneficiaries;
- iv) working with the people and then choosing the correct form of assistance for them, i.e. not being dominated by resources as the basis for the relationship;
- v) being flexible and responsive to their works;
- vi) working with and strengthening local institutions;
- vii) achieving outcomes at less cost (Tredt, 1998: 129)

It should, however, be noted that although NGOs in the eyes of the International donor community are cost effective and are better placed to reach the poor, there is very little evidence that supports this assertion (Robinson, 1992; Farrington and Bebbington, 1993).

### **NGO-State Relations**

There is no doubt that with increasing demands on the state by the citizens, the state can no longer be the sole provider of goods and services. It is also true that the support and interest in NGOs has grown as a result of the failure by state agencies to deliver services. Thus, the state and NGOs need each other. In terms of their relation with the state, Clark (1991) provides a liberalist view in terms of three options; they can complement, reform, and/or oppose the state.

In their role of complementing the state, they act as the implementers of development activities. In this case as argued by Thomas, (1992) NGOs fill the gaps left by the public service. The role of the state becomes more of an enabler rather than a provider of services. In their reforming role NGOs are seen as agents of advocacy and contribute immensely to policy dialogue. NGOs are able to represent the interests of the people they work with and in this case can ensure that policies are adaptable to real life situations. Finally, NGOs can oppose the state. They can do this by acting as watchdogs and holding the state accountable. This can be achieved through several methods including lobbying or even overtly supporting groups which are adversely affected by the policies of the government (Thomas, 1992). An example is the Survival International (SI) which is an international NGO based in the United Kingdom that supports the Basarwa in Botswana in their refusal of relocation from the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve (CKGR).

From the foregoing, it is clear that NGO-government relationships are complex and diverse and are likely to affect the management of NGO activities. The relationships are affected by the specific contextual factors which may include the nature of NGOs objectives and strategies, the area of operation of an NGO, the behavior of the donor and the nature and character of the regime (Turner & Hulme, 1997). These relations also differ from country to country. In some countries certain regimes are favourable to NGOs while in others the relations are antagonistic.

In order for NGOs to realize their potential contribution and to efficiently manage their activities, a healthy relationship between them and the government is essential. This healthy relationship can be conceivable only if both parties share the same objectives. If the government's commitment to poverty reduction is weak, then NGOs are likely to view collaborating with government as counter-productive. In the same vein, dictatorial

governments will be wary of NGOs which tend to be sympathetic to the poor. In this case NGOs will not value a positive relationship with government and may choose to go their own way and attempt to make life difficult for government agencies.

However, in cases where the government has a positive social agenda which resonates with the NGOs, there is potential for a strong, collaborative relationship. However, even where there is room for cooperation, jealousies and mistrust between NGOs and governments are deep rooted. Governments always have the fear that NGOs will erode their political power and NGOs also mistrust the motivations of government officials (Fowler, 1992).

### **Governance and Management Issues of NGOs**

The issue of good governance is the key to the functioning of NGOs. It implies that the effective management of an NGO's resources is done in a manner which is transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to the needs of the people. Since NGOs aim at becoming sustainable, then good governance is critical to their existence. In many developing countries NGOs often lack the institutional capacity and resources to operate. Also, funds from donors are sometimes poorly managed. Thus, in order to ensure effective and proper management of resources, good governance becomes an important aspect of every NGO. One of the key requirements for good governance is accountability. The issue this creates is to whom are NGOs accountable? At first this question may appear to have an easy answer. Obviously they are expected to account for the use of resources to the funders. However, the ability to ensure that accountability exists, among the NGOs and to all those concerned, remains debatable. NGO staff members are not elected and ordinary people have no mechanisms for bringing them to account for their actions. Unlike governments, who have to get elected and can only avoid accountability through violence or coercion and in business where consumers can decide where to spend their money, NGOs have no obvious accountability structures. NGOs themselves see the need to take this issue seriously as there is a growing emphasis on the need for proper monitoring.

There are a number of ways in which NGOs can improve on their governance and management operations. These include the following:

- Stating their mission, values and objectives clearly and ensuring that these strategies are followed
- Better human resources development and training for their managers and staff including board members and volunteers
- Better management processes as well as financial management, accounting, and budget systems.

