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**NGO INFLUENCE ON NATIONAL POLICY
FORMATION IN ZIMBABWE**

by Harold Sibanda

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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| 1. | CADEC | Catholic Development Commission |
| 2. | CFU | Commercial Farmers Union |
| 3. | DCS | Downs Child Syndrome |
| 4. | JJA | Jairos Jiri |
| 5. | NANGO | National Association Non-Governmental Organization |
| 6. | NCDPZ | National Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe |
| 7. | NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| 8. | ORAP | Organization of Rural Associations for Progress |
| 9. | ZIFOD | Zimbabwe Foundation for the Disabled |
| 10. | ZNCB | Zimbabwe National Council for the Blind |

NGO Influence on National Policy Formation in Zimbabwe

by Harold Sibanda

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INTRODUCTION

Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Zimbabwe are increasingly demanding involvement in the policy formulation process. They argue that they now play a major role in the implementation of the policies that are formulated by the government, especially those that deal with sustainable development. In other words, the NGOs' programs are directly affected by the policies that the government produces. The NGOs feel that in order for the government to formulate policies that are appropriate for sustainable development, NGOs also need to be involved in the policy making issues since they work for development and as such can make important inputs to the policy making process. This involvement of NGOs in policy issues will increase the likelihood that the NGOs understand the policies fully as well as ensure that the policies passed are appropriate to the needs of the people, feasible and implementable on the ground.

The importance of this research lies in the fact that; (1) it identifies various strategies and their tactics that the NGOs can use to influence national policy formulation, (2) it suggests training needs of NGO staff to equip them with skills that can enable them to deal with policy issues more effectively, (1) it identifies some resources that are required to implement the identified strategies. All these preliminary findings of the research are derived from past experiences of some NGOs that have successfully worked on policy issues in Zimbabwe since the country's independence in 1980. Two cases have been selected to show the common strategies that are used in Zimbabwe and these are the policy on the disabled people in Zimbabwe, being championed by the Zimbabwe Federation of the Disabled (ZIFOD) and the policy on the exemption from taxation of indigenous NGOs' imports into Zimbabwe and this is dealt with by the National Association for Non-Governmental Organizations (NANGO).

It is important for any NGO that works on policy work to be informed about the requirements needed for addressing policy issues effectively because policy work is a very sensitive area where NGOs have to be careful in dealing with the Zimbabwean government. "There is always a precarious relationship between the NGOs and the governments, especially when NGOs begin to be influential, taking initiative"¹ So an uninformed attempt at influencing policy formulation can jeopardize the relationships between the government and the NGO itself. If an NGO employs a very radical strategy to influence the policy formulation process it is likely to be punished by the government and this could reduce the NGO's autonomy and latitude to perform its activities. That is, the government is likely to scrutinize that particular NGO very carefully. On the other hand, an NGO that uses a 'soft' strategy can find itself complying too much to the government's needs at the expense of its target population.

The Focus, Method and Limitations of the Research Study

I focused this research on two main issues. I first sought to find out if NGOs in Zimbabwe do influence national policy formulation. I went on to explore the strategies and tactics that seem to work in Zimbabwe which NGOs use to influence national policy formulation. I analyzed two cases of NGO influence on national policy decisions. The first case was that of the NGOs of disabled persons changing the policy towards the disabled persons in Zimbabwe. The second case was that of NANGO which was still working on changing the government's policy on the taxation of NGO imports into Zimbabwe. The analysis sought to find out which of the five strategies identified in the literature review were used by the NGOs studied, what resources were used, tactics employed as well as the outcome of the policy influence process. The analysis also compared the two cases to find out similarities and differences in using the strategies between the two cases.

The Methodology

I explored the two case studies by gathering information through semi-structured interviews with the leaders of key organizations and other players in the policy process. I looked at publications of the key players and any documented data about them. I attempted to use questionnaires but they proved to be ineffective as some interviewees did not respond to and return them to.

My criteria for selecting the two cases were that;

- (a) The policy was done in the post independence era,
- (b) it involved more than two Zimbabwean NGOs from the two major regions of Matebeleland and Mashonaland,
- (c) the key players were able to be seen and talk about how they influenced the policy process, and,
- (d) the cases should clearly show the strategies and tactics used by the NGOs.

The Limitations

The limitation revealed during the course of my research was that I had originally intended my study to focus on policy advocacy directly related to land reform, key players were reluctant to share information with me. This was probably due to the fact that the land issue was a very sensitive one at the time of the research because of the new Land Acquisition Act of 1993. So the farmers were not willing to share their views about the land policy issues, lest they release some information deemed vital for their efforts to restrain the government from taking their land away. As a result, I chose alternative issues of the policy on disabled persons of Zimbabwe and the policy on taxation of NGO imports into Zimbabwe.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

NGOS and Governments

Generally speaking, in Zimbabwe, NGOs play a complementary role to the government. They help to get goods and services into the areas that are unaccessible to the government. These areas could be inaccessible due to the lack of government transport to reach out to the distant areas. At times the government does not have enough resources like manpower and capital to extend them to reach all the sectors of the community. Because the NGOs are

able to secure resources from both within the country and overseas, they often provide services that the government can not provide to the people especially those at grassroots level.

The support that Zimbabwean NGOs provide to the grassroots is in the form of capital, materials, training, technical expertise, transport, energy and provision of education, health, water and sanitation services. They also mobilize and organize communities for development activities. These services are provided in line with government programs. But surprisingly, NGOs generally tend to formulate their own programs separate from those of the government to complement the government. In both cases, NGOs and government programs should be guided by policies that are formulated and legislated by the government. So there is a justification to involve NGOs in policy issues so that appropriate, feasible policies can be formulated. In this way they can also provide vital information that can lead to the formulation of policies that are relevant for sustainable development.

