The Relationship between Non-Governmental Organizations and the Community in

Building Sustainable Development: A Review of Literature

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Marketing and Sustainability Concepts

Sustainable development is a relatively new area of business, but it is an emerging theme for discussion due to its continuous changes. To deal with the gap between what has already been known about sustainability and the emerging social or environmental concepts, Jovic and Novčić (2016) offered to use marketing and related theories. As a result, there are two key terms that have to be identified in this literature review: sustainable development and sustainable marketing.

The findings of Singla et al. (2018) showed that multiple definitions of sustainable development were given during the last several decades. For example, the World Commission on Environment and Development explained it as "a strategy of progress in which the utilization of assets, command on investments, arrangement of technological development and corporate revolution, are made persistent with subsequent and existing demand" (as cited in Singla et al., 2018, p. 303). Blewitt (2018) introduced sustainable development as a paradigm in terms of which people chose a holistic way to relationships with the world where human lives were viewed as a part of a larger entity. Therefore, there exist different approaches to defining the term 'sustainable development,' and the current literature review will focus of analyzing them..

With time, new improvements and additions have been made in this field. However, Jovic and Novčić (2016) recommended following the definition given by Brundtland: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (p. 921). Its strength is the illustration of the problems that people could face in their intentions to endorse their growth, including environmental degradation, economic

growth, poverty, and social relationships (Jovic & Novčić, 2016). Taking into consideration all these characteristics, the creation of a sustainable society turns out to be a complex endeavor that requires collaboration, investigation, communication, and the exchange of resources (Broman & Robèrt, 2017). Giving a definition and promoting an understanding of the concept cannot be ignored, but these initiatives are not enough to make sure that positive results are achieved.

Regarding the practical aspect of sustainable development, it is important to understand how to connect sustainability and ordinary people. Marketing is one of the disciplines that follow social, economic, and cultural development and contribute to the awareness of modern society (Meler & Magaš, 2014). In their studies, Jovic and Novčić (2016) and Meler and Magaš (2014) stated that marketing is a set of processes to create and deliver information to users. Sustainable marketing, in its turn, focuses on the market in which people and organizations solve the problems of sustainability in modern society. Its distinctive feature from ordinary marketing is that in addition to the building of long-term relationships with customers, the recognition of social and environmental benefits is more important than organizational values, annual revenues, and financial profits. Therefore, the role of marketing in the promotion of sustainable development is integral not just because of the possibility to connect people but also due to creating a mix of ideas, actions, and goals focused on social, environmental, and financial aspects.

The Community's Role in Sustainable Development

In the age of sustainable development, people have enough powers and abilities to make their contributions and demonstrate their attitudes towards what is done to nature and its resources. Governmental and non-governmental organizations like the United Nations (UN) or the World Bank group develop specific sustainable development goals (SDGs) and plans.

However, these goals should not just mobilize population knowledge but make stakeholders like community leaders or religious groups to be pulled together and act (Sachs, 2015). The practical experience of the citizens of Northern Sri Lanka proved that communities were able to develop their projects, recognize their needs, and support sustainability at their homes (Dixon & Qian, 2017). People believe that if several years ago, communities had to act alone, nowadays, they can learn, exchange their experiences and approaches, and make common decisions.

The worth of involving communities to achieve sustainability depends directly on their experiences and participation in everyday activities. For example, the representative of the UN, Sekhran (2017), admitted that communities might be role models for the supporters of sustainable development because they are those who face actual consequences of human activities, including climate changes, biodiversity loss, and the decrease of the quality of life. Community participation in development and intervention programs can be an effective strategy in different spheres. Madon et al. (2018) used a particular example of how health program sustainability could be promoted and defined the role of community as a possibility to identify local priorities and gain conceptual clarity about health. The investigation of Olajuyigbe (2016) proved the improvements in the donor-driven water sector by involving communities and local governments to remove vandalism enhance positive attitudes towards continuity and sustainability, and support mobilization. In each of the studies, the authors introduced different ways of how a community may participate in sustainable development. Still, the main message remains the same – any community can be a member of a team where improvements and changes are encouraged.

As well as an active doer, a community may be a credible source of information and evaluator of the achievements made. Such a diversity of functions may be explained by a

diversity of its definitions. Nagle (2018) said that the community could mean different things for different people, including a group of people who live in the same area or who share common interests without living in the same place. Still, such characteristics as having boundaries, belonging to something common, and sharing similar values cannot be neglected. When the community has sustainable development as its goal, the outcomes of its actions are hard to predict, but certain changes have to be expected. New tactics, multiple perspectives, and vivid examples of what can be done or what should be avoided are the possible expectations of the situation when the community is involved in sustainable development practices (Nagle, 2018). In many countries, the role of the population is not as crucial as the role of the government. Therefore, additional sources of information and supported must be found out in order to stabilize the position and get prepared to educate, act, and decide.