Nevertheless, in order for these systems to be implemented, committed staff and leadership within the NGOs themselves are required. The expanded role of NGOs in the delivery of public services is likely to affect the potential of these organizations. The work of NGOs is much more difficult and demanding now as they are expected to deliver quality with such limited resources. Problems arise where governments shift major responsibilities to the NGO sector. According to Schiavo-Campo (2001), some NGOs do not have the time and expertise to manage all of the funded programs, or even to ensure full involvement by all of the communities, as is normally claimed. In some cases, where there are many departments trying to deal with the NGOs, the problems may be created by the governments themselves. Also,

staff at the local level may not be familiar with government policies and this affects efficiency of the NGOs because of tensions which may arise. The following section outlines the evolution of NGOs and the context under which NGOs operate in Botswana.

### **NGOs in Botswana**

NGOs in Botswana are emerging in a country that has done very well in terms of socio-economic development and management. Botswana is a small country that was blessed with the discovery of diamonds. The government has, over the years, used finances earned from the diamond industry to develop the economy and provide a variety of developmental and social services to its people. The country has also adopted very good macroeconomic management policies which have helped Botswana design and implement various infrastructural and development projects. The country boasts one of the longest surviving democracies in all of Africa and also has a stable political economy.

Despite such strides, civil society has emerged in order to supplement the state's efforts in providing sustainable development, social services and programs to its people. The civil society, in both developed and developing countries, has emerged in order to supplement the failures of the state to effectively deliver services and development to all to its citizenry. It is through the complementary efforts of civil society and interest groups that good governance can be promoted. These same efforts also help to ensure that government goods and services reach the grassroots, the poor, the marginalized, the disadvantaged in society, both fairly and equitably. The state and civil society need to supplement and complement each other's efforts in terms of the developmental and service delivery agenda. Civil society emerged in Africa, particularly in the 1980s when international financial institutions, donor agencies and Western governments shifted some their aid from African governments to civil society (Molomo and Somolekae, 1999).

Non-Governmental Organizations now play an important role in any country. Non-Governmental Organisations provide an umbrella of services including the promotion of equality and human rights, legal services, education and training programs, socio-economic political empowerment, and employment creation schemes. Civil society continues to play an important role in any developed and developing society because they help citizens participate and influence the decision making process as well as the management of public affairs. Through civil society, citizens too can make an impact on the decision making processes at both central and local government levels. According to Diamond (1994), civil society refers to the 'realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating (largely), self supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules' (cited in Lektorwe, 1999: 87).

According to Maundeni (2005), civil society in Botswana is very weak and organizations usually lobby bureaucracy rather than politicians as a result. Furthermore, Maundeni asserts that civil society is characterized by ad-hoc ways of organizing. That is, civil society organizations are temporary in nature as they address particular issues in the society and then go into a state of decline. Lektorwe (1999) also argues that 'civil society in Botswana is weak and lacks the capacity to organize itself' (1999: 95). Lektorwe (1999) argues further that despite the fact that Botswana has built a successful democracy, the civil society structures still remain weak. Democracy is believed to be one of the mechanisms that promotes and facilitates the growth of a strong civil society. As pointed out by Molomo and Somolekae (1999), 'it is an undisputable fact that democracy is hollow and meaningless if not accompanied by the

existence of a strong civil society seeking to represent non-governmental interests' (1999: 99). Lekorwe (1999) argues that one of the factors that impede the growth of a strong civil society in Botswana is a shortage of citizens knowledgeable in the management of NGOs. Furthermore, Lekorwe argues that the fact that there are only a limited number of volunteers that run the affairs of NGOs also has an affect on their development. There is also the issue of adequate time availability, especially in terms of the public and private sector employees who lend their services and knowledge to civil society. In addition, Lekorwe maintains that the fact that civil servants are not permitted to engage in lobbying and other political activities actually hampers the development of NGOs in the country. The limited number of educated individuals who support and actively participate in the activities of civil society also affects the growth of NGOs and interest groups. The fact that the state controls the public media also has an affect on the development of civil society in Botswana. The sources of public media, such as newspapers, radio and television, which are accessed by the majority of the population are controlled by the state. This limits their potential use and creates biased publication regarding civil society issues. The biggest problem, as noted by Hirschman (1970), is the attitude of the people, because they believe that there is no use in putting pressure on the state 'since no one is prepared to listen to them' (cited in Lekorwe, 1999).

