NGOs and Community: A Case Study of Roles of NGOs in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT
The development of the country is not only focusing on the role of government alone. The private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also play an important role in ensuring that the public benefits from sustainable development. The NGOs play a major role at the grassroots level since they are close to the community to implement the programs that will benefit the community. They do have the expertise and skills to deliver the services to the communities. By understanding the important role of the NGOs, this paper will explore their roles and contributions towards community development in Malaysia. The research was used among members of NGOs in Malaysia about their roles and contributions towards communities. The descriptive analysis will be discussed throughout the paper. This paper will also highlight the future relationship that the NGOs and other stakeholders like government and corporate organizations should focus on creating sustainable development.

Keywords: Networking, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), Partnership, Roles of NGOs, Sustainable development.

1. INTRODUCTION
In the past, NGOs were involved in helping the poor, disabled, distressed, and community within the society. Gradually, their focus shifted toward upliftment, empowerment, development, and sustainability issues [1]. Click or tap here to enter text. This type of NGO is also known as the fourth generation of NGOs, creating a global impact. The study has shown that NGOs can influence government policy at the domestic and international levels. To the extent that human rights protection can be restored, for example, in Saudi and Korea, both countries have transformed their policy and restored protection to the vulnerable group [2]. There are many collaborations between private sectors and NGOs, for example, Coca-Cola companies with WWF to help protect the world's seven most important freshwater river basins, and McDonald's partner with the Environmental Defense Fund to reduce the environmental effect of its packaging. According to the CandE Corporate NGO Barometer 2013, 84% of companies and 96% of NGOs expect corporate NGO partnership to become more important for the organization over the next three years [3], and the number of companies to have partnerships with NGOs keep increasing for the year 2018 [3]. Therefore, this paper will explore the roles played by NGOs in Malaysia and their activities within the community.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
Corporate-NGO partnerships constitute one of the four possible types of cross-sector partnerships for addressing societal issues' called business-nonprofit, business-government, government-nonprofit, and tri-sector partnerships [4]. To develop successful corporate-NGO partnerships, understanding each party's world views, interests, and risks is important. Normally, large businesses usually have the financial resources to develop social impact programs for NGOs, and they often rely on the expertise of grassroots NGOs for implementation. However, smaller-scale NGOs often lack knowledge and skill, which hinder them from accommodating corporate goals.

The Corporation comprised various stakeholders. Based on the stakeholder theory, each stakeholder's group must be considered, and that each stakeholder group must even participate in determining the firm's future direction, in which they hold a stake since each stakeholder invests in the firm[5]. The stakes are reciprocal since both the
firms and their constituencies can affect the other regarding rights and responsibilities. In this context, the small scale of NGOs would likely fail to accommodate the aspiration of the companies failing to secure financial support through CSR activities by the companies. Thus, any NGO must capture the aspiration and interest of the corporate bodies through their CSR activities. For example, WAO set up the first green child care in Malaysia, a center to protect children experiencing trauma and women who are the victims of domestic violence. The center was financed by REHDA and other main partners[6]. The NGOs need to grab the opportunities produced through partnership to fulfill society's aspiration to provide services.

NGOs have greater public trust in social and environmental issues than the government, media, and corporations [7]. Thus the partnership between companies and NGOs could enhance its legitimacy and trust for their social and environmental initiatives, thus, ensuring the continuity of their business in the long run.

Although previously the relationship between NGOs and companies was also termed as “doing a deal with a devil” [8], the pattern of the relationship has changed from collaborating partners rather than traditional adversaries to sustainable practices and ethical code of conduct [9].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research has mainly used the survey as an instrument of collecting data about the role of NGOs. The primary data is based on the survey and semi-structured interviews with the selected NGOs that represented different NGOs. The google forms have been distributed widely, and it consists of two parts. The first part is respondents’ view on the roles of NGOs, and the second part of the survey mainly involves the respondents who are members of particular NGOs in Malaysia. A total of 356 forms had been collected from the public and members of NGOs. The next section will discuss the descriptive analysis of the findings.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, there were 356 respondents from the survey that was conducted. For this article, the researchers will focus on the respondents from NGOs.

The following is the selected demographic background of the respondents. The majority of the respondents are female (58.9%) and while male respondents are 41.1%.