NGOs also play the role of being a watch-dog or voice of a certain sector of the community to the government. Here, the NGOs guard against interests of the sector they represent. They make sure that those interests are well protected. The Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) in Zimbabwe provides a good example of an NGO that plays a watch-dog/bridge role. The CFU is an NGO of all commercial farmers in Zimbabwe. Members tend to be mostly white, large land owners with lots of resources and power. The CFU interacts with the government of Zimbabwe on behalf of the commercial farmers. It negotiates with the government for prices of farm produce, wages and salaries for farm workers and represents the farmers to the government on policy issues. As from 1990 to the present, CFU has been trying to protect the acquisition of private commercial farms by the government for redistribution to the communal farmers for resettlement. However, the government legislated the Land Acquisition Act in 1992 to change the policy on the distribution of land that was set up by the colonial regime under the Land Husbandry Act (1961).

In some cases, Zimbabwean NGOs play the role of being innovators. Because of their abundant resources and their desire to contribute to meaningful sustainable development, NGOs embark on experiments and innovation exercises. In the process of experimenting, they come up with a lot of innovative ideas and approaches which they share with the government. This innovativeness has led to the initiation of a number of development activities by the government.

NGOs are also educators of the government. They accumulate a lot of information that they provide to the government and the government leans a lot from that information. During the education process, there is a lot of information analysis which becomes very vital as a source of policy alternatives.

Why NGOs and Policy?

As defined in Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, a policy is " A definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions especially of a government body." In this case, government policies are very important because they are sources of legislation. Ideally, policies are embodiments of the needs and interests of the community but in most countries the interests of the poor and disenfranchised are ignored.

NGOs need to play a very crucial role in policy formulation. In policy formulation, NGOs can provide information that is vital for the development of policies that are appropriate to the

community the policy is meant to serve. NGOs, as watch-dogs, can also apply pressure on the government to ensure that appropriate policies are enacted and implemented. In the implementation of policies, NGOs can monitor the application of the laws and also, where compatible with community interests, NGOs can design programs that complement rather than undermine or contradict government policies.

In most cases, Zimbabwean NGOs have programs that complement the policy goals and programs of the government such as the Health for All campaign by the Year 2000. This set up necessitates a close working relationship between the government of Zimbabwe and the NGOs vis-a-vis the formulation of policies. This relationship between the government and the NGOs helps to ensure that the NGOs supply the government with the information that the NGOs collect from their experiences in working in development activities. Furthermore, the NGOs need to assist the government in policy formulation so that the end results of the policy process becomes relevant to the needs of the people the policy is intended for. But above all, NGOs need to understand fully the policies that are directly related to their activities so that they complement the government effectively on the ground.

General Strategies Used By NGOs

Jane Covey of the Institute for Development Research, in her paper, 'A Note on NGOs and Policy Influence', provides a clear breakdown of strategies used by NGOs to influence policy. She says that NGOs use five strategies to influence national policy formulation. These strategies are collaboration, education, persuasion, litigation and confrontation.

As applied in Zimbabwe, these strategies take the following frames. The collaboration strategy is one where an NGO works hand-in-hand harmoniously with the government. Relations are usually good and amicable between the government and the NGOs that is collaborating with it. Collaboration calls for mutual trust between the government and the NGO it is dealing with. It also calls for transparency within the collaborating bodies. That is, both sides need to show all their intentions, interests, needs, goals, agendas, etc to each other. This is the basis of building trust and relationships.

The education strategy is one where the NGO attempts to give the government a lot of information, analysis and policy alternatives. NGOs also educate the government by creating and testing innovative development approaches that could be adopted by the state. Education is done through workshops, conferences, physical visits and initiation of pilot projects. Education strategies may also target other groups besides the government such as the public at large, the media, and NGO or community members.

In using persuasion as a strategy, the NGO acts like a pressure group to press for policy changes and show public support. The idea here is to convince the government that the NGO supported policy or policy change needs to be recognized and enacted into legislation. Persuasion is done through various means which cover meetings, workshops, conferences, invitations to the site, lobbying, demonstrations and strikes. The main aim is to present the government with information that can change the government's attitude or policy direction.

In the litigation strategy, the NGOs use the courts to press for policy issues. When an NGO believes that the law is being broken, misapplied or inconsistent it can take the government or other offending parties to court for the issue to be legally dealt with. In Zimbabwe the Commercial Farmers Union took the government to court over the new land policy by which the government aims at redistributing land. The government intended to repossess land that it regarded as lying idle and resettled people from the communal areas. On the other side,

the commercial farmers are saying their land is private property which they can use in the manner they like. So they took the government to court for creating such a policy and legislating it by the 1992 Land Acquisition Act.

Lastly, confrontation involves protesting in various forms for policy issues. The protests usually involve radical tactics such as violent demonstrations, destroying property, etc. In most cases, relationships between the government and the NGOs become sour and there is a lot of animosity between the two bodies.

Below is a table showing the summary of strategies together with the tactics, skills, resources and human qualities that are required to implement them.

Table I

Strategies	Tactics	Skills	Resources	Human Qualities
EDUCATION	Meetings,media,workshops.	Research,information analysis and dissemination, communication	Stationery, transport, accommodation office equipment and supplies	patience, creativity, good presenter.
COLLABORATION	Build relationships,links, cooperate with government	Communication, organizing	Office equipment, transport, funds	Transparency openness, honest.
PERSUASION	Meetings, workshops, coalitions, lobbying, media, demonstrations	Organizing, communication, motivation, negotiation	Office equipment, accommodation transport	Clarity, creativity, vision, compromise, commitment
LITIGATION	Use of courts	Legislation,communication	Courts, legal practitioners	Just, fair, courageous, clear
CONFRONTATION	Demonstrations, public gatherings,addresses and speeches	Mobilizing, communication, motivation,leadership	Leaders, capital, and good speakers	Courage, sacrifice, compromise, commitment.

NB. I have made this table to present the strategies and their tactics, skills and human qualities which I gathered from various sources. Human qualities are personal attributes an NGO employee need to possess for it to implement each strategy. This list is not exhausted, these are simple examples of strategies and their requirements. There are some tactics, resources, skills and resources that are required in all the strategies. An example is money which is a resource requirement in all the strategies.

THE CASES

NGOs in Zimbabwe

The growth and development of NGOs in Zimbabwe dates back to the World War II (1939-45). In the case of Zimbabwe, blacks formed indigenous NGOs to try to fill the gaps in the provision of welfare and social services left by the government which had discriminatory policies between the black and the white people. An example of an NGO formed during the colonial era to cater for the disabled blacks is the Jairos Jiri Association (JJA). JJA was set up in 1969 by a black man called Jairos Jiri to provide disabled people with training for self help activities like carpentry and sewing. JJA went on to create employment for disabled people as sheltered workers.