Molutsi (1995) argues that one of the factors contributing to the weaknesses of civil society is that the concept of non-governmental organizations was imported from outside by donor agencies in response to the African states. The structure of civil society is inward looking and less engaging when it comes to policy issues. In some cases, governments in Africa spite civil society because of the sympathetic attention they receive from international organizations and donor agencies (Molomo, 1996). Furthermore, donor agencies have often favoured not-for-profit organizations in order to generate confrontational politics between civil society and African states. However, Lekorwe (1999) argues that some of the civil society and interest groups in Botswana are manipulated by the government through state funding. Some of the civil society organizations are therefore not able to openly criticize and challenge government because of their dependency on state funding. As pointed out by Molomo and Somolekae (1999), NGOs in Botswana are more interested in welfare issues than issues relating to politics and good governance. The reasoning behind this perspective is that they find such matters to be too political. For example, churches are more interested in moral and spiritual issues than developmental issues. However, the authors further argue that there are other NGO sectors that advocate for political issues including issues dealing with democracy, good governance, as well as legal, constitutional and human rights. Examples include women's NGOs which advocate for the promotion and empowerment of women, the provision of educational opportunities for school drop outs, and operating day care centres, while human rights NGOs advocate for democracy, good governance, in addition to legal and constitutional rights (Molom and Somolekae, 1999).

However, as noted by Maundeni (2005), a lot has happened since 1996, including socio-economic and political changes that have occurred in Botswana. The civil society has been transformed as well, in terms of its structure, core roles and the overall management of their activities. However, the effective management of these NGOs is still affected by financial and managerial constraints, as will be demonstrated later in the paper. The following section briefly discusses the roles, activities, and overall management of selected NGOs in Botswana.



## **Ditshwanelo – The Botswana Centre for Human Rights**

The Centre for Human Rights was established in 1993 with the overall objective of ‘the creation of a human rights culture in Botswana’ (Ditshwanelo, 2004). Ditshwanelo is the only not-for-profit organization in Botswana responsible for dealing with human rights issues in the country. As outlined in the centre’s mission, ‘the centre seeks to affirm human dignity and equality irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, social status or political convictions’ (Ditshwanelo, 2004: 3). The centre’s mission is linked to Botswana’s National Vision 2016, which stipulates that everyone should be accorded the right to live their lives with dignity. Overall, the centre strives to achieve a society in which:

- Everyone is equal before the law
- The general population is aware of what human rights are, and understands and supports the rights of those who are different from themselves
- The public hears about human rights violations and puts pressure on the government and/or perpetrators to redress the violation
- Everyone understands their rights and is aware of opportunities to address their legal matters
- Everyone has access to affordable legal assistance
- Everyone has the confidence and skills necessary to be able to stand up for their rights (Ditshwanelo 2004: 3).

The above objectives are achieved through a variety of programs including inter-dependent programs and activities. The centre is an advocate for a variety of programs including HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, the marginalized minority group known as the *Basarwa*, the abolition of the death penalty, paralegal training and legal advice, children’s rights, the domestic workers’ project, land rights, gays, lesbians and bisexuals, rights based development, and African citizenship. Ditshwanelo has had a huge impact in the country, especially when it comes to advocating for issues relating to human rights. For example, the centre lobbies for legal representation for those who can not afford attorneys, they attempt to save the lives of those facing the possibility of the death penalty, as well as rescuing abused children. Some of the major achievements of the centre include several new publications, including a booklet on ‘Inheritance Rights’ and one on the ‘Alternative to the *pro deo* system’. The centre continuously advocates for changes in specific laws. For example, the abolition of the death penalty, they encourage the government to sign, ratify and implement international treaties, they argue for the provision of legal advocates against incidences of corruption, they argue for more transparency and accountability, as well as the freedom of information and of the press. The centre has recently contributed to the Marital Power Bill which came into effect in May 2005.

However, Ditshwanelo is seriously under resourced as it is a non-membership NGO and does not accept funding from the government (Maundeni, 2005). The human rights centre’s financial resources are mainly sourced from donor agencies, volunteers, and other supporters. As mentioned earlier on, the management of the centre has been affected by reduced donor funding due to Botswana’s re-classification as an upper-mid income country (Ditshwanelo, 2004). Some of the factors affecting the effective management of the Centre include insufficient funding and a shortage of staff. A lack of funding by international donor agencies may force the centre to scale down its activities. Yet another challenge, as argued by Ditshwanelo (2004), is ‘the continuous need to ensure that the concept of human rights is well understood to mean ‘all should live their daily lives as self respecting beings’. The centre also maintains that the government needs to honour its responsibility of ensuring that the people

within the borders live their lives with dignity. As pointed out by Ditshwanelo, Botswana has been perceived as a shining democracy in Africa, it is therefore imperative that this democracy is accompanied by equality, equity, participation, consultation, accountability, and respect for human rights. Despite these challenges, the centre has opened an office in the northern part of the country in order to further promote and assist people with human rights issues.

