

# NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AS ALTERNATIVES FOR SERVICE DELIVERY IN CONTEMPORARY STATES

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the last two decades, a worldwide consensus has emerged about the limits of what can be achieved by public sectors and the need to relieve the public sector of a number of functions that it could share with other role-players or for which it has proved to be particularly not capable to achieve or unsuitable. This development has called for the need to consider alternatives for public service delivery thus looking at the private sector and non-profit organizations (NPOs) for solutions in the pursuit of a number of development objectives. Since the 90s, NPOs have played a significant role in supporting citizens at various levels. NPOs' relevance and significance differ depending on the context. For the sake of this article, an emphasis is placed on NPOs' role in countries of the sub-Saharan African region especially those that are considered to be fragile, weak or failed states.

**KEYWORDS:** *The role of the state; public services delivery; non-profit sector; non-governmental organizations; fragile states; weak states; failed states; governance and government.*

## INTRODUCTION

The World Bank (1997:42) outlines four fundamental tasks that lie at the core of every government's mission. Thus, every government should do the following: establish a foundation of law; maintain a non-distortionary policy environment, including macro-economic stability; invest in basic social services and infrastructure; and protect the vulnerable and the environment. Israel (1990:1) notes that the universality of acceptance of the need to change the role of the state is remarkable. It is being pursued, in different degrees, by most countries irrespective of ideology, political structures or levels of development. As a result, a worldwide consensus has emerged about the limits of what can be achieved by public sectors, the failure of centralized planning, the need to relieve the public sector of a number of functions for which it has proved to be particularly unsuitable, and about the need to look for other alternatives in the private sector or among NGOs to pursue a number of development objectives. As a result, governments have begun to look to the non-profit sector to fill the breach left by their withdrawal from social programs and to provide a mechanism by which social services can be delivered less expensively (Hall and Reed, 1998:1). Beyond the context of a functional state in which NGOs play the role of filling the gap in the provision of social programs, one must stress that in the developing countries, NGOs attain a far reaching role for citizens' survival. In the sections that will follow later in this article, one will explain the significance of the role NGOs play especially in fragile, weak and failed states.

In recent years, the debate in developed societies over the respective roles of public and private institutions in providing collective goods has shifted. Traditionally framed in terms of the appropriate functions of governments and markets, a third component has been brought into the debate: the non-profit sector (NPS). Several factors account for this shift. The main factors that provoked the shift are mainly the limits of the state capabilities and the market failure. As a result, governments that faced declining public treasuries and which were under pressure to reduce their span of activity, while facing demands by electorates to maintain long-standing benefits and entitlements, begun to look at the non-profit sector either as a potentially less expensive means of delivering social services or as a means of avoiding the complete termination of selected social programs (Hall and Reed 1998:2). Across Europe and elsewhere there has been an increasing use of voluntary and community sector organizations (VCOs) to deliver public or human services over the last decade (Ascoli and Ranci, 2002; Evers and Laville, 2004). Evidence from the US and increasingly from Europe seems to show that the precise role that VCOs play in public service delivery varies according to the existing arrangements and social politics in individual countries, but also that some markedly similar trends can be noted, with significance for both states and VCOs. The agenda justifying these developments is that public service delivery, especially in welfare services, is supposed to be assessed on the basis of what works, irrespective of the sector, ownership or form of organization delivering the service (Kramer, 2000). In the sub-Saharan African region, the requirement for multi-partism and democracy that swept the continent in the 1990s came along with devastating consequences that negatively affected the role of a state. Instead of instilling democracy many countries entered into a period of political instability, social turmoil, rebellions and armed conflicts that weakened the state machinery. As a result, many countries could no longer afford to honor their social contracts and subsequently they lost their capacity to provide the basic and essential services. More than two decades have passed and many countries are still struggling to get back on their feet. In a number of countries, if it was not for the presence of NPOs, citizens would have not survived. It is in this instance that this article intends to examine the need to assess available alternatives for the provision of the much needed public services to meet citizens' expectations in countries in

the region. Throughout the continent, NGOs (international and local organizations) play a noticeable role in supporting citizens' survival in the absence of a capable state to honor the social contract. One would like to stress that this article does not advocate for the promotion of NPOs as a panacea for resolving the various challenges the region is faced with, but the article highlights the significance of the third sector in the context of failed, fragile and weak states. The article suggests that given the limited state capacity in certain countries in the region, the public sector should contemplate options presented by the third sector represented mostly by NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) which fall under the umbrella of NPOs.

It is important to note that, in a number of countries developing countries, NPOs play a an indispensable role in bridging the gap between governments and citizens particularly in the provision of basic services such health, water, sanitation, education, to name but a few. However, for the sake of this article, an emphasis is placed on NPOs' role in the countries of the sub-Saharan African region especially those that are considered to be fragile, weak or failed states. In the process of meeting its objectives, the article relies on a qualitative approach as it relies on a review of available literature and considers few case studies in order to assess the role of NGOs in contemporary states. The article is structured as follows: section one gives an overview and explains the changing role of the state focusing on the rise of governance without government. Section two, it offers a theoretical perspective based on institutional, stakeholders and agency theories. Section three, it discusses and distinguishes and outlines the relationships that exist between states and NGOs. Section four, highlights the role of NGOs in a contemporary state. Section five examines the relevance of NGOs in a fragile, weak or failed state while section six presents few case studies to demonstrate the relevance of the third sector actors in selected countries in the region. Section seven enumerates some of the challenges faced with in the relationships between states and NGOs. Finally, the article will conclude and provide some recommendations.