In the 1980s, following independence, the number of NGOs in Zimbabwe increased tremendously and by 1992, there were over eight hundred (800) NGOs operating in Zimbabwe.² This number includes both indigenous and foreign based NGOs.

Ann Muir groups NGOs in Zimbabwe into three categories and these are as follows;

- (a) Welfare NGOs: Welfare NGOs provide free goods and services to the disabled, poor, young and the elderly people. Examples of welfare NGOs include Child Survival, Entembeni Old People's Home, Jairos Jiri Association, and the National Council for the Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe (NCDPZ), to name a few.
- (b) Development NGOs: Development NGOs are those that aim to assist in the upliftment of living standards of various sectors of the society, examples include, The Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (O.R.A.P.), Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU), Christian Care, and the Catholic Development Commission (CADEC).
- (c) Environmental NGOs. These are NGOs that deal with natural resources to conserve, animate, manage, and attempt to increase them through exploring various alternative cross breeding. Examples of environmental NGOs include Africa 2000, whose major thrust is the conservation of the land and vegetation resources in Africa as a whole. The other example is Camp Fire which conserves the wild animals by controlling their utilization in conjunction with the government of Zimbabwe and the communities adjacent to the national parks.

There are some NGOs like ORAP, World Vision International, and Christian Care who are engaged in integrated rural development. These fall in all the above three categories because these NGOs provide welfare support to the needy, as well as supporting people's initiatives in development and are engaged in environmental conservation.

The provision of goods and services by NGOs in Zimbabwe are traced way back before independence in 1980. Before 1980, NGOs provided a number of goods and services like health, education, water and food to the underprivileged sectors of the Zimbabwean society. Most of these NGOs were church organizations such as Presbyterian, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, and Salvation Army, to name a few. After independence, NGOs worked closely with the new government of Zimbabwe in the reconstruction of the country to rebuild infrastructure that had been damaged by the war. From the mid 1980s to the present, most NGOs began to play a developmental role. They are providing underdeveloped sectors of the society with materials, skills, capital, training and technological support required to improve their living standards.

In the reconstruction and development mentioned above, NGOs in Zimbabwe are playing a complementary role to the government of Zimbabwe. For the most part, there is a lot of collaboration between the government and both foreign and local NGOs operating in Zimbabwe. The NGOs seem to enjoy the freedom and latitude of operation in the country while the government also appreciates the co-operation of NGOs, their participatory approach to development which goes along with the ruling party's drive for democracy, the NGOs' teamwork spirit when implementing development activities, flexibility, timely response to emergencies, and innovative approaches to development. The government also appreciates the NGOs' ability to move resources from the rich nations into Zimbabwe.

There are contradicting views on the involvement of Zimbabwean NGOs in policy issues. One position argues that NGOs in Zimbabwe have never seriously embarked on policy advocacy issues. The other argues that the NGOs have used various means to influence policies and some of these means are the press, presentations to commissions and litigation in courts, strikes, rallies, petitions and other forms of mass action like demonstrations. One would be inclined to think that the NGOs, since they often implement government policies or policy goals, have to some degree attempted to make the government formulate policies that are feasible and relevant to the needs of the direct beneficiaries and those of the NGOs themselves. As a result, the cases explored below are designed to prove or disprove this hypothesis.

CASE I : The Policy on Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe

Background to the policy

The Chronicle Newspaper of September 10, 1982 reported that the Minister of Labour, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare gave a break down of disabled in figures as follows;

- 70 000 - visual disabilities
- 67 000 - lower limb disabilities
- 27 000 - retardation
- 20 000 - deaf
- 15 000 - neurological disabilities.

The minister also pointed that in all Zimbabwe had 250 000 disabled people. He said 5 000 of them were ex-combatants. Of this number, 48% were disabled by disease, 31% by accidents and 13% by war for the liberation of Zimbabwe from colonial rule. He further said less than 0,5% went to secondary school and above, 45% up to primary school and 52% never went school.

Before Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the community regarded its disabled members as unable to do anything to fend for their lives; to them disability meant inability. The approach of the government towards the disabled was to make them adapt to matters such as transport, housing, education and health instead of the opposite.³ The general attitude towards disabled persons was that they were to be looked after by the able bodied members of the community. As a result the disabled people found themselves marginalized from the social, political and economic affairs of the community. They felt denied opportunities to make inputs into the development of the country. As a result, the disabled persons felt that their lives were miserable and not worth living. However, the war for independence increased the number and activism of the disabled. The quantities of disabled people increased as some freedom fighters were disabled in the battle field fighting for the liberation of Zimbabwe from white colonialists. But independence to the disabled meant nothing as they were still

marginalized from the social, political and economic activities of their country.

The disabled people tried to change the attitude of the people and the environment they were living in well before and after the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980. They tried to change the erection of special schools, education and living institutions for them. They demanded to attend schools with able-bodied people. When the Jairos Jiri Association was set up in 1969, it became regarded as an institution to which the disabled should go. The center became congested and could not adequately cope with the demands for training and providing accommodation to the disabled. The disabled say they felt isolated from and unwanted by the community. So these feelings of isolation and rejection gave the disabled people an impetus to fight against this situation.

With respect to transport and mobility, the disabled demanded to have specific features incorporated that would allow them to move with little assistance from the able members of the community. An example of such features is the erection of ramps into buildings so that they can easily push their wheelchairs into the buildings. They also demanded, for example, the observation of a white walking stick as a sign of blindness so that the blind people can go without being led by the people who can see. Furthermore, the disabled demanded equal employment opportunities in jobs that they can also do rather than discrimination on the basis of disability. In work places, the disabled demanded respect and equitable distribution of duties and remunerations.