### **Emang Basadi Women's Association**

This is a women's organization which was established in 1986 by a group of women interested in improving the legal, social, cultural, and economic status of women in Botswana. The main objectives of Emang Basadi (Stand Up Women) include the identification of problems related to women through discussion and research and the development of action oriented strategies with a view to change the socio-economic and legal status of women. Furthermore, the association aims at mobilizing and increasing awareness among women and the public regarding specific problems faced by women. Emang Basadi also aims to emphasize the role of women and enhance the recognition of women's participation in national development. Issues relating to greater social equality and the removal of cultural and legal barriers, which prohibits the advancement of women, are the integral parts of Emang's mandate (Emang Basadi, 2006). Emang Basadi targets groups of women in politics and decision making positions, women's wings of political parties, as well as the youth and voters in general. The organization is involved in a variety of activities, including research which lies particularly in the areas of law, rape, and violence against women. Emang Basadi also offers leadership skills training to women who are in politics and managerial positions.

This NGO had been successful in a variety of areas, including the supervision of the October 2004 national elections, together with Ditshwanelo. Some of Emang's publications include 'Women and Law in Botswana' (1987), 'Gender and Development of Women Politicians' (1980), and 'Setting an Agenda for Women's Empowerment Towards 1999' (1997). As noted earlier, the major challenge faced by Emang is the reduced funding by international donor agencies. This has adversely affected Emang and hampered it in attaining some its mandates. Nevertheless, Emang had a strategic plan called 'Plan of 2002 to 2006'. The plan entailed a variety of projects which were aimed at empowering and promoting women's status. Women and Law in Southern Africa Trust (WLSA) is a non-governmental organization whose objectives and activities are somewhat related to those of Emang Basadi, though they have a wider area of coverage. WLSA was established in 1989 in order to foster the socio-economic, political, and legal advancement of women in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. WLSA's overall objectives are to conduct research on issues related to the law and to educate women on their legal rights. This NGO targets women in all SADC member states, public policy makers, and also the justice delivery system. WLSA's main activities include: maintenance law issues, inheritance laws, emerging family forms, and violence against women.

### **Botswana National Youth Council (BNYC)**

BNYC was established through the presidential directive of 1974 (Maundeni, 2005). Members are elected from the leaders of affiliate youth organizations and district youth councils. This NGO is funded by the government and other donor agencies. BNYC is mainly interested in promoting the interests of the youth in the country through programs that provide such things as youth economic and political empowerment. The NGO strives to promote the status of the youth and also lobbies the government in order to garner support for the country's youth in

terms of providing leadership positions, changes to the health system to make it more youth friendly, as well as promoting their involvement and influence on issues relating to land allocation in the country. The BNYC has had some impact in promoting the interests of young people in the country. For instance, through BNYC youth were successful in lobbying the government in order to reduce the age for membership to the land board from 30 years of age to 28 (Maundeni, 2005). The BNYC had initially proposed 18 years of age, but the government reached a compromise so that membership to the land board should be restricted only to those aged 28 and above. The BNYC has also managed to influence the health system, forcing them to change their attitude when attending to the youth, and lobbied for the establishment of youth centres throughout the country (Maundeni, 2005).