Figure 1 Gender of Respondent

Figure 2 Age of respondents

The survey asked the respondent's views on the roles of NGOs in the community. Almost all respondents agreed on the importance of NGOs in the community. It can be determined from their answer to the questions. The followings are the respondent's view on the role of NGOs

1. Increase the well-being of community
2. Provide services to the community
3. Provide a bridge between public and other stakeholders (government/private sectors)
4. Representative for the community
5. Act as communicating agent on behalf of the community

These roles viewed by respondents are consistent with the literature. NGOs are currently active at the grassroots level and offer various services, protection, and assistance to various groups, including the people and the government, including policy-making (Fox & Brown, 1999; Roper, 2005) to corporate ethics watchdogs (Doh & Guay, 2006) to conflict resolution and peace (Bartal & Bennink, 2004; Goodhand & Lewer, 1999; Isralowitz, Sussman, Afifi, Rawson, Babor, & Monteiro, 2001). For many people who embrace a liberal perspective, NGOs are seen as a third player in the global governance system to address institutional weaknesses of states and markets (Clarke, 1998). NGOs also ensured beneficiaries were getting their needs met through the health department (Hartmann et al., 2020). Thus, it can be seen that, even during times of unrest or conflict, NGOs presence is crucial and able to ensure the well-being and security of the people are protected.

In addition, NGOs do have networking with other NGOs, as visualized in the following pie chart. 80.4% of respondents mentioned that they did have networking
with other NGOs instead of 19.6% of respondents. They believe that networking with other NGOs will enable them to get benefits for their organizations as well.

Source: Result analysis (2021)

**Figure 3** Is NGOs having the network?

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents said that networking with other NGOs will provide platform to

1. share ideas, human resources, and updated or relevant information;
2. collaborate and enhance the capability to implement the programs to the community;
3. enhance their visibility and good publicity for their NGOs as well
4. get potential financial assistance or funding for programs
5. provide training as well as mentoring and guidance among NGOs
6. serve as a support system among NGOs

Besides, the NGOs did have networking with other stakeholders such as corporate organizations. The respondents said that they did have networking with industrial sectors (87.5%) as opposed to only 12.5% did not have networking with industry.

Source: Result analysis (2021)

**Figure 4** Is NGOs working with corporate organization?

The findings from the survey also have shown forms of networking between the NGOs and other stakeholders. The following Table did highlight the networking established.

### Table 1. Forms of Networking

Source: Result analysis (2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Forms of Networking</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Collaboration or collaboration partners</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Equipment assistance</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Expert assistance</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Visibility or Promotion of NGO</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Community Programmes</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Business partners</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though the NGOs did have good networking with other NGOs and other stakeholders like private sectors or corporate organizations, they also faced problems. Almost 73.2% of the respondents mentioned that lack of financial resources is their main problem in supporting NGOs operations in realizing their roles in the community. By having support from government and corporate organizations, the NGOs will function effectively within the community. The findings below showed how government and corporate organizations could assist NGOs in their daily operations.

### Table 2. Means/Methods of Support

Source: Result analysis (2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Government (%)</th>
<th>Corporate Bodies (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Appointed as a contributor of expertise to the government/corporate bodies</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Training assistance</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Appointed as service provider by the government/corporate bodies</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research did highlight the role of NGOs in the community and how they form the networking with other NGOs. In addition, their partnership with government and corporate organizations needs to be further utilized since NGOs are close with the community in general. They play important roles at the grassroots level as well. The NGOs may help the government to achieve the vision.
of the country. Their roles are consistent with the
government policy on Shared Prosperity Vision 2023.
The policy aims to boost the country's economic
prosperity and benefit people from all segments of
society regardless of income class, race, and geographic
region of the country.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper presented findings from the research that
has been done among NGOs in Malaysia. The research
explores significant issues surrounding the NGOs, such
as their roles in the community, networking with other
NGOs, and other stakeholders like government and
corporate organizations. The NGOs do play important
roles in the community since they work at grassroots
levels. The NGOs need to grab the opportunities
produced through partnership to fulfill society's
aspiration to provide services.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researchers would like to thank Universiti
Utara Malaysia for providing funding and support to
complete this research (SO Code 14580).

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