## **THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE STATE – GOVERNANCE WITHOUT GOVERNMENT**

The relationship of exchange between citizens and politicians, and between politicians and executive agents can be seen as a contractual agreement (North, 1981). The state will seek to maximize the opportunities for citizens to exercise their rights, in exchange for which politicians are given the right to exercise power (e.g. by the use of force). Politicians are also allowed to restrict citizens' use of rights, for instance by attenuation (to avoid damage to the rights of others) and partitioning of rights (i.e., dividing scarce assets or resources) as long as restrictions agree with social norms (Eggertson, 1990). Max Weber labeled it rationalization of the state (Ultee et al., 1992:241). Bureaucrats are empowered by politicians to implement policies, but have no rights of production. For example, they do not determine the size of production (input, output), budgets or prices, nor are they allowed to retain surpluses. They are expected to be neutral actors, not acting in their own interest but in the general interest of all individuals, implementing policies that support the enforcement of individuals' rights. This conception of bureaucrats is known as the classical political science perspective (Breton & Wintrobe, 1982:2). However, the drawbacks of bureaucracy as an instrument of rational action, such as inflexibility, red tape and logrolling, facilitated the evolution of western states into a new stage: the post-bureaucratic stage, which is characterized by a diffusion of authority (Nonet & Selznick, 1978:22) and dilution of control (North, 1981). In this stage, the implementation of policies is no longer automatically trusted to core government agencies (Pollitt, 1999; Thiel, 2001:4-5). As a result, the governance era has opened up the space for other role-players to lend their hands in the provision of public services. This is evidenced in

the role played by NPOs in developed as well as developing countries. For the sake of this article, one would like to single out the relevance of governance without government in the sub-Saharan region.

It is worth noting that NPOs and the non-profit sector more generally are part of a complex dual transition from industrial to post-industrial society and from national state to transnational policy regimes. This transition witnessed the occurrence of a new policy dialogue in addressing the future role of NPOs and involves three broad perspectives that have become prominent in recent years: First, non-profits are increasingly part of new public management and a mixed economy of welfare; second, they are seen as central to ‘civil society–social capital’ approaches, specifically the Neo-Tocquevillian emphasis on the nexus between social capital and participation in voluntary associations; and third, they are part of a wider social accountability perspective that sees them as instruments of greater transparency, heightened accountability, and improved governance of public institutions (Anheier, 2009:1082). This implies that governance does not merely include the actions of government but extends beyond government to address the role of citizens, both individually and organized in various forms of association, in the policy process, and the way groups and communities within a society organized to make and implement decisions on matters of general concern (Frishtak, 1994; Turner & Hulme, 1997). In Africa, due to the events of the early 1990s when the continent was ushered into an era of multi-partism and democracy, citizens of countries that faced numerous challenges that weakened states’ capacities had no other choices than to rely on NPOs organizations in order to access basic public services such as education, health care, water and sanitation. Few countries have managed to address their development challenges but many are still fragile or weak, and still require the assistance provided by the non-profit sector towards the provision of public services. Such examples will be highlighted on a later stage in this article.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

Traditional approaches to public administration assumed public service to be the sole responsibility of the state and state agencies. However, in the context of rapid urbanization, resource constraints and population growth and states’ limited capacity to provide, operate and maintain public services, the rational model as suggested by Max Weber needs to be revisited as countries have reformed their administrative systems in order to accommodate the contribution made by the third sector in terms of service delivery. The rise of the non-profit sector and its role in the delivery of collective goods conventionally stemmed as the result of limited state capacity thus due to the scarcity of resources. The non-profit sector also came as a result of market failure. This article, the theoretical perspective focuses on a set of three interrelated theories (institutional, stakeholders and agency theories) which are considered to be fundamental in of the promotion of the non-profit sector as an alternative to public services delivery.

### **Institutional Theory**

The term ‘institution’ can be described as a set of formal rule, *ex ante* agreements, less formal shared interaction sequences, and taken-for-granted assumptions that organizations and individuals are expected to follow. Institutions create expectations that determine appropriate actions for organizations, and also form the logic by which laws, rules, and taken-for-granted behavioral expectations appear natural and abiding. As a result, institutions define therefore what is appropriate in an objective sense, and thus render other actions unacceptable or even beyond consideration (Meyer & Rowan 1991; Zucker, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Bruton, Ahlstrom and Li, 2010:422). As a result, the institutional theory is traditionally

concerned with how various groups and organizations better secure their positions and legitimacy by conforming to the rules and norms of the institutional environment (Meyer and Rowan, 1991; Scott, 2007). Therefore, institutional stability, fairness, and predictability are significant for the promotion of economic growth. Such institutional environments are demonstrated by a well-specified legal system, a clearly defined and impartial third (judicial) party of government to enforce property rights, and a set of attitudes towards contracting and trading that encourage people to engage in transactions at low costs (North, 1986, 1993). The regulatory component of an institutional context reflects the existing laws and rules in a particular national environment that promote certain types of behaviors and restrict others (Kostova, 1999: 314).