Non-Governmental Organizations

In the period of global development, international relationships, and industrialization, the role of NGOs cannot be ignored. Tortajada (2016) admitted that these processes lead to multiple transformations in society, politics, economy, and other spheres, which results in the creation of new stakeholders and interest groups, known as NGOs. There are many studies where definitions of NGOs are given, and the discussion of their roles and duties are developed. In their article, Rahim and Mohtar (2015) explained NGOs as non-profit organizations that "neither a part of a government nor a conventional profit oriented business" (p. 13). Ordinary citizens are usually the founders of such groups, and funding may come from different sources, including foundations, governments, or private individuals (Rahim & Mohtar, 2015). As a rule, NGOs are focused on humanitarian issues, political aspects, and social concerns the solution of which may improve the quality of life, determine further contributions, and support vulnerable groups of people.

Depending on their types and locations, NGOs are able to promote specific positions and explain their steps in relation to society, the government, and the globe. The investigation by Mosweunyane (2019) in a particular region (Botswana) can be used to understand the categorization of NGOs from a general perspective. For example, there are business-friendly international organizations (BINGO) with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as one of the well-known examples (Mosweunyane, 2019). Nowadays, it is popular to create environmental NGOs (ENGO) like Greenpeace to support the ideas of nature protection and support. Additional variations of NGOs include international (INGO), quasi-autonomous (QUANGO), and government-organized (CONGO) organizations.

People are free to develop their individual understandings of NGOs due to the activities and positions they choose. Lewis (2014) defined NGOs as the representatives of the "third sector", where the issues of social justice and global poverty are addressed. These organizations may influence society directly by providing services and funding or indirectly by cooperating with other companies and individuals or campaigning. Its growth is evident during the last decades: in the middle of the 1900s, the UN officially recognized about 40 international NGOs, and today, there are more than 2,800 NGOs that raise approximately $20 billion annually (Lewis, 2014). The size of NGOs varies in countries, depending on their missions, abilities, and funding. Due to the rise in numbers and the level of impact NGOs have on society, their management and development become urgent topics for discussions. However, the idea that NGOs play a role in sustainable development is interesting not only to individual researchers or writers but to the members of international organizations and local governments.

NGOs and Sustainability

The connection between sustainable development and NGOs is frequently discussed in many studies. Sustainability implies the necessity to stimulate a better way of human life through social development and the recognition of people's needs, and NGOs facilitate developmental activities (Ariadi et al., 2018). There has to be a plan for organizations to follow their sustainable goals, and the representatives of the United Nations (2015) introduced the agenda with 17 clearly defined SDGs. Each goal from the ending poverty to promoting global partnership has its area of action and building peculiarities, and NGOs should recognize their participation in this plan. Sometimes, it is possible to succeed in an independent campaign, but the idea of multiple participants also has a number of benefits for sustainable development promotion. NGOs prove themselves as non-profit organizations that are good at establishing various types of relationships and collaboration at different levels (Tortajada, 2016). In academic and practitioner literature, attention is paid to how NGOs contribute to cooperation between civil and business sectors (Harangozó & Zilahy, 2015). Governmental and inter-governmental processes, as well as public and regulatory activities, excite interest among many activists.

NGOs discuss social problems from multiple perspectives, thus inviting more people and private companies to find solutions in different areas. For example, to support sustainable development and decrease inequality, NGOs participate in the discussion of women's rights and analyze the achievements of local policies (Lewis, 2014). Counseling, support services, advocacy, and education become the priories for many NGOs in such regions as the United States, Australia, and some European counties. Such activities help people recognize their basic needs, develop their abilities, and improve knowledge to control their lives and promote social mobility (Sachs, 2015). In addition, some common functions of NGOs include the delivery of

services, educating people, and advocating their rights and freedoms have to be underlined. Goldman and Little (2015) showed how NGO involvement influenced women in Northern Tanzania when the beliefs about gender norms and increased personal agency were re-organized at the societal level and resulted in female empowerment. In fact, the improvement of social roles is one of the initial steps to develop sustainability.

Capacity building is another method to build sustainable development, and NGOs can introduce specific interventions. Investigations by Morgan (2016) or Schmitz and Mitchell (2016) help to recognize the possibilities of young people to stabilize their positions and clarify the perspectives where services might be offered. Additional education and new perspectives make it possible to find out the balance between existing social, environmental, and economic issues and involve as many communities or other stakeholders as possible.