## **Trade Unions**

Trade unions also play a significant role in the civil society in Botswana. The most significant trade unions are the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU), Botswana Teachers Union (BTU), Botswana Secondary Teachers Union (BOFETU) and the Botswana Primary Schools Association (BOPRITA). The BFTU was formed in 1971 and has 25 unions in affiliation with it. The BFTU has branches across the country and is funded through membership fees. The BFTU as a parent organization has remained weak, as argued by Obassi et al, (2006), and has not made an impact in the country's economy (Mpabanga, 2005). Some of the factors which impact the effectiveness of trade unions include legal, political, organizational, and cultural constraints (Obassi et al, 2006). Trade unions in Botswana are not well developed and organized when compared to other countries. Some of the major factors affecting the effectiveness and management of trade unions are the lack of organization and a poor membership base. As argued by Obassi et al (2006), some members of BFTU have stopped paying their membership fees because of feelings of ineffectiveness towards the parent union who they accuse of not fulfilling its mandate of promoting their interests. Government laws regarding unions have not been conducive to the development of trade unions. For example, the leaders of unions are not allowed, by law, to be working on a fulltime basis (Obassi et al, 2006). Hence, this affects their potential effectiveness and impact. However, the latest changes to the trade unions and labour law of 1984, which was amended in 2004, will transform the development, governance, and activities of the trade unions in Botswana.

Despite these challenges, some trade unions are striving to have an impact in fulfilling members' demands, such as BTU. One of the major demands of BTU is the democratization of the education system in the country. The current practice with regards to the education system is such that teachers do not participate in the policy making and development of the curriculum. Discussions are underway with the Ministry of Education in an attempt to get rid of the centralised system which entails unfair HR practices such as the unfair hiring, transferring and promotion of teachers (Maundeni, 2005).

There are many other NGOs operating in Botswana which have not been covered in this paper. For example, there are NGOs dealing specifically with issues related to HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has affected the African continent more so than any other in the world. Countries in Southern Africa are amongst the most affected in the continent. The civil society is, therefore, complementing the efforts of governments in Africa, and Botswana in particular, to combat the adverse effects of HIV/AIDS on the socio-economic lives of people. The government, the National AIDS Coordinating Agency (NACA), the private sector, and NGOs are striving to minimise the impact that HIV/AIDS has on productivity and the erosion of human capital and human resource levels in various economic sectors and communities.

Concerted efforts by the government, NACA, private sector, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), and NGOs are aimed at encouraging people to go for voluntary testing, offering HIV/AIDS treatment and counselling, in addition to home based care and support services for those affected and their families. NACA and HIV/AIDS NGOs and CBOs are mainly funded by the government and international donor agencies. They are managed by volunteers as well as a few complementary/permanent staff. Their management has recently come under attack in the media, particularly on issues relating to good governance (Botswana Daily News, 2006). They have been accused of financial mismanagement and maladministration.

## **BOCONGO**

BOCONGO was established in 1995 as an umbrella body for non-governmental organizations in Botswana. BOCONGO enjoys the membership of over seventy NGOs in the country, ranging in a variety of issues, such as human rights, health, youth, religious and women (BOCONGO, 2006). The main mission of BOCONGO is to provide an enabling environment for the NGO sector to become a recognized partner in the development process in Botswana and internationally. Furthermore, BOCONGO aims to promote experience sharing with other NGOs as well as provide assistance to members on issues relating to networking, capacity building, information dissemination, and policy advocacy. BOCONGO is partly funded by the government and the African Development Foundation. This NGO is engaged in a variety of activities including: sitting in the Vision 2016 council, involvement in election observation, and conducting workshops on electoral reform and the empowerment of women. In addition, BOCONGO promotes awareness amongst the rural populace regarding the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), which aims to reduce poverty in rural areas. This NGO has also assisted a number of rural NGOs in improving their administrative capacity and their networking with other NGOs in the development of the country. In addition, BOCONGO disseminates information from other regional and international NGOs. BOCONGO acknowledges the effect that reduced funding from international donors will have on the financial resources of civil society in the country (BOCONGO, 2005). The following section gives an overview assessment of factors which impact the effective management of NGOs in Botswana.

## **Factors Impacting Efficient Management of NGOs**

### ***Financial Resources***

As noted earlier in this paper, one of the major factors impacting the effective management and sustainability of NGOs is the nature of their dependability on donor funding. A majority of civil society organizations in developed and developing countries were established in order to complement and supplement governments' developmental and service delivery efforts. Multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, Commonwealth Secretariat, as well as regional organizations such as the European Union, African Union and SADC have funded NGOs' programs and activities. Funds were channelled through the civil society organizations to foster development and improve service delivery at the grassroots level. In the case of Botswana, donor agencies have reduced their funding of NGOs once the country was elevated to an upper-mid income status. This has led to some the closing down of some NGOs in Botswana due to a lack of funding and insufficient staffing levels. The common impact of financial dependence on donor funding is that once donors pull their financial support, NGOs collapse. As pointed out by Ditshwanelo (2004), one of the major threats to

their existence and the carrying out of their mandates is the reduced funding which may force them to scale down their activities.