The disabled persons had tried to change policies they felt discriminated against them for a long time. Efforts were made as far back as the 1960s but by the 1980s they found that it was difficult to change the negative attitudes that viewed them as useless members of the community. They attributed this failure to change the policy to lack of organization on the part of disabled persons as they pressed for diverse and at times contradictory policy changes through individual organizations that catered for persons with divergent disabilities. These NGOs were National Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe, Council for the Blind, Zimbabwe National League for the Deaf, Zimbabwe Association for the Visually Handicapped, and Downs Child Syndrome. The individual efforts by these organizations for the disabled did not produce any results. The reason for this failure as sighted by the NCDPZ director was that the government found it difficult to respond to numerous varying policy demands. So the government encouraged the organizations for the disabled to come together and talk to the government with one common voice making a common policy demand. NCDPZ took a leading role in working on changing the policy on disability and thus, organized other organizations to work on the policy process.

The Strategies and Tactics Used by Disabled People's Organizations

The disabled persons used strategies of persuasion, education, and collaboration to influence the government to change the policy towards the disabled people in Zimbabwe.

Tactics for the Persuasion Strategy

(a) Coalition Building

In 1989, the disabled people set up a coalition of all organizations that deal with disabled persons in Zimbabwe. This coalition became known as the Zimbabwe Federation of Disabled, (ZIFOD). The coalition was steered by a committee of seven members, each member representing their organization. The member organizations of ZIFOD are National

Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe (NCDPZ), Zimbabwe National League for the Blind (ZNLB), Association for the Deaf, Zimbabwe Association of the Visual Handicapped (ZAVH), Downs Child Syndrome (DCS), Council for the Blind (CB) and Jairos Jiri Association (JJA). The essence of setting up the coalition was to increase the power of the NGOs to persuade the government by combining their skills, labor, and resources. Moreover, this created a common understanding of the policy goals of the disabled persons as a whole. The building of a coalition also made it easy for the government to deal at once with all disabilities, covering the deaf, the blind and the physically handicapped, by listening to one voice.

The common interest of each organization in ZIFOD was to set up a policy that would liberate the disabled persons from negative attitudes and infrastructural set ups that hindered them from making a meaningful input towards the development of their lives and that of the whole Zimbabwean community. The building of the coalition was supported by the fact that the government was more keen to listen to a coalition that was very organized and that covered the whole country from persons of cross disabilities. The government found itself with an obligation to do something for the betterment of the disabled people's lives as some people were disabled by the war which ultimately put the ZANU-PF Party in power.

The coalition was prone to differences in opinions, policy needs, and abilities due to divergent policy goals from the member organizations. To solve this problem, the organizations agreed that ZIFOD was to champion issues selected and agreed upon by all the member organizations of ZIFOD. In an event where there was no unanimous agreement, voting would decide the end result of ZIFOD's discussions. That is, the agreement was done through a more than fifty percent vote.

Some organizations could not provide resources and manpower for policy advocacy and because of this, NCDPZ which had taken a lead role, found itself overburdened with providing manpower and material resources like capital and transport. As a result, to alleviate NCDPZ, the member organizations of ZIFOD had to pay two hundred Zimbabwean dollars (Z\$ 200) per month for policy activities alone.

At first ZIFOD organizations could not reach consensus over the composition of the ZIFOD committee to meet the government and from which organizations the committee members would come. To resolve this dilemma, ZIFOD member NGOs agreed that each member organization has to send only one representative to represent it. This representative had to be somebody who was well informed on what was taking place visa-vis the kind of policy ZIFOD was aiming at and the interests of their organizations. Positions of chairperson, secretary and treasure had to rotate yearly among the committee members to ensure that there was no domination of one NGO in the committee. This could have resulted in ZIFOD working for the interests of that one NGO. Furthermore, the committee only acted on the instructions of the member organizations. This was to prevent the committee from being divorced from the organizations and end up being coopted by the government. To beef up the expertise of the committee, ZIFOD invited two private lawyers who were not part of the disabled fraternity but had shown some keen interest in the issues of the disabled persons. These lawyers provided legal advise to ZIFOD in the policy formulation process.

(b) Lobbying

ZIFOD member organizations lobbied every minister and members of parliament in their localities. They briefed them about the needs of disabled persons in Zimbabwe as well as tried to persuade them on the type of policy that they wanted pertaining to disabled persons. Lobbying was done formal in offices and informally in functions where they met. Some

disabled persons would make courtesy calls and visits to the government officials. Some of the lobbied through public gatherings that offered the disabled people an opportunity to appeal to the public on the desired treatment the disabled people wanted.

The impact of lobbying was revealed when the bill was presented to parliament. Every member of parliament had been sensitized and informed about the needs of the disabled people and hence most of them supported that an act be enacted to protect the disabled from discrimination. However, lobbying was weakened by the fact that some organizations in ZIFOD did not have the financial and human resources to undergo the lobbying exercise and this over-burdened the NCDPZ in particular. The other weakness of lobbying as a tactic to persuade the government was that some of the disabled persons had low levels of education and this made it difficult for them to effectively communicate their opinions to the politicians and the public who wanted to hear from them to verify what their disabled educated leaders were lobbying for.

The political and social conditions that prevailed and favored the success of lobbying efforts to change the policy about the disabled persons were that about 5 000 people who are disabled were disabled during the struggle for the independence of Zimbabwe which finally put the current ruling party, ZANU-PF, into power. As a result, there was no way that the government could ignore the plight of the disabled persons. This was further supported by the fact that in post independent Zimbabwe, members of parliament are more accessible to the electorate and as such it became easy for the disabled people's representatives to communicate with them within their constituencies. And because members of parliament also live with the communities, they were aware of the living standards and needs of the disabled. As a result it became easy to lobby the government ministers and members of parliament. In order to effectively lobby the government officials, ZIFOD members had to have financial resources to enable them to communicate with and travel to local members of parliament's locations. They were also required to have capital resources for conferences, stationery, transport and even resource persons to facilitate discussions in workshops.

Skills used in lobbying the government officials were negotiating, organizing and communication. Few ZIFOD member organizations staff had these skills and this explains why ZIFOD had to solicit the support of some outsiders with expertise to make lobbying successful.