### **Stakeholders Theory**

Freeman (1984) argues that stakeholders are those interest groups and actors who affect, or in turn, are affected by the corporation. Therefore, Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) stress that Stakeholders' theory is concerned with seeking to systematically address the question of which stakeholders do and do not deserve or require management attention through evaluation of relationships between organizations and stakeholders based on exchange transactions, power dependencies, and legitimacy or other claims. Cummings and Doh (2000) insist that stakeholders affect a company/institution's and a country's ability to influence and benefit from favorable public policy thus through the political advantage process.

An effective stakeholders' management requires that agreements be reached with all stakeholders in the following four areas: What you must achieve and how? What important conditions will have to exist for you to be successful? What criteria or indicators you will use to evaluate your work; and Agreeing where, how and from whom you will get the information you will need to evaluate your work? It is this context that one would suggest that the above questions be answered for one to expect the non-profit sector has to play a meaningful role in the provision of public service.

### **Agency Theory**

An agency relationship can be defined as one in which one or more persons (the principal(s)) engage another person (the agent) to perform some service on their behalf which involves delegating some decision making authority to the agent. The cornerstone of agency theory is the assumption that the interests of principals and agents diverge. According this theory, the principal can limit divergence from his/her interests by establishing appropriate incentives for the agents, and by incurring monitoring costs designed to limit opportunistic action by the agent. Further, the principal may pay the agent to spend resources (bonding cost) to guarantee that he/she will not take certain actions that would harm the principal, or to ensure that the principal will be appropriately compensated if he/she does take such action. That is, the agent may incur *ex-ante* bonding costs in order to win the right to manage the resources of the principal (Jensen and Meckling, 1976; Ross, 1973). Further, Hill and Jones (1992:131-132) note that agency theory has been primarily concerned with the relationship between managers and stakeholders. In addition to managers and stockholders, stakeholders include employees, customers, suppliers, creditors, communities, and the general public. The agency theory views the firm as a nexus of contracts between resource holders (stakeholders).

## **DISTINCTION BETWEEN FRAGILE WEAK AND FAILED STATES**

Lacking concrete metrics to evaluate state capacity in each core area of state responsibility, policymakers and scholars resort to a host of adjectives such as 'weak', 'fragile', 'failing', 'failed', and even 'collapsed' to distinguish among countries suffering from a wide variety of

capacity gaps (Rice and Patrick, 2008:5). A country's status (e.g. capable, strong, weak or fragile, failed) determines to a large extent its need for NGOs involvement in services delivery. The concepts fragile, weak and fragile states are briefly examined.

### **Fragile states**

States are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their population. This reflects the prevailing characterization of state fragility as the failure of states to perform certain functions to meet citizens' basic needs and expectations. Fragile states are often described as incapable of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens (OECD DAC, 2007). State fragility is a continuum. At one extreme, a state can be so frail that it will fail as soon as it is threatened by a hostile internal or external force. However, there are states that are weak but not so frail as to risk imminent collapse but are unwilling or unable to guarantee the welfare of their citizens. The key characteristics of fragile countries are their instability and lack of responsiveness to human needs. As a result, fragility has to do with the capacity of the state to adapt to changed circumstances, protect citizens, absorb shocks and manage conflict without resort to violence (Donovan *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, Ikpe (2007:86-94) has identified three rankings of fragile states, namely: not fragile (NF), very fragile (VF) and somewhat fragile (SF). The not fragile group of states refers to states that are strong on both capacity and resilience whereas the very fragile states are weak on both capacity and resilience. The somewhat fragile states are either capacity fragile or resilience fragile. This categorization is useful as it helps to find a better approach in addressing the particularity of the fragility and thus positing more efficient rules of engagement.

It is obvious from what has been stressed above that fragile states lack the capacity to guarantee the provision of basic services in a sustainable manner. Hence there is a need for the involvement of third sector agencies or organizations in order to ensure continuity of certain essential services. A number of sub-Saharan countries are characterized by a frail nature which requires support from the non-profit sector.

### **Weak states**

Rice and Patrick (2008:3) define weak states as countries that lack the essential capacity and/or will to fulfill four sets of critical government responsibilities: fostering an environment conducive to sustainable and equitable economic growth; establishing and maintaining legitimate, transparent, and accountable political institutions; securing their populations from violent conflict and controlling their territory; and meeting the basic human needs of their population. State weakness may be measured according to each state's effectiveness in delivering on these four critical dimensions. According to Rotberg (2002:3-4) modern states (as successors to sovereigns) provide predictable, recognizable, systematized methods of adjudicating disputes and regulating both the norms and the prevailing mores of a particular society or polity. The essence of that political good usually implies codes and procedures that together constitute an enforceable rule of law, security of property and inviolable contracts, a judicial system, and a set of values that legitimize and validate the local version of fair play. Strong states obviously perform well across these categories and with respect to each, separately. Weak states show a mixed profile, fulfilling expectations in some areas and performing poorly in others. The more poorly weak states perform, criterion by criterion, the weaker they become, and the more that weakness tends to edge toward failure, hence the subcategory of weakness that is termed failing. Many failed states flunk each of the tests outlined above. But they need not flunk all of them to fail overall, particularly since satisfying the security good weighs very heavily, and high levels of internal violence are associated

directly with failure and the propensity to fail. Yet, violence alone does not condition failure, and the absence of violence does not necessarily imply that the state in question is not failed.

