

Comparing Domestic NGOs and International NGOs: Relationships with government, Public profile and Advocacy

Organisation: Anglicare is a registered charity with a long established history in South Australia. Anglicare's mission, guided by its Christian values and affiliation with the Anglican church, is to provide a range of resources and services that improve the lives of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society.

Aim: This report will compare the functioning of International NGOs (INGOs) to domestic NGOs in Australia (ANGOs) such as Anglicare. The relationships they have with government, other NGOs and society, their financial structures, and the role of advocacy will be the main points of focus. ANGOs and INGOs while engaged in the same fundamental missions, operate in different spheres and so aren't often viewed through the same lens. Some ANGOs carry with them a certain level of dependence on government that most INGOs do not. This appears to hinder their efficient functioning as well as their public profiles and role as advocates for long term policy change. This report hopes to provide Anglicare and other ANGO's with a useful understanding of how they can learn from their international counterparts and overcome these barriers. In doing so, the aim is to highlight any inefficiencies in the current processes and also highlight a stronger role for ANGOs in advocacy so that they can also be a more prominent driver of policy reform rather than being predominantly responsive in their operations.

Methodology: This will comprise of literature review and primary interviews from those working within the NGO sector.

Research and findings so far:

Social Contract theory and the Domestic and International political spheres:

It will be argued that Social Contract theory is pivotal to understanding how ANGOs and INGOs operate within society and the differences in their relationship with government and society. The theory suggests that there is an agreement which legitimises the authority of the state to govern the people when the people give up certain freedoms in return for certain benefits. The problem for all NGOs is that they are not traditionally considered to be a part of this agreement and in this way are delegitimized as entities. However it appears to be more of an issue for ANGOs than INGOs. INGOs work in the international relations system which is considered to be anarchical by nature, and with developing countries which do not have fully functioning or established social contracts. ANGOs on the other hand, operate around a well established social contract which they help to deliver. This means they are much more of a focus for government, both their benefit and their detriment.

Finance , Sources of Revenue and its Impact on Operations :

The underlying financial structures of most INGOs and some ANGOs differ greatly which may help to understand the differences in their functioning. The table beside looks at a sample of 8 of some of the most well known ANGOs and INGOs. Taking into consideration that this is a limited sample size, one pattern is evident. While the amount of government funding ranges greatly amongst both types of NGO, INGOs appear to consistently have very high proportions of revenue coming in from community fundraising. It will be argued that the impact of this financial situation on the operations of ANGOs and INGOs is significant and reflects the political relationship with government. Whilst advantaged in one respect, more heavily government funded ANGOs can find themselves conflicted in criticising government or biting the hand that feeds, so to speak. Meanwhile, government of course have an interest in censoring or outright silencing ANGOs which has been a point of controversy in the past and present. However, in recent times the federal government has aimed to be more progressive in their approach towards ANGOs.

Sources of Revenue

	Government (%)	Fundraising (%)	Other (%)
Anglicare SA	78	1	21
St Vincent de Pauls	13.9	20.2	53.5
The Smith Family	20.5	53.2	26.3
Salvation Army	47.5	14.7	26

	Government (%)	Fundraising (%)	Other (%)
World Vision	12	71	17
Oxfam	24	67	9
Amnesty International	0	97.6	2.4
CARE Australia	37	49	14

Figures taken from 2010/11 Annual Reports from respective NGOs. All are national reports except for Anglicares.

Social Contract theory and the financial structures of ANGOs and INGOs, amongst other factors, aid in understanding how their standings and relationships with government, other entities and society differ. Whilst ANGOs are much more of a priority to government, they are also kept under the thumb of government in a way that INGOs do not experience. Thus this significantly impacts the ability of some ANGOs to go about their missions as well as create public profiles and engage in advocacy. By exploring these various tensions, my project will seek to understand what ANGOs can learn from their international counterparts in balancing these relationships. It will seek to formulate recommendations that allow ANGOs grappling with these issues to be more equal partners with government, more recognised as leaders in society, as well as drivers of genuine policy reform.

Intern: Hiranya Ekanayake

Academic and Host Supervisor: Ian Goodwin-Smith