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Megan D. Beddow

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Fundamentals of the Dominican Voluntary Sector

Megan D. Beddow

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Foreword

Global Foundation for Democracy and Development (GFDD) and its sister organization in the Dominican Republic, Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo (Funglode), are dedicated to promoting research and awareness in areas that are crucial for sustainable development in the Dominican Republic and in the rest of the world. GFDD and Funglode put together panel discussions, foster educational programs and support research that generate new perspectives, contribute to public policy and promote transformative initiatives on a national and international scale. The foundations are honored to present the publication series Research and Ideas, which offers the results of research projects that address critical international issues from local to global perspectives.

This edition of the series showcases the work of GFDD Fellow Megan D. Beddow, titled "Fundamentals of the Dominican Voluntary Sector," which presents an analysis of the opportunities and challenges associated with non-profit work in the Dominican Republic. This work, which considers the external environmental factors and internal organizational characteristics that shape the voluntary sector of the Dominican Republic, illustrates a classic evolution of the Voluntary Sector in a developing country. Considering the advances of the education, economic, sustainable development, transportation, and agricultural sectors in the Dominican Republic after the end of the dictatorship in 1961, the Voluntary Sector is facing some challenges but is heading in the right direction. Any sector of a government cannot be analyzed without considering a detailed vision of the political, economic, and social evolution of a society. However, if readers look at this research as an exercise to satisfy their intellectual curiosity on how some government administrations can lead a country to total instability and dependency, they can understand issues of ethnicity and sectarian fundamentalism, which play an important role in promoting or undermining democracy.

Even though the views and findings contained in the book are solely those of the author, GFDD is fortunate to have researches such as Ms. Beddow, who open conversations among the various sectors and enhance our knowledge in areas that we might not think would be affected by political or economic factors. We hope this research will contribute to a better understanding of the world and empower readers to act in more informed, efficient, and harmonious ways.

Yamile Eusebio Paulino
Acting Co-Executive Director
GFDD

Preface

The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in promoting sustainable development at the international level cannot be understated. Campaigning groups have helped to drive inter-governmental negotiations, which include the regulation of hazardous wastes, the fight against climate change and even the elimination of slavery. Today NGOs no longer solely engage with traditional government bodies, they also hold to account other stakeholder groups, including the private sector.

This stakeholder approach has come to define the innovative ways in which NGOs work. One characteristic they all share is that their non-profit status means they are not hindered by short-term financial objectives. Accordingly, they are able to devote themselves to issues which occur across longer time horizons, such as climate change. Being highly trusted by the public, they can therefore often give an effective voice in the various international fora that they operate in, thereby helping to promote and advance policy issues from the international to the local level.

Within the Dominican Republic, the success of NGOs in achieving their missions has been mixed dependent on their size, network, geographical location and other such criteria. In light of such mixed success, GFDD Fellow Megan Beddow, a then Masters candidate of Public Affairs (MPA) specializing in international nonprofit management at Indiana University travelled to the Dominican Republic over the summer of 2015 (June to August) as part of our research fellowship program. Megan decided to apply her decade of experience in program design and project management to review the conditions affecting Dominican nonprofits and further characterize elements of the Dominican voluntary sector which enhance or inhibit the role of NGOs in the Dominican Republic. Collecting testimonies from different NGO structures across the Dominican Republic, Megan painted a comprehensive picture of the varying conditions that affect their work.

The analysis that Megan conducted has revealed some key issues including institutional inefficiencies, widespread economic and social inequalities, and mistrust in political leaders. All of these factors significantly reduce the benefits to civil society and human development

of the extensive Dominican voluntary sector. Looking forward, Megan makes strategic proposals for reform such as streamlining processes, enforcing accountability measures, and investing in capacity building mechanisms. Given the numerous and varied organizations that make up the Dominican voluntary sector, we therefore believe that Megan's analysis and her recommendations can constitute a useful resource for enhancing the effectiveness of the voluntary sector.

We therefore hope that this report on the Fundamentals of the Dominican Voluntary Sector will encourage debate on the important role played by civil society organizations in promoting human development not only in the Dominican Republic, but also in the Caribbean region.