In Africa, out of 54 countries only few, possibly less than 10, that can truly qualify to be ranked among strong or capable states which fulfill the four sets of critical government responsibilities identified by Rice and Patrick. Hence for those countries that are not able to stand on their feet due to their weak nature, the non-profit can be of significance as it will be able to fill the gap and come to the rescue of the citizens by ensuring the provision of certain essential services that state institutions or agencies are not able to deliver.

### **Failed states**

A failed state is marked by the collapse of central government authority to impose order, resulting in loss of physical control of territory, and/or the monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Crucially, it can no longer reproduce the conditions for its own existence (Crisis States Research Centre, 2007). According to Rotberg (2004:5) a failed state or a state in anarchy is characterized by the following indicators:

- Civil wars characterized by enduring violence;
- Disharmony between communities;
- Loss of control over peripheral regions to out-groups;
- Growth of criminal violence, including gangs, and trafficking of arms and guns;
- Cessation of functioning legislatures and judiciaries;
- Informal privatization of education, health and other social services;
- Corruption;
- Loss of legitimacy; and
- Declining per capita GDP, with associated soaring smuggling and the supplanting of the national currency with external money.

To this end, a state may be considered a failed one if it struggles with most of the conditions enumerated by Rotberg (2004). One can therefore note that the lower the capacity of the state, the greater is the need for governance through non-hierarchical modes involving non-state actors to compensate for government weakness or state failure. In many countries, particularly those located in the sub-Saharan African region, central governments are believed to increasingly lose grip over their countries' political realm, entire segments of the population are being left under the tutorship of NGOs, private businesses, warlords, rebel militias, as well as other non-state political authorities. The next section intends to examine the role of NGOs in a contemporary state.

### **THE ROLE OF NGOs IN A CONTEMPORARY STATE**

In modern days, public service delivery involves three broad categories of actors, namely: clients/citizens, politicians/policy makers, and providers (public, private or self-organized groups) (Birner, 2007; World Bank, 2004). Across the developing world, states with limited finances and riddled by poor governance and corruption have failed to lead to development for all of their citizens. Within this context, alternative forms of development have been pursued, and since the 1980s, NGOs have been increasingly advocated as a means through which the gulf between citizens' needs and existing services can be bridged. Where states cannot provide sufficient goods, services or enabling environments that help citizens in securing livelihoods, or where disadvantaged groups are excluded from existing state institutions, alternative channels of service provision and/or holding governments to account must be found. It is into this gap that NGOs have neatly fitted (Banks and Hulme, 2002:3).

According to Salamon (1994:110) the rise of the third sector springs from a variety of pressures – from individual citizens, outside institutions and governments themselves. It reflects a distinct set of social and technological changes, as well as a long-simmering crisis of confidence in the capability of the state. Broad historical changes have thus opened the way for alternative institutions that can respond more effectively to human needs.

Anheier (2009:1092) insists that in societies with different views of the public good, the non-profit sector can add to institutional diversity, contribute to innovation, and prevent monopolistic structures by fostering a sphere of self-organization next to that of state administration and the market. Table 1 enumerates the various types of NPOs. Table 1 enumerates the various types of NPOs.

<b>Table 1: Types of non-profits organizations</b>	
BINGOs	Big International Non-Governmental Organizations
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CB-NGOs	Community-Based Non-Governmental Organizations
DOS	Development Organizations
DONGOs	Donor Non-Governmental Organizations
GONGOs	Government Non-Governmental Organizations
GROs	Grassroots Organizations
GRSOs	Grassroots Support Organizations
IDCIs	International Development Cooperation Institutions
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
NGDOs	Non-Governmental Development Organizations
NNGOs	Northern Non-Governmental Organizations
POS	People’s Organizations
PSCs	Public Service Contractors
QUANGOs	Quasi-Non-Governmental Organizations
SCOs	Social Change Organizations
SNGOs	Support Non-Governmental Organizations
VCOs	Voluntary and Community Sector Organizations
WCOs	Welfare Church Organizations

Source: Adapted from Vakil (1997:2060).

Fowler and Bratton devise a restricted definition which divides NGOs into four main types:

- *Community-based organizations* (CBOs) are small and intimate, often village level, organizations run by the members themselves and relying primarily on locally-generated resources;
- *Service or intermediary NGOs* are registered organizations with paid staff which provide social services to beneficiary groups, often characterized by CBOs;
- *Intermediary NGOs* are increasingly becoming involved in advocacy and policy work; and
- Finally, *International Relief and Development NGOs* are foreign organizations, such as OXFAM or Save the Children, with 'large professional staffs, field offices in many countries, and worldwide budgets (Bratton, 1989:571; Fowler, 1992:8).