Most NGOs in Africa and Botswana in particular, lack clearly defined structures in terms of organizational charts, buildings, facilities, equipment and human resources. The major contributory factor to this is the constraint that limited financial resources places on the ability of NGOs to enable, plan, organize, and design clearly defined structures as well as equip their offices with adequate equipment and facilities. As noted by Molomo and Somolekae (1999), the key weakness of NGOs in Africa is the inappropriate organizational structures which impact the manner in which NGOs carry out their core business. However, Ditshwanelo is one of the most well established and longest surviving NGOs (12 years) and it has an organizational structure that links various programs and activities to the centre, and also supports human resource requirements (Ditshwanelo, 2004).

### ***Human Resources Management and HR Development***

As noted earlier in the paper, most if not all NGOs depend on voluntary staff to run their activities and programs. NGOs, therefore, generally do not have control over the quality of labour they obtain. Their staffing levels are determined by those who volunteer their services and whether or not they have time available. Some of the personnel used to run the affairs of NGOs are not well trained to effectively carry out their duties. A lack of well trained and experienced HR limits the extent to which NGOs are able to manage their daily affairs and their capacity to effectively plan, appraise, implement, and monitor their projects and programs. The other issue is the fact that the most knowledgeable and experienced volunteers do not normally provide adequate support for NGOs' activities partly because they are not allowed, by law, to be actively involved and partly because of the limited time they have to render their services (Lekorwe, 1999).

### ***Strategic Management***

Some NGOs in Botswana are moving towards reforming their structures and roles in order to ensure that they have a clear direction and strategy of how to get to where they want to be in the next few years. For example, Ditshwanelo has a mission and vision statement which reflects their core business of promoting and protecting human rights in Botswana. BOCONGO has a mission statement that articulates the desire to establish an enabling environment for the NGO/CBO sector so that they can become recognized partners in the development process both in Botswana and internationally. In addition, BOCONGO has a strategic plan outlining its activities and programs for the next five years (BOCONGO, 2006). Emang Basadi had a strategic plan covering 2002 to 2006. The Centre for Human Rights and BOCONGO have developed websites which provide information on their missions, visions, values, and strategic goals. The Centre for Human Rights also has annual reports, up to 2004, that can be obtained from their website. This shows that although some NGOs have capacity problems, they still aim to have their aspirations and long term strategic goals spelt out in order to indicate the directions they would take now and in the future, thus promoting visionary leadership.

### ***Democracy and Good Governance***

Democracy and good governance are currently regarded as key aspects of management in any organization. Multilateral and regional organizations emphasise the importance of these

concepts as motivation to fund civil society. However, a lack of democratic practices, transparency, and accountability are some of the factors impeding the effective management of NGOs in Africa. Botswana is not an exception to this trend, as is evident in recent reports. Molomo and Somolekae (1999) give examples of undemocratic practices found in some NGOs in Botswana, where periodic elections are a rare occurrence. Issues surrounding a lack of accountability have recently been exposed by the media. For example, some NGOs dealing with the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Botswana have been accused of maladministration, financial mismanagement, and the misuse of donor and public funds which were channelled through them (Botswana Daily News 2006). They were also accused of lacking timely reporting to the funding agency (Botswana Guardian, 2006). Furthermore, some HIV/AIDS NGOs have been accused of lacking the capacity to implement projects. Issues regarding a lack of proper record keeping and the maintaining of proper financial accounts have an impact the management of NGOs in Botswana. As acknowledged by BOCONGO (2005), in order to improve management of NGOs in Botswana, some of the capacity building programs must include training in the areas of governance, management, leadership, financial management and record keeping. The following section reviews the lessons learnt and suggests ways to improve the management of NGOs in Botswana.

### **Lessons and Suggestions**

As noted above, one of the major challenges of managing NGOs in Botswana is the reduced financial support from donors and other international institutions. There is, therefore, a need to empower NGOs with the ability to source funds and help them realize their goals. Insufficient funding, especially after Botswana was classified as a middle income country, would be facilitated by granting NGOs access to alternative financial resources, such as government and supporters. Alternative sources of funding will assist particularly small NGOs, which are not well established, to work more closely with the needy such as the poor, orphans, children and the marginalized. Still on the issue of assistance for smaller NGOs, the most well established and longest surviving NGOs, such as Ditshwanelo, should assist smaller NGOs in helping them to develop and become sustainable. BOCONGO can also play a key role in this respect through capacity building and creating a positive environment for smaller as well as established NGOs to thrive. As was pointed out by Obassi et al (2005), NGOs in Botswana have influenced public policy making processes since the late 1990s. This was accomplished through persuasive, consultative, and peaceful methods. Ditshwanelo is one NGO which has played a major role in this regard.