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UN Programs & Outreach Manager
GFDD

Fundamentals of the Dominican Voluntary Sector

Megan D. Beddow

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Finally, thank you to GFDD and Funglode for funding my field research in the Dominican Republic and their continued support throughout this project.

Abstract

The Dominican Republic is home to thousands of nonprofit associations. These associations vary in form and represent a mixture of informal neighborhood groups, domestic startups, service-oriented collectives, and standardized international organizations. However, there is a scarcity of scholarly sources benchmarking the composition and activity of nongovernmental organizations (NGO) located in the Dominican Republic. Along with offering representative data points this report provides preliminary analysis of how external environmental factors and internal organizational characteristics shape the voluntary sector of the Dominican Republic. Interview data collected throughout the summer of 2015 provides annotations to these examinations. Introductory vignettes of current organizations outline (1) why Dominican NGOs may seek corporate collaboration in place of building public or third sector networks, (2) complications for complying with NGO requirements in the Dominican regulatory environment, and (3) the immaterialism of select bureaucratic practices related to NGO formalization in the Dominican Republic. The core analysis examines how internal characteristics of individual nonprofit organizations might best adapt to the environmental context in order to increase perceived legitimacy, funding, and efficacy.

Abbreviations

ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
END2030	Estrategia Nacional de Desarrollo (National Development Strategy) 2030
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPSA	Global Partnership for Social Accountability
HDI	Human Development Index
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
INVI	Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
MEPyD	Ministerio de Economía, Planificación y Desarrollo
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RSF	Reporters Sans Frontières
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development is the United States

Terminology

Though the literature offers distinctions between nonprofit organizations, nonprofit associations, and nongovernmental organizations and the terminology can carry unique characteristics, the terms will be used somewhat interchangeably for the purposes of this report. The legal term used in the Dominican Republic to define and regulate the third sector is translated literally as "not-for-profit associations," so in this study the distinction between "organizations" and "associations" was put aside in order to do justice to the translation (Ley No. 122-05). Likewise, the term "nongovernmental organization," or NGO, is often used to delineate international organizations which operate independently of governments and across borders (Smith, Stebbins, & Dover, 2006). The developing country status of the Dominican Republic provides reason for such organizations to be active in the nation. Many NGOs are in operation there and will be included in the data and references to the scope of work being done in the country by nonprofit associations, unless otherwise specified (Sciacchitano, 2013). The terms NGO and nonprofit will also be used interchangeably.

Introduction

Worldwide, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) contribute to the delivery of public goods and services. These private organizations supply human and financial resources to advance social causes with a commitment to reinvest surplus gains within a level of the global voluntary sector (Grønbjerg & Paarlberg, 2001). Scopes of impact range from single neighborhoods to international populations. However, there is no panacean predictor for local acceptance, longevity, or efficacy for a voluntary organization. Institutional, economic, political, and societal factors can combine with individual organization characteristics to enhance or reduce an organization's influence (Brown & Osborne, 2012). The Dominican Republic provides a compelling example of this variation on a national level. Situated within the Global North-South divide, the Dominican Republic has a distinct geopolitical position in addition to unique considerations as an import/export island economy within a consolidating democracy. This analysis reveals elements that combine to advance and inhibit the role of NGOs in the Dominican Republic.

A variety of perspectives produce the knowledge representing a nation's NGO environment. Statistical reports by development agencies and multilateral organizations heavily populate previous work related to NGO efforts in the Dominican Republic (European Commission, International Monetary Fund, United Nations, USAID, World Bank, etc.). This perspective trains its audience to focus on metrics for human or natural resource development but often avoids discussion of the structures utilized to achieve anticipated outcomes. Cases on subsector work by NGOs in the Dominican Republic are also available, yet this literature does not provide opportunity for broad time-based comparisons or comparative work across the Caribbean region (Meyer (1999), Choup (2003), Bossin (2009)). Meanwhile, much of the conventional work defining influential factors for NGOs focuses on Northern organizations. Longstanding political stability and higher levels of modernity make associational life more conducive in these nations, resulting in available archival data for empirical review (Smith & Shen, 2002). Alternatively, reports produced by domestic NGOs provide a glimpse into current sector conditions and begin to offer strategic vision of what could be (including Alianza ONG, Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo, and Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo). I use these domestic sources to call attention to and promote the work of professionals within the Dominican third sector.