The non-profit sector operates in a diverse ways: religious, advocacy, mutual aid, business and professional, cultural, social services, and recreational. It is considered to be the third



component of the social order. This sector has become more visible and more recognized as the limits of the state and marketplace have become more evident.

## **THE RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF NGOs IN WEAK AND FAILED STATES**

NGOs are often polarized with local and national governments, but such a dichotomy overlooks the nature of relationships between the two, which can range from overt and hidden tensions and active hostility to cooperation and collaboration, depending on multiple influences such as successive government regimes and their dispositions and changing NGO strategies and interventions (Rosenberg *et al.*, 2008; Rose, 2011). While there is scope for positive relationships between government and NGOs for those working towards mutual goals in service and welfare provision, those working openly in advocacy and human rights tend to be viewed with suspicion or open hostility, especially when explicitly challenging the state (Banks and Hulme, 2012:6). Depending on context and circumstances, NPOs do play distinct roles varying from complementary, supplementary and adversarial roles. First, the *complementary role* is played when NPOs are able to secure an environment that ensures legitimacy, accountability and transparency. Salamon's 'partnership' theory (1995) notes that the relationship that exists between government and non-profits is a complementary one, it is necessary and desirable because government funding provides the necessary resources for non-profits to expand their capacity, while government is able to capitalize on the resources of non-profits which may include voluntary labor, flexibility, and creative programs, that are often difficult to implement in rule-bound public bureaucracies. Second, the *supplementary role* is played when NPOs are able to fill the gap in government activity by, for example, consolidating democracy, checking abuses of state power, preventing the resumption of power by authoritarian governments, and encouraging wider citizen participation and public scrutiny of the state. Finally, NPOs do play an *adversarial role*. In democratic transitions or in countries that are plugged by authoritarian rules, NPOs become the voice of the people as they are to mobilize the much needed pressure for political change. This pressure is often expressed throughout interest and pressure groups represented by trade unions, religious groups, professional organizations, the media, think-tanks, NGOs and CBOs. These organizations are at the forefront of democratic change and it is for this reason that, in weak or failed states, they might be considered as a threat to power and legitimacy. The next section highlights the significant role played by non-profit organizations in some African countries.

## **CASE STUDIES**

This article intended to examine the role of NGOs in contemporary states. An emphasis is placed on developing countries particularly those located in the sub-Saharan region. Hence the cases concentrate on few examples that cover an instance of a complementary and an indispensable role played by NPOs. In the context of state countries, NPOs are partners that supplement government's role whereas in weak and failed states, NPOs are playing an indispensable role. The following cases demonstrate the relevance of NPOs as an alternative to service delivery in few countries.

### ***Kenya – Pick and Move Ambulance Referral Services in Garissa County***

According to Kenya School of Government (KSG, 2015) Garissa County has seven sub-counties: Garissa Township, Lagdera, Fafi, Ijara, Dadaab, Balambala and Hulugo. The total population for the county is approximately 623,060 (2009 census). The area is hot and dry, it

receives scarce rainfall in the range of 150-300 mm annually. The county has a total area of 45720 Km<sup>2</sup> with one referral hospital and each sub-county having a health facility. A referral system is a mechanism to enable clients' health needs to be comprehensively managed. The system ensures linkages across the entire health sector, not just the public health services. Initially, the ambulance services were provided by the Garissa Provincial Hospital at a cost of Ksh 25,000 which not only was unaffordable but also unreliable due to inadequate access to fuel and drivers, limited capacity and bureaucratic processes before authorization. With the national government, the county had no any referral system in place and clients had to make their way out for health care services. This led to the increased maternal and neonatal mortality in the county hence the need for better and efficient means ensuring patients are referred for better services within and outside the county. The county previously had invested in a number of ambulances, however most did not last long because of lack of maintenance, misuse for other utility purposes, lack of robust command and control unit for referral system.

In its efforts to improve the health services within county, the county government conceptualized and initiated a “*Pick and Move*” 24/7 ambulance referral services in March 2014. The Pick and Move ambulance services were aimed at:

- Creating a reliable referral services within Garissa county;
- Mitigating the unaffordable cost and unreliable services run by Garissa Provincial General Hospital; and
- Knowledge transfer between Red Cross and County health staff.

The county government obtained seven ambulances through an outsourcing arrangement under a renewable contract with Red Cross - Kenya at a cost of Kshs. 600,000 per month per ambulance. Red Cross has a valuable experience in disaster and emergency response hence it represents a strategic partner. The services cover each sub-county, coordinated by a sub-county referral coordinator. Each ambulance is fitted with a tracking system for monitoring speed and fuel consumption, complimented by a fuel card system. To ensure facility optimization, both the county and Red Cross share operational costs for fuel beyond 3500 km at 50/50 and the allowances for drivers and staff (3000/per night) for approved work beyond 8 pm. Each ambulance is manned by an Emergency Medical Technician and driver. Optimum utilization is enhanced through inter sub-county sharing arrangements backed up by fully equipped refurbished county ambulances, total of nine in number. The ambulance services are offered free of charge to the community. The county government has trained approximately 200 health workers and customized the referral guidelines developed by the national government in building capacity (KSG, 2015).