Tactics for the Education Strategy

(a) Public Awareness Building

Awareness events were directed to the political leaders and the public about the needs and opinions of the disabled persons. Awareness was built through interviews, seminars, workshops and conferences in which relevant ministers and influential politicians and private individuals were invited. Two examples of such an awareness event was the workshop that was held in Monomotapa Hotel in Harare in March 1989. A total of one hundred and fifty people composed of members of parliament and other political leaders were invited to the workshop. More than sixty-five percent people invited turned up for the workshop. In the workshop, they were asked to play various roles as disabled people, e.g, using wheel chairs and crutches the whole day, going to the toilet, dining hall, and being led around as blind people. This was followed by a congress of the National Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe (NCDPZ) in April 1990 at Holiday Inn Hotel in Bulawayo where the President of Zimbabwe, Mr.R.G. Mugabe was the guest speaker. Also present were the Minister of Labor,

Manpower Planning and Social Welfare, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and the Secretary General of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). This was also followed by a meeting between the president, the minister of social welfare and representatives from ZIFOD. In this meeting, the president and the minister of social welfare took it upon themselves to look into the needs of the disabled persons. This resulted in the drafting of a bill which finally became the Disabled Persons Act in 1992.

The public was educated through the use of the media like newspapers, radios, televisions and occasional pamphlets and posters at public places. This enabled the public to understand the disabled persons' plight to be accepted as members of the community.

The effort to educate the politicians and the general public was successful as far as restoring the dignity of the disabled persons. Much of the public became aware that disability does not mean inability. Many people came to realize that most disabled people can stand on their own without depending on other people for survival. The abilities of the disabled were also reinforced by the production of usable items from the sheltered workers of Jairos Jiri Association who produce a lot of handicraft and furniture and sell it in Zimbabwe and abroad. This tactic to educate the general public and the government also provided the government with information to base on when setting up legislation to protect the disabled persons against any discrimination on the basis of disability.

One of the factors that favored the success of awareness and education campaigns was that the government itself set up the Ministry of Labor, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare to look into the needs of the disabled persons. This provided ZIFOD member organizations with a channel to present their case to the government. Furthermore, the government of Zimbabwe's goals, 'Education for All' and 'Health For All by Year 2000' made a lot of people to be literate and catered for, particularly the disabled people. It then became easier for the disabled to express their views and deal with complex concepts on disability. In addition, some politicians had already been educated in the countries they sought refuge in or they visited during and after the liberation struggle. So these politicians understood the case of the disabled because they had already been enlightened about the needs of the disabled. Therefore this set up worked to ZIFOD's advantage by making it easy to persuade the government on the nature of policy and legislation on disability that disabled people wanted.

The government, through discussions with ZIFOD, was made aware of the fact that disabled persons are also part of the electorate. So if the government did not take the case of the disabled persons seriously, the ruling party might lose the disabled persons' votes together with those of their friends and relatives. This made the ruling party and government consider the fate of the disabled persons more seriously and become committed to addressing their needs.

In organizing awareness and education campaigns, ZIFOD had to have 150 wheelchairs for all members of parliament, transport, stationery and the media to organize the workshop. The abilities demanded from ZIFOD and its member organizations in order to educate the politicians and the public were negotiation, communication both in writing and verbally, and organizing, conducting and using the findings of workshops they held.

(b) Use of the Media

ZIFOD put articles in the media to educate and persuade the public and the government

towards a policy and legislation that the disabled wanted.⁴ The idea to educate the public about the needs of the disabled persons was to make the public understand the disabled people's plight and support it.

In 1991, ZIFOD used the media to express the disabled people's rejection of the first draft of the Disability Act which was drafted by the government. The media became a good tool to bring to light what treatment the disabled people wanted. Through the media, ZIFOD challenged the government's recommendation in the draft bill on disability that institutions should be set up specifically for disabled. This was repugnant to the disabled. ZIFOD member organizations wrote a lot of articles in the media to persuade the government and the general public that living in institutions specifically set up for them was not acceptable. The disabled expressed that they needed to be part of the public so that they could also make a meaningful input in the development of the country. The use of the media was successful to make the government nullify its own drafted bill and asked ZIFOD to draft a bill for the disabled. ZIFOD's draft laid the basis for the Disabled Persons Act that was passed in March 1992.

The abilities that were required of ZIFOD to air their opinions through the media were clarity in expressing their views in writing and verbally in meetings, workshops, articulateness and simplicity in putting across the views rather than making them very

complex such that the lesser educated community members could comprehend. ZIFOD had to be factual and try to be as realistic as possible rather than unnecessarily attacking the government. Attacking the government could have led to hostilities between the government and ZIFOD and consequently fail ZIFOD to achieve any policy changes.

The use of the media demanded resources such as stationery, transport, telephones and personnel to write articles to the press, make presentations in the national television and radio stations.

The political situation that supported the use of the media was that during the 1980s, most of the media was influenced and controlled by the government and as such the government tended to take seriously the issues that came out from the media.

The disabled people finally persuaded the government to change the unwanted policy on disability and the legislation which finally came out as the Disabled Persons Act of 1992 made life easier for the disabled people. In mid 1993, a year after the enactment of the Disabled Persons Act, a lot of improvements in the lives of the disabled had been realized.

The Collaboration Strategy

The collaboration strategy was effectively used when the ZIFOD and the government were working on the draft bill for the Disabled Persons Act. ZIFOD provided the government with a lot of information for the bill. They guided the government right through the process of formulating the bill until it was passed by parliament. In this process, there was a lot of communication between the government and ZIFOD. Trust was built between the two bodies and each side tried to be as transparent as it could to maintain good working relationships. The outcome of this collaboration was that the final product of the whole process, the Disabled Persons Act (1992), was more towards the expectations of the disabled people.⁵

Impact of the New Policy Towards the Disabled Persons

(Disabled Persons Act of 1992)

The new policy towards the disabled persons had already had positive results by mid 1993, a year after its legislation. Most public buildings became accessible to the disabled people because it is now law for every public building to have a ramp for the disabled people who use wheel chairs to drive them into the building. There is now equal employment for both the able bodied and the disabled people for jobs that can also be done by anybody ir-regardless of one's physical abilities. As a result, more and more disabled people are entering the labor market. For instance, some disabled people are holding very senior positions in both public and private sectors. An example is Livion Njini who is an administrator of the Organization Of Rural Associations for Progress. Mr Joshua Malinga who uses a wheel-chair was elected to be the mayor of the city of Bulawayo after serving as a councillor for more than three years. There are a number of examples of disabled persons running institutions like schools, hospitals, etc. There is no more discrimination for public facilities on the basis of disability. Disabled persons can now attend schools of their choice with the able bodied-people unlike before the act was passed when they were confined to special schools even if they could attend normal schools.