A concise overview of the Dominican voluntary sector and the national conditions that affect the capacity of its NGOs remains to be presented. To answer this gap, I will review the macro-environmental context alongside a focus on local practitioner experience. This will inform how structures and social possibility relate to actual practice of voluntary work in the Dominican Republic. It is important to include voices from Dominican practitioners in this type of review in order to gain awareness of locally perceived opportunities and threats for voluntary organizations as well as discover the relative priorities for development of civil society. The included case work focuses on interviews with organizations in different regions. Concluding analysis will note how organizational characteristics affect service delivery when most macro-environmental factors are held constant.

While this report offers a snapshot of the dynamic factors acting upon the Dominican voluntary sector, two hypotheses that I believe to be steadfast frame its conclusions. First, despite the inherent costs, I suppose that collaboration across social, professional, and generational boundaries creates more productive innovation. This informs my assessment that strengthening the tools and manners of civic communication will bring a net benefit to the government as it pursues national goals. Additionally, anecdotal evidence convinces me that achievement begets responsibility. Those perceived as successful will become implicit role models and asked to assume leadership roles. This consequence of reputation affects individuals and organizations alike. The current leaders of Dominican civil society will have a direct impact on the future environment and existence of its voluntary organizations. The discussion of the fundamentals of the Dominican voluntary sector proceeds in four sections. The introduction reviews the Dominican context and its unique position within the global voluntary sector. A collection of interview vignettes then narrates how three service groups approach the complex factors affecting NGO management in the Dominican Republic. Next, two explanatory sections detail the external and internal factors used in the final analysis of the role of NGOs in the Dominican Republic. External environmental factors are those that act upon all associations while internal factors are those that characterize an organization. This section covers broad institutional, economic, political, and societal factors before a review of organizational mission, size, and central donor support. The final investigative section provides findings on the composition of the Dominican nonprofit sector before analysis of elements that advance or inhibit Dominican nonprofits.

Context

The Dominican Republic maintains a common identity with its Caribbean neighbors alongside preserving strategic allies from the Global North. While geography requires constant partnership in order to provide diverse goods and services plus protection to its populace, the Dominican Republic is an autonomous and generally thriving nation. The Dominican Republic is noteworthy for its competing statuses as an upper middle income country (World Bank, 2016) with a regionally low stance on the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2014). These factors provide natural opportunities for voluntary groups to develop associations focusing on financial stability, education, health, gender relations, community development, and workforce development. The Dominican Republic is also known for its despotic history, agricultural production, fanaticism with baseball and merengue, and exquisite tourism destinations (Haggerty (1989), Moya Pons (1995); Brennan (2004)). These elements make it ripe for a nonprofit sector reaching into themes of civic empowerment, environmental protection, nutrition, physical education, the arts, and professional development.

Moreover, within the past decade the Dominican Republic has established sophisticated legislation for nonprofit organizations (MEPyD2, 2015). This contemporary engagement shows national attention on the voluntary sector and implies that citizens actively desire its improvement. As a small nation, in relation to the entirety of the global south and the Latin American region, it becomes logistically feasible to assess how this proactive legal structure matches with other macro-environmental elements to engage or discourage diverse types of organizations. The small size also increases the feasibility of collecting cross-regional interviews in order to provide a more comprehensive assessment.

Interview Vignettes

The following anecdotes provide a closer look into the current NGO environment. They portray organizations with a variety of internal characteristics and demonstrate how each responds to a challenge of the macro-environment. These accounts display points of positive deviation from the norm as each NGO finds a manner for success within the relative context. Table 1 identifies select internal characteristics for these nonprofit associations. To preserve the integrity of each organization the vignettes omit description of specific, identifying characteristics including names of organization, staff members, and neighborhoods of organizational offices.