The ambulance services have greatly improved the state of health care with the county with notable achievements being:

- Reduced mortality especially amongst expectant mothers.
- Established 24 hour referral center and tracking systems in placed with control offices at county referral hospital.
- Skill delivery has improved from 18 to 41 % through Standard Operating Procedures for the referrals in the county developed, TOTs trained on referral strategy and roll-out.
- Increased access to immediate care: all referrals are attended to – none has been missed since the intervention evidenced by referral numbers between March to December 2014 (1201) compared to March to June 2015 (1047).
- Improved data capture and coordination of ambulance operations – documentation and tracking of daily referrals for the e-plus and county ambulances.
- Improved county and staff capacity in emergency response evidenced by the role of the county in the unfortunate Garissa University terror attack.

- Procured emergency supplies for the ambulances to ensure continuity of services.
- Quarterly meetings with Red Cross/MOH were initiated.
- Benchmarking with Red Cross E-plus dispatch office in Nairobi, and
- Repaired and equipped all non-functional county ambulances (KSG, 2015).

Being a critical initiative in improving health services within the county, ensuring sustainability of the project is being addressed through a phased reduction plan, aimed at building capacity of the county ambulance service. The county government is currently negotiating with UNICEF to have a partnership for funding through equipping ambulances. The county is actively building institutional capacity in partnership with national government in emergency services training. The initiative is one of its kind in Kenya as it promotes the effective collaborative knowledge transfer, facility optimization and provision for phase out. As a result, the model has been considered a best practice and a benchmark for other counties: Wajir and Mandera (KSG, 2015).

### ***Ethiopia – Water Report Software***

In Ethiopia, a “Water Report Software” is used in order to deliver monthly report and give timely report about spoilage of the water system by use of very simplified codes which do not require high level of knowledge. This was reported as a best practice for Halaba Special Woreda Water Sector. This software is serving 10 water points. Distinct codes are assigned to different types of water spoilage problems which include pump, generator, electrical system, tanker, pipe, fittings and so on. The software is developed with the support of “People In Need” which is an. After rendering basic training to experts in the water sector and to water committee members, the operational service of the software has become a reality. It is connected to local network and to 10 selected mobile phones of water committee members in order to get timely service. After having the report through SMS message, the appropriate expert would be assigned to fix the reported problem. Such expert goes with necessary spare parts with no time delay which has greater positive implications in reducing unnecessary wastage of time and finance. Best practice from Water Office of Dale Woreda demonstrates that a spare part shop has been established at Woreda level in order to give fast response when requests come for maintenance services. They have revolving fund in which case they replace the money after selling the spare part to the users. The community has their own bank account that operates through three signatories who are among water committee members (Ethiopian Civil Service University - ECSU, 2015).

### ***Ghana: Making the case for private sector participation in Water Sector Restructuring***

According to Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA, 2015) from 1986 several measures were undertaken to improve the operational performance and financial viability of the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL), but these efforts did not yield the desired results. Many staff training and capacity-building programs were undertaken by GWCL. There was staff rationalization to cut staff (1000 staff in 1991 and about 600 in 1993), and donor funds were sourced to rehabilitate broken down systems and expand their capacity. In spite of these efforts the operational performance and the financial viability of GWCL has not improved. However, in March 2000, the government of Ghana awarded a 30-year Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) contract for one half of the country, including the capital Accra, to the US company Azurix, a subsidiary of Enron. However, the World Bank did not support the contract. The contract failed before operations began due to accusations of corruption and public opposition which led to the formation of the Coalition against Water Privatization.

The establishment of Coalition of NGOs in water supply and sanitation (CONIWAS) in 2003 practically compelled the World Bank to change stance on its support for a PSP. In 2004 it approved a credit of US\$103 million for an ‘Urban Water Project’, which was later turned into

a grant. The Nordic Development Fund also contributed US\$5 million in order to improve and expand infrastructure, services and deal in part with the financial difficulties of GWCL. In November 2005 GWCL signed a five year Management Contract with a Consortium made of Vitens Rand Water Services BV of Netherlands and Rand Water Services of South Africa. The broad terms of the 5-year contract were: improving the reliability (pressure and flow rate) and quality of potable water, ensuring the company's financial sustainability, improving customer service, and providing access to potable water at affordable prices to low income consumers (GIMPA, 2015).

Partnerships with NGOs were beneficial to the provision of improved water services for the community. For instance, in order to improve customer service a Call Center was established and the operator training helped in mending staff attitude towards the consumers. Secondly, access to potable water at affordable prices to low income consumers became a reality. The number of connections increased from 364,000 to 438,000. However, water tariffs increased by 80% and there was no specific target concerning access of the poor to water included in the management contract. Nevertheless, with the help of the Dutch foundation "Water for Life" the operator improved the water supply for around 75,000 people in 15 peri-urban areas throughout Ghana. Furthermore, the private operator provided 25,000 training days. Customer data were entered into a Geographical Information System (GIS), 70,000 meters were installed and meter workshops were established to repair faulty meters. Non-revenue water was only reduced marginally from an estimated 53% in 2006 to 50% in 2010, compared to a target of 26%. An accurate measurement of non-revenue water was not possible, because the installation of bulk water meters started only in 2008 and the separation of the network into district metered areas – a prerequisite to accurately locate leaks was undertaken only during the period of the management contract. Intermittent supply also made it more difficult to locate leaks (GIMPA, 2015).