NGOs-Community Relationships

One of the most remarkable benefits of NGOs in modern society is to make sure that communities and individuals can be helpful. Therefore, the relationship between NGOs and the communities turns out to be a serious topic for discussion. Stakeholders play a key role in sustainable development, and the more parties are involved in the solution of the same goal, the better. For example, Meixell and Luoma (2015) discussed the responsibilities of NGOs and communities as the major stakeholders in the sustainable management of the supply chain. They proved that communities remain a credible source of information about human needs and major problems, and NGOs assist in overcoming barriers and gaps between private organizations and communities and enhance education. At this moment, all people and organizations who want to make contributions to the safe and healthy future of generations have to recognize their tasks

from the different perspectives (Goldman & Little, 2015; Meixell & Luoma, 2015; Singla et al., 2018; Sustainable Brands, 2016; United Nations, 2015):

1. Poverty end is the goal by means of which the UN wants to ensure equal economic rights for people. The community gathers information and identifies problems and expected minimums. NGOs like Save the Children, Plan International, or BRAC raise donations, provide education, and build alliances.

2. Food security and hunger end may be promoted by the creation of sustainable food production and delivery systems. The community is responsible for administrative issues and human resources. NGOs like KickStart or One Acre Fund empower small organizations, farms, and water pump stations in developing.

3. Healthy lives and well-being are possible when child deaths, substance abuse, or epidemics are prevented. The community report on recent cases and health-related problems in a timely manner. ICRC, Clinton Health Access Initiative, and Partners in Health are the NGOs that educate people, deliver free or cheap medications, and do humanitarian work.

4. Inclusive quality education is insurance of education accessibility for all people, regardless of their age, race, gender, or income levels. The community identifies the need for technicians or other experts locally. Wikimedia Foundation, Pratham, and Room to Read are NGOs to encourage the growth of free content and innovative technologies for developing countries.

5. Gender equality presupposes the elimination of all forms of discrimination and ensures equal economic, health, and legal rights for women. The community shares their experiences and observations where men and women collaborate. The NGOs (Akilah Institute for Women or

MADRE) strengthen women's participation in social activities, education, and other civil movements.

6. Water and sanitation management, affordable and reliable energy, sustainable economic growth, and resilient infrastructure and industrialization are the goals that contribute to the improvement of employment rates and the efficiency of energy and water resources. The community identifies people needs and report about the results at different levels. NGOs like WaterAid, Solar Sister, Root Capital, and Construction for Change create appropriate living and working conditions in different countries.

7. Inequality reduction, safe and resilient human settlements, and sustainable consumption help to share similar opportunities for the citizens of different regions. Such networks like Verité, C40 Cities, and Greenblue control how recent achievements, globalization, and industrialization work for vulnerable people. Communities, in their turn, check the effectiveness of the work of such organizations.

8. Climate change control, sustainable use of marine resources, and terrestrial ecosystem protection are the ecological steps to protect natural resources. Greenpeace, Oceana, and the National Wildlife Federation are the leading NGOs that create policies, protect nature, and educate people on how to behave. Communities are responsible for following regulations and avoiding human-nature conflicts.

9. Peaceful societies with access to justice and the promotion of global partnership are the purposes of the UN to ensure friendly and trustful relationships. Open Society Foundations and Ceres are the networks where communities can expand their knowledge, try new business practices, and protect their rights. Capacity building, trade, and technology are the major aspects of this part of building sustainable development.

Effects on Building Sustainable Development

Taking into consideration the goals set by the UN and the abilities of both NGOs and the community, there are several ways people can choose for building sustainable development. However, in addition to some general benefits of the idea of sustainability in society, not many researchers focus on the advantages and disadvantages of this process. In his book, Sachs (2015) believed that practical and measured goals, as well as the participation of the UN and the World Bank in the establishment of threshold lines, may help to end extreme poverty. Meler and Magaš (2014) evaluated the relationship between sustainability and marketing and concluded that the minimization of the use of natural resources could provide future generations with a chance for a good and safe life. In addition, such effects like the possibility to meet social and environmental needs and build stronger communities encourage people to believe in the power of sustainable development at this period of time.

However, in addition to such general pros of sustainable develop like saving the planet, helping people, and promoting cooperation, the concept of sustainable development has its disadvantages and concerns. For example, there are many obstacles to meeting the SDGs, and one of them is the presence of false promises in the discussion. In his work, Blewitt (2018) enhanced an understanding of sustainable development and mentioned that sustainability takes time during which political campaigns and promises help to create the necessary image. Still, there is no evidence about the effectiveness of these plans, and people may listen to motivational speeches and plans but fail to take the necessary steps and protect the land. Jovic and Novčić (2016) underlined that the companies that support sustainable development aim at meeting the needs of customers and gain their own profits at a global level. Such attitudes are characterized by fragile commitment and high costs.

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