CASE II: The Policy on the Exemption of Tax on indigenous NGO Imports into Zimbabwe

Background of NANGO and the Policy on Taxation of NGO Imports

NANGO is an umbrella body of all Zimbabwean NGOs. It was formed in 1962 as the Southern Rhodesia Council of Social Services for the provision of social welfare to white urban communities. After the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 it was renamed the Voluntary Organization of Community Enterprises (VOICE) and supported NGOs focusing on social, political and economic development of Zimbabweans particularly in the rural areas. In 1991, VOICE changed its name to National Association of Non-Governmental Organization (NANGO) when it underwent a major restructuring exercise. One of the functions of NANGO is to represent member NGOs to the government of Zimbabwe and to coordinate NGO activities within the country. Its other function is to give support services to the member NGOs such as providing training and some technical support to its member NGOs.

NANGO is currently working on changing the government's policy of taxing imports of indigenous NGOs that come into Zimbabwe from international donor partners. The argument for NGOs is that the government is taxing the resources which are going through indigenous NGOs to the Zimbabwean poor. They say that as a result the tax does not reach the poor because of the government's infrastructure which is concentrated to servicing the rich in Zimbabwe, leaving out the poor people. As such the poor do not get what is due to them. Moreover, this taxation exercise hinders grants from reaching NGOs in time and by the time they do these grants are reduced by tax and inflation. The indigenous NGOs also do not understand why their imports are taxed while those of their international NGO counterparts are not taxed at all. So the indigenous NGOs are trying to persuade the government not to tax their capital imports. Indigenous NGOs are demanding an exemption from taxation of their imports by the government. Below is a break down of strategies and tactics that NANGO has used to influence the government in the formulation of the policy and legislation on the exemption of indigenous NGO's imports from taxation.

The Strategies Employed by NANGO to influence Government Policy on Taxation of indigenous NGO Imports

NANGO is using three strategies to change the government's policy to tax indigenous NGOs' imports. These are persuasion, education and collaboration. As an umbrella body of Zimbabwean NGOs, NANGO feels that healthy relationships between it and the government can foster a good working relationship between the government and NANGO member NGOs. That is, NANGO realized that its relationships with the government have an indirect impact on the relationships between NANGO's member NGOs and the government of Zimbabwe. NANGO basically used three tactics to implement these strategies.

Tactics for Collaboration

(a) Applications to the Government

In December 1991, NANGO made an application to the government for exemption from taxation of indigenous NGO's imports like funds, cars and other machinery into Zimbabwe. The Ministry of Labor, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare under which NGOs belong finally accepted NANGO's application for exemption. However, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development objected that revenue would be lost since NGOs import a lot of their items and the tax on these imports raise a quarter of government revenues. At the time of this research, NGOs were still working with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development to finally get the government to legislate the exemption of the NGO imports from taxation.

Making written applications to the government is favored by the government itself which prefers to be approached in writing as a channel so that they can work on some blue print which can be kept and referred to time and again as a record. Its weakness is in that it takes a long time for the government to respond to correspondence. The application was made in 1991 but the response took a year to come. The document was trapped in bureaucratic red tape as it moved from one office to another up the hierarchical structure of the government. This resulted in the government's failure to deal with NANGO's plight with speed and urgency.

To make an effective application to the government, NANGO and its member organizations had to have an ability to be articulate in written communication, clarity and logical presentation of facts. This helped make the Ministry of Labor, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare able to easily understand why NANGO sought tax exemption for NGO imports. NANGO required resources like stationery and office equipment such as typewriters, telephones, fax and telex machines, and mailing services to make the application.

Tactics for Education and Persuasion Strategies

(a) Meetings, Workshops and Conferences

NANGO organized meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences where it expressed how taxation of NGO imports affects NGO development efforts and processes. NANGO held meetings, workshops and conferences and invited government officials. The idea here is to discuss with government people face-to-face so that NANGO makes its case clear to the government. One such event was a meeting held on February 1, 1993 at the Bulawayo Sun

Hotel. The people invited included the Provincial Governor of Matebeleland North and two other officers from the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development to meet representatives of NANGO's regional member organizations from the Western Region. The major issue discussed at this meeting was the exemption of indigenous NGO's imports from taxation. In this meeting, the government learned that it was not the desire of NANGO's headquarters to seek exemption from tax of NGO imports but that of its member NGOs. The importance of this meeting was that the government officials present were educated and more informed about the adverse effects of taxation of indigenous NGOs imports. In other words, the government officials heard for themselves from the organizations that are directly affected by the taxation of imports.

Although at the time of the research the issue was still under discussion, the use of meetings to persuade government officials had given the government some vital information for the formulation of a policy on the exemption of NGO imports for legislation. Already by mid 1993, some equipment had been granted tax exemption after the meeting, which was an indication that the government might accept and legislate the policy on the exemption from tax of all imports of indigenous NGOs. Two examples of goods granted tax exemption are the Catholic Development Commission (CADEC)'s drought relief trucks and sewing machines for a group of women in Makokoba Township of Bulawayo in September 1992. This was a positive indication that the government was taking the issue seriously and would soon legislate it.

The strength of using workshops, meetings and conferences as tools to persuade and educate the government laid in the fact that the dialogue at meetings involved question and answer time where immediate explanations were given. Furthermore, issues are raised and cleared on the spot between the two major parties, the government and NANGO. However, using workshops, meetings and conferences had a weakness in that various organizations brought a lot of issues that diverted the discussions from the real issues of taxation. Moreover, a loophole could be that resolutions and agreements made at workshops and meetings may not be fulfilled by the relevant offices if NGOs do not make a follow up.