### ***Somalia***

Since January 1991, Somalia has been without a functional central government, making it the longest running instance of complete state collapse in post-colonial history (Menkhaus 2009:74). Somalia's descent into civil war and state collapse can be traced to underlying factors at work in the 1980s but that only culminated in political catastrophe in 1991. The harsh repression of the government of Mohammed Siad Barré fueled sharp resentment toward and fear of the state itself in the (Menkhaus 2009:78-79) Somali public. The Barré regime's divide-and-rule tactics stoked deep interclan animosities and distrust, and are held partially responsible for the failure of clans to unite in a post-Barré government (Sunyoto *et al.*, 2017). Since the departure of United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), Somalia has remained a collapsed state notwithstanding ongoing efforts to operationalize the transitional federal government (Lyons, 2016). Nevertheless, communities that have been cut off from an effective state authority – whether out of governmental indifference to marginal frontier territories, or because of protracted warfare, or because of vested local and external interests in perpetuating conditions of state failure – consistently seek to devise arrangements to provide for themselves the core functions that the missing state is supposed to assume, especially basic security (Warf, 2017). Menkhaus (2009:75, 86) argues that local efforts at governance vary widely in their effectiveness. Collectively, they reinforce the obvious but often overlooked observation that local communities are not passive in the face of state failure and insecurity, but instead adapt in a variety of ways to minimize risk and increase predictability in their dangerous environments. In some locations – most notably, the towns of Beled Weyn, Borama, Hargeisa, Jowhar, Luuq, and Merka – the local polities that have emerged constitute incipient municipalities that do more than simply keep the peace via a sharia court. They also have at times managed to provide some basic services, operate piped

water systems, regulate marketplaces, and collect modest levels of taxes and user fees that cover salaries. Typically, these successful municipalities have been led by dedicated, professional mayors working closely with local NGOs, clan elders, and business people. These success stories usually involve partnership with an enlightened set of UN agencies and international NGOs that are committed to local capacity building and that provide much of the funding for municipal projects. In some cases, innovative partnerships have resulted – the management of several UNICEF municipal piped water systems has been outsourced to a multi-clan consortium of business people that has run the water system effectively and profitably.

### ***Burkina Faso***

In Burkina Faso, since 1990 the drinking water provision sector has undergone extensive changes fuelled by significant reforms in public water service provision, and by the effective decentralization of water provision (MAHRH, 2009:8; Zoungrana, 2011:1). Following the water service management reforms, municipalities across Burkina Faso adopted various approaches to operate Drinking Water Provision (DWP) facilities. In the case of the simplified System of Drinking Water Conveyance and Autonomous Water Installations (SDWC/AWI), they implemented three types of delegation to operate facilities. The first form of delegation was to a third party (private sector or NGOs); the second was delegation to the National Office of Water and Sanitation (ONEA), a para-statal; and the third form of delegation was to a third party with technical assistance from the Association for the Development of Water Conveyance (ADWC).

### ***Nigeria***

Most farmers in Nigeria operate at the subsistence, smallholder level in an extensive agricultural system; hence in the country's food security and agricultural development lie in the hands of those farmers. Women's groups, NGOs and civil societies have empowered and given rural women farmers a voice and effectively championed their cause. Women farmers now have better access to farm inputs and credits. Rural women farmers deserve better recognition and greater appreciation of their tangible contributions to agriculture and rural development and food security (Ogunlela and Mukhtar, 2009:19). In an attempt to bridge the gap between men and women farmers in Nigeria, various women groups and organizations have emerged. Such groups and organizations have contributed substantially to the gains women farmers have recorded and the voice that they now have in overall national policy on agricultural development. One such group is the Women Farmers' Advancement Network (WOFAN), a private initiative founded in the early 1990s whose headquarters is in Kano, Nigeria. WOFAN works with 250 women's groups in five different states in northern Nigeria in an effort to mobilize and train rural women in the management of information and communication. Community participation is a key strategy (WOFAN, 2003). The network also organizes a weekly radio broadcast that features the efforts of rural women.

The main thrusts of WOFAN include: providing a forum through which members of rural Nigerian communities can express themselves; encouraging the formation of commodity groups to garner access to agricultural credit and insurance facilities; and introducing labor-saving technologies, including modern farm implements and the use of solar energy. Initially, WOFAN helped women farmers in rural areas with issues of health and agricultural technology. It has since inevitably expanded to address other needs. The role of national and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in reaching the rural population in Africa is being increasingly documented. The importance of NGOs to rural women varies from country to country, as does their focus on rural issues. In most of the countries examined, the growth in recent years of NGOs and women's associations which pay attention to gender

issues has benefited rural women immensely.