Training and development in areas of organizational, project and financial management, as well as capacity building represent some of the measures which are needed in order to improve NGO management in Botswana. Training and education, in order to allow NGOs to effectively lobby and have an impact on the communities they strive to assist, will enhance NGOs' management. Furthermore, strengthening NGOs' lobbying skills will also enhance their impact with regards to policy and practice. Equipping NGOs with skills that would allow them to effectively lobby government would also help NGOs effectively campaign for funding locally, nationally, and internationally. This can be done, for example, through institutions such as SADC and NEPAD. In addition, improved lobbying skills would facilitate the NGOs' ability to collaborate and source support from international initiatives such as the UN and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Furthermore, such skills will also help the NGOs mobilize communities, as well as national and international organizations, to actively support and participate in their activities. Through vigorous lobbying, NGOs will be able to encourage

communities and institutions to play an active role through the volunteering of their time, which would lend further knowledge and skills to NGOs' activities and success.

NGOs should also continue to play their role in practising good governance through transparency, equity, and also timely reporting regarding their achievements and areas where they need assistance. Equally crucial is the issue of publicizing their achievements in service delivery, lobbying, and explicitly identifying areas of financial and HR support which are in need. Having a well developed website would also facilitate NGOs' efforts in having their aspirations, effects, and areas of need known nationally and internationally. Information dissemination regarding good governance, the activities, and the lobbying effects of NGOs would also enhance the public confidence, acknowledgment, and support of NGOs. The establishment of partnerships with local, regional, and international institutions would improve the management of NGOs by providing lessons learnt from the experiences and successes of a number of different multinational non-governmental organizations. Collaboration in the areas of fighting and eradicating poverty, human rights, HIV/AIDS, as well as the empowerment of women and children, the prevention of injustice and inequality will be of the utmost importance, with regards to these partnerships.

## **Conclusion**

This paper addressed the evolution of NGOs and the issues relating to the management of NGOs in Botswana. One of the characteristics of the NGOs management practices in Botswana includes that fact that they are mostly funded by donor agencies, while some are funded partly by government and membership fees. However, one of the major challenges of managing NGOs in Botswana is the limited amount of financial and human resources available to them. The withdrawal of funding by international donor agencies, since Botswana was re-classified as an upper-mid-income country, has adversely affected the operations of NGOs in Botswana. This has led to some NGOs having to close down, while others have had to scale back their operations due to financial constraints.

The government, the private sector, the public, and the NGOs themselves have to play an increasingly and active role in the efforts to supplement each others' efforts in making development and community services available and equally accessible to all those in the country. The efforts of government, private sector, and communities at large, regarding the administrative support of NGOs through capacity building, in areas of good governance, effective lobbying, sourcing funds, project management, implementation, and monitoring, would certainly help promote the sustainability of NGOs. Capacity building in areas of financial management and reporting would also be beneficial. The government, in collaboration with BOCONGO, should strive to provide a positive environment in order to enable civil society to voice their concerns through democratic and civic means. Such an environment would encourage NGOs to be effective in service delivery, lobbying, advocacy, awareness building, and the empowerment of the marginalized. In the process, it will help citizens to actively participate and promote NGO sustainability. Collaborative efforts by the government, the private sector, regional institutions like SADC and NEPAD, as well as multilateral organizations such as the UN, would also be beneficial. Partnerships in initiatives, such as MDGS, will strengthen the efforts of NGOs in promoting democracy, equity, human rights, and sustainable development. NGOs themselves should also take the lead in promoting visionary leadership, strategic management, and the practice of good governance in their operations. Enhanced funding and capacity building of NGOs will bridge the gap between the

efforts of the government and multinational institutions in promoting democracy, good governance, and sustainable development, particularly in the areas of human rights, equality, socio-economic and political empowerment as well as the eradication of poverty and injustices in Botswana, both regionally and internationally.

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