The condition that favored the use of workshops, meetings and conferences was that there was a close working relationship between the government and NGOs in Zimbabwe. The drought that Zimbabwe went through in 1992 made the government and NGOs in Zimbabwe work together in importing and distributing drought relief supplies, thereby creating working relationships between the government and NGOs. As most drought relief materials came from outside the country and got delayed at customs while NGOs were still looking for some money to pay customs duties, it dawned to the government that NANGO's plight for exemption of NGO imports was valid. Moreover, the good relationships between the government of Zimbabwe and NANGO that enabled the two bodies to amicably discuss issues between them. This was also supported by the current politically peaceful situation in Zimbabwe where the government did not suspect that NGOs were out to destroy it.

In February, 1993 meeting, NANGO officers relied much on their abilities to negotiate and persuade government officials to attend the meeting. They also used a lot of networking before the meeting to inform and get information from the member organizations of NANGO in its other four regions. Some information gathering and dissemination abilities were used so that NANGO's regions represent interests of all indigenous NGOs in Zimbabwe.

(b) Lobbying

NGO leaders made personal contacts with senior government officials to lobby them. The idea was to create personal friends in government to represent the NGOs' interests in parliamentary deliberations that deal with the issue of taxation of NGO imports into Zimbabwe. For example, The Chronicle Newspaper of July 16 1992 reported that the Director of NANGO lobbied the Senior Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development in May 1992 to waive taxation on "152 wheelchairs, accessories and spares meant to benefit 280 disabled people in Bulawayo for NCDPZ which were held by the Department of Customs and Excise at the Dabuka marshalling yard in Gweru". The Permanent Secretary was finally persuaded to issue a tax exemption certificate for the goods and they were imported into Zimbabwe without paying duty. Persuasion became easy for the director of NANGO because he had made personal relations with the secretary of Finance through telephone conversations and courtesy visits. In this set up, the secretary for finance understood the plight of NANGO's director through the discussions the two held.

Creating personal contacts required negotiation, communication and lobbying with, for example, the senior Permanent Secretary and any government official creating contacts became successful because there was direct contact with the decision maker, thereby making the decision making process faster and more favorable to NANGO.

DISCUSSION

COMPARISONS OF STRATEGIES AND TACTICS USED BY ZIFOD AND NANGO

ZIFOD and NANGO employed three similar strategies but varied here and there in terms of tactics. The strategies these two NGOs used were collaboration, education and persuasion. In addition, ZIFOD used the confrontation/contestation strategy. In terms of tactics, both ZIFOD and NANGO used meetings as a forum to educate inform and persuade government officials. In addition to meetings, ZIFOD employed the media while NANGO made written applications and telephone conversations to lobby and persuade government officials.

In both policy efforts, coalitions of involved NGOs were set up. ZIFOD was set up in 1989 as a coalition of organizations that deal with disabled persons in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, NANGO is also a coalition of all Zimbabwean NGOs and it was set up in 1962 as the Southern Rhodesia Council of Social Services and changed to VOICE in 1981 and then finally to NANGO in 1991. The main purpose of setting up NANGO was to represent all indigenous NGOs' interests at government level as well as coordinate all indigenous NGOs' activities within the country. In the case of ZIFOD, it was set up specifically to persuade the government to formulate and legislate a policy that would liberate the disabled persons and make them full and independent members of the Zimbabwean community. Before the formation of ZIFOD in 1989, the various NGOs for disabled persons negotiated for their own individual policy changes but the government encouraged them to form a coalition to have one common policy goal that the government could deal with. NANGO is a coalition much bigger in size than ZIFOD. ZIFOD member NGOs are also members of NANGO. This difference in size probably explains why it was easy for NANGO to achieve policy changes while it took ZIFOD a long time.

NANGO's coalition did not have many problems as ZIFOD. It was probably so because NANGO is a long standing coalition which has dealt with problems of diverse interests and opinions regarding the taxation issue. Moreover, it could be that NANGO has a full time staff

which is guided by a constitution which deals with the issues of diversity and demands partiality on the part of its personnel in executing NANGO functions.

NANGO relied mostly on the input from its regional offices that are located in all the eight provinces of Zimbabwe. NANGO's regional offices meet frequently with member NGOs within their regions to air their views and grievances that they wish NANGO to present to the government. This was similar to the operations of ZIFOD whose committee met with the member organizations and got their input for every action that the committee took. The committee of ZIFOD, like NANGO, was accountable to the member NGOs of ZIFOD.

ZIFOD put articles in the media while NANGO did not. This tactic worked well for ZIFOD but some of its members felt that this tactic could be jeopardized by the relationship between that particular form of media and the government. NCDPZ in particular pointed out that before ZIFOD was set up, it tried to use the media but the government did not take the newspaper articles seriously because the government felt that certain newspapers, The Chronicle in particular, were bent on destroying the government's good image unlike some newspapers that were controlled by government. But in 1991, when the relations between the government and The Chronicle improved, ZIFOD used The Chronicle effectively to air their resistance to the draft bill on disability which the government had produced. So it is very necessary to consider the relations between the government and the type of media an NGO intends to use to influence policy issues.

Both NANGO and ZIFOD used meetings and workshops to make government officials aware of the type of policies they wanted. In such fora, it became open for any one to make contributions but the disadvantage was that some government officials tended to make promises they did not honor later. The use of this tactic also depended upon how the NGO representatives present their case. The policy advocates need to be clear, analytic, creative and realistic in putting information and policy alternatives forward. ZIFOD used meetings effectively when they set up a workshop and requested that all participants play the role of disabled by using wheel-chairs, pretending to be deaf or blind through out one day of the workshop, going to the toilet, dinning room, etc. This made the government officials who attended the workshop experience the life of the disabled. After the workshop the participants were more informed about the problems the disabled people face. These meetings and workshops helped to give the government officials more information and experiences on which to base their decisions in formulating and legislating policies.

NANGO communicated directly with the government through written applications and telephone conversations. ZIFOD only made presentations to government officials in their localities to lobby them. But in both policy efforts, the idea was to persuade the government towards desired policies.