### ***Senegal***

In 1995, the government of Senegal launched extensive reforms in the water sector. According to Ndiaye and Dedehouanou (2016:50, 53), despite government interventions in the provision of water, interest among urban and rural populations seems to be limited. On the one hand, governance in water provision in urban areas mainly takes the form of Public Private Partnership (PPP). At this level the water provider is the *Sénégalaise des Eaux* (SDE), a private provider responsible for the operation, production and distribution of water and maintenance of the water system. The PPP is through a series of contracts between SDE and the *Société Nationale des Eaux du Sénégalaise* (SONES), a public agency responsible for planning, development and regulation of water supply infrastructure and services in urban areas (Brocklehurst and Janssens, 2004; Shukla *et al.*, 2007). Both the SDE and SONES have a close working relationship with NGOs and financial partners without formal contractual arrangements. On the other hand, water provision in rural areas has a different form of private partnership that mainly involves civil society. The *Associations des Usagers des Forages* (ASUFOR) are user associations – community based groups – that manage and provide water under license from local councils (Repussard, 2011). They also maintain the water network with technical services from the ministry, and support from NGOs and financial partners and programs. One program actively engaged in the rural sector since 2005 is the *Programme Eau Potable et Assainissement du Millénaire* (PEPAM).

## **CHALLENGES FACING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATES AND NGOs IN THE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

In light of the case studies mentioned above, one can stress that there is a good story to tell in terms of the role NGOs play in developing countries. Although NGOs have been successful, in some instances, in substituting governments' role in countries that are fragile, weak or failed in nature, they are however not a panacea to resolving problems related to the provision of public services but they can assuredly be considered as significant alternatives to service delivery. Be it in stable countries or countries that came out conflicts, NGOs are positioned to complement governments' role especially if their operations are well regulated. Depending on the context and circumstances, this relationship faces a number of challenges. Such challenges manifest in various forms, such as:

- The diversity and specificity of NPOs and their personnel – monitoring and evaluation to be problematic;
- The scope of NGOs' coverage and State's public services – conflicting interests or objectives between governments and NGOs can negatively affects the maintenance of responsibility and accountability;
- Voluntary services' failures – countries become reluctant to trust the capabilities of NPOs;
- Difficult strategic choices about how to deploy limited capacity for engagement – absence of strategic planning and cooperation between the state and the non-profit sector;
- Suspicion between governments and NGOs – in the absence of trust it is indeed difficult for the two sectors to cooperate. In some countries, International NGOs, for example, are seen as the representatives of an invisible hand that strives to control public policy in a sovereign state;
- Scarce resources in the midst of abundant demands and expectations – when a country is fragile, weak and failing there is of course meager sources whereas citizens have a plethora of needs and expectations. There is no single NPO that can address all the problems and issues a country is faced with;

- Poor networks' governance and stakeholders management; and above all,
- Constant decay of state institutions in developing countries.

The success of the non-profit sector's involvement as an alternative for the provision of public services will mainly be determined by the extent to which the above challenges are addressed. The next section concludes and suggests few recommendations.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article examined the role played by the non-profit sector as alternative for the provision of public services in contemporary states. Non-profit Organizations (NPOs) play various roles depending on whether a country is developed or developing. In the first category, NPOs are partners that play a complementary role whereas in the second group, NPOs play a critical role bridging the gap that exists between governments and their citizens especially when it comes to the attainment of the social contract. In the latter category, particularly in countries that are considered fragile, weak or failed, citizens' survival depends significantly on how well NPOs provide basic services such health, water, sanitation, education, to name but a few. For the sake of this article, the focus was on developing countries particularly those situated in the sub-Saharan African region. It is important to note that since the 1990s, state capacity was weakened as the majority of countries in the region faced numerous challenges when the continent was swept by the waves of multi-partism and democracy. It is believed that NGOs have played and can continue to play a meaningful role in sustaining the delivery of public services particularly in countries in which government structures have been weakened by political, institutional, and socio-economic factors. Depending on the context and circumstances, NGOs do play distinct roles varying from complementary, supplementary and sometimes adversarial roles. Few cases were highlighted to tell a good story and demonstrate the relevance of NGOs in selected countries. Although NGOs have been successful in substituting governments' role in countries that are fragile, weak or failed in nature, the re in no intention of insinuating that they are a panacea to resolving problems related to the provision of public services in contemporary states. This article intended to insist on that the fact that the non-profit sector can be considered as a partner when the state machinery is fragile, weak or has failed like it is the case in a number of countries in the sub-Saharan region.

Depending on contexts and circumstances, the relationship that exists between governments can be either successful or problematic. Challenges that impede smoothly rapports between states and NGOs were outlined. If NGOs are to play or continue playing a meaningful role in developing countries, the following are recommendations can be suggested: create an environment that promotes effective cooperation between the three sectors of the social order: public sector, private sector and non-profit sector; promote various types of partnerships – the state needs both the willingness and the capacity to respond effectively and appropriately to input from civil society; need for the provision of a sufficient legal and financial support while preserving a meaningful degree of independence and autonomy; constant evaluation of NGOs operations; and finally, militate for the restoration of state's capacity. A stable or enabling state will surely have the means to monitor and control NGOs operations.

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