Implications for Zimbabwean NGOs

The two case studies proved that some NGOs in Zimbabwe work on policy advocacy. The case studies revealed that these NGOs use persuasion, collaboration, confrontation and education as strategies to influence the national policy formulation. NANGO and ZIFOD used these strategies to influence the government on the exemption from tax policy on indigenous NGO imports and the policy on disabled persons respectively. This implies that they are successful strategies that NGOs can use in Zimbabwe to influence the government's policy formulation process. However, this does not mean that the other strategy of litigation is not used or do not work in Zimbabwe. There are NGOs like the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and Commercial Farmers Union who have confronted the government and even

taken it to court and the consequences have been that the relationships between such NGOs and the government have been strained.

The research also revealed that the use of the strategies vary from one NGO to another as has been seen in the case of ZIFOD and NANGO. The tactics used for each strategy also varied from one organization to another. The tactics used by NANGO and ZIFOD included building coalitions, using the media, organizing workshops which involve government officials, building personal contacts between the NGO leaders and the government officials and making written applications to the relevant government offices. So this implies that any Zimbabwean NGO that intends to deal with policy formulation issues needs to be aware of these tactics so it can use effectively them to influence national policy formulation process.

Awareness and education campaigns to influence national policy formulation process also proved worthwhile. In the cases of ZIFOD and NANGO, the education and awareness campaigns became very useful to inform and persuade the public and the government officials about the policies ZIFOD and NANGO wanted. The major ways of educating and informing the public and the government officials were meetings, experiential workshops and conferences. These activities helped to convert the government officials into ZIFOD and NANGO policy goals by providing the government officials with a lot of information and enlightenment on the respective issues.

The building of coalitions revealed several advantages. Joining together gave NGOs more power and authority - economically and politically. The NGOs combined their labor, skills and resources towards one policy goal. The affected NGOs spoke with one voice which could be listened and responded to more easily and effectively. Coalition building resulted in ZIFOD and NANGO's respective policy goals attended and addressed to a satisfactory level. The whole policy efforts therefore, became organized and systematic than when a number of NGOs made individual policy demands.

The other advantage to be considered in building coalitions was that NGOs that can not work on policy issues due to a lack of resources and manpower might easily be cushioned by their NGO colleagues. Coalition building also makes it difficult for the government to single out and punish any one NGO.

Coalitions may find it difficult to work. Some NGOs tend to dominate the coalitions and foster their own interests at the expense of other NGOs. ZIFOD dealt with this problem by setting up a committee with representation of each member organization. This brought about some acceptable level of balance of interests although some people may dominate the committee itself. On the other hand, NANGO has a full time personnel whose operation is guided by a constitution rather than member NGOs. This however, does not mean that NANGO staff are not prone to biases towards some of the NGOs that have a lot of influence over NANGO's operations.

NGOs need to have personnel with competencies to implement the strategies mentioned above. Some capacities that have been revealed in the two case studies are negotiating, communication, networking, organizing (workshops, meetings and conferences), and above all, information gathering, analysis and dissemination using the gathered data in implementing the various strategies mentioned above. Creativity is also required as demonstrated in ZIFOD's experiential exercise where the government officials were requested to play the role of the disabled by using wheelchairs and crushes to experience the lives of a disabled persons. Conflict resolution abilities are required so that the personnel in coalition committees can deal effectively with conflicting interests, and demands within a

coalition. In some cases misunderstandings might rise up between the coalition and the government and the coalition staff should be in a position to deal with the misunderstanding amicably. Above all, NGO staff should be fully informed about various strategies to work on policy advocacy so that they have no doubts in policy work.

Conclusion

In concluding this research, it is imperative to mention that some NGOs in Zimbabwe are involved in policy issues. But surprisingly, the NGOs consulted during this research expressed that they found themselves influencing policy formulation without being clearly aware about how to go about the policy process. In other words, it was experiential learning for them. As such, they felt that there is need for a training workshop on policy advocacy so that they are made aware of the pros and cons of policy influence and different strategies they can use to influence national policy formulation.

Five main strategies that NGOs use to influence the national policy formulation process, namely collaboration, litigation, confrontation, education and persuasion. ZIFOD and NANGO used persuasion, education and collaboration. The NGOs involved explained that they used these strategies because they believed that these strategies do not generate hostilities between the government and NGOs, unless, may be, when mishandled.

Training needs for NGO staff come out clearly from the cases studied. NGO personnel need to be equipped with skills in research, information gathering and analysis, conflict resolution, negotiation, communication, organizational, and public/human relations skills. Moreover, NGO staff need to have knowledge and awareness of legal processes particularly those dealing with national policy formulation. ZIFOD had to incorporate two legal practitioners to provide legal advice in formulating the Disabled Persons Act of 1992.

It is important to note that coalitions could be very effective mechanisms for dealing with policy advocacy issues but they are very delicate entities. They need a lot of compromises from member NGOs. Common goals, interests, norms and values have to be established to provide members with guiding principles for their actions. Team work needs to be of high standard so that the coalition works as a team.

Finally, NGO staff need to have certain human qualities that are required in policy advocacy. Some of these qualities are commitment, patience, ability to compromise, ability to set goals and self evaluation. In the case of the disabled, they evaluated their efforts in 1989 and from the evaluation, they found the need to create a coalition and that produced ZIFOD which finally achieved policy changes for the disabled.

Questions for Further Research

Further research on policy advocacy issues may focus on how NGOs, indigenous NGOs in particular, can influence policy formulation outside their government spheres. These could be policies formulated by international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank or internationally powerful governments like the United States of America. Can the local NGOs use the same strategies to influence these international organizations' policy formulation processes and what could be the requirements in terms of resources, skills and human qualities?

Further research may also seek to establish what the local NGOs can do to influence national policy formulation if all the strategies identified in this research study do not produce required results. That is, if the government of the day in Zimbabwe does not listen to the policy

demands. Should the NGOs resort to clandestine ways like anarchy or should they give up the efforts to influence the national policy formulation process.

Of course there are many questions that arise from this research that could be researched further and these are some of the research areas.

ENDNOTES

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APPENDIX

List of Organizations Contacted

Council for the Blind

Council for the Deaf

Ministry of Finance Economic Planning and Development

Ministry of Labour, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare

NANGO head Office, Harare

NANGO Western Region, Bulawayo

NCDPZ Head Office, Harare

NCDPZ, Bulawayo

ORAP