	Organization 1	Organization 2	Organization 2
Mission	Community development.	Women's empowerment & workforce development.	Education & youth development.
Site of Incorporation	*Regional INGO* Established a branch of the INGO within the Dominican Republic in 2009. Currently employs 14 paid staff members in addition to numerous volunteers.	*American INGO* Established a branch of American NGO in the Dominican Republic in 2013. Foreign staff members hold administrative positions and receive salary through the host organization. Local practitioners such as accountant, program manager, and security detail are compensated from the income generated in the Dominican Republic.	*Dominican* Established in 2007. Employs 6 administrative leaders plus additional teachers, group parents, workshop leaders, cooks, and security personnel on the payroll.
Scope	*Large:* Multiple cities and project sites around the country, headquarters in Santo Domingo.	*Small*: Intentional community located in a city outside of Santo Domingo.	*Medium*: Educational facility located outside of Puerto Plata.
Point of Accolade	Innovation in resource management.	Collaboration & consistency.	Navigation of the bureaucratic system.

Source: Personal communications with a Development Director, a Volunteer Coordinator, and two Executive Directors, June 26 –July 28, 2015.

Table 1: Internal factors of vignette organizations.

Organization 1: Gaining volunteer and funding power in a scarce environment

Housed in a building painted to match the hue of the organizational brand, this nonprofit is an affiliate of an established INGO founded in Latin America in the 1990s. The attitude of the Dominican staff is positive, determined, and energetic. These qualities match its volunteer base comprised mainly of high school and college students. Utilizing participatory development practices, the host organization works in isolated slums in twenty countries throughout the region. This branch has posts in at least six cities around the Dominican Republic. Its community intervention model is dependent on volunteer effort to aid community members to diagnosis community issues, develop strategies for solution, and apply sustainable solutions.

Leaders of the Dominican civil society sector know and respect this organization for its relative leadership and commitment. Employees commonly participate in forums addressing civil society in the Dominican Republic and provide feedback to legislators about the state of the sector. With employment networks spanning across the international branches, a quarter of the paid staff in the Dominican branch hail from Central and South America, creating a team with diverse experiences to employ in the Dominican Republic.

In interviews with administrative staff I uncovered that in a resource scarce environment the organization rallies tremendous volunteer power (personal communication with Development Director and Volunteer Coordinator, June 26, 2015). In one weekend alone 2,600 volunteers across its six cities united to collect donations. Mobilization of youth volunteers is central to the mission of this organization, but how do they do it? For one, having a casual, open-door policy at the headquarters made it easy to join whatever was taking place that day. From painting and taking inventory to phone calls and bachata dance breaks, the workers take the work seriously but do not take themselves too seriously. The promotion of this environment along with structured, specific initiatives to contribute to throughout the year appears to draw in the young volunteers. (Note: I made my observations during summer months when student schedules were objectively more flexible than during the school year.)

However, the youthful workers at this organization report that Dominican employment mores do not perceive NGO work as a professional career path. Many long-term volunteers and staff are under the age of thirty and simultaneously complete coursework in higher education, receive technical training, or pursue internships. As these young professionals leave their positions in the voluntary sector

to take full-time work elsewhere they create a culture of transience in the NGOs they serve. This reduces institutional knowledge and distracts other workers from project completion as they train and build rapport with new colleagues.

Interviews also uncovered that collaboration in Dominican civil society is highly normalized. NGO workers described cooperation tactics as natural and expected for project execution. One survey of Dominican voluntary groups notes that 80 percent of nonprofits are a part of civil society networks (Alianza ONG, 2014). To gain access to new communities this organization would determine a peer organization already serving the area and use its own reputation to gain legitimacy with the potential partner. Then, because they are both committed to a local population, the groups would combine their resources to mutually accomplish their intersecting missions. These NGO professionals do not perceive competition to be an option when need is high and donated resources are scarce.

In addition to its apparent ability to inspire volunteer manpower and invest in building organizational relationships within the voluntary sector, the organization's development director is also an innovator. He approaches corporations for financial and volunteer sponsorships that directly apply to communities within proximity of the corporations' central offices. The corporate social responsibility (CSR) philanthropy model is uncommon for Dominican firms, yet the director targets domestic and foreign firms equally.

The CSR program designed by this development director created shared value, as CSR projects often do. Companies would give to the nonprofit both directly through financial contribution and through a commitment of volunteer hours from their workforces. In return the company gains community support and provides the opportunity for future customers through the stabilization of a portion of the citizenry. Likewise, the nonprofit gains the legitimacy of association to a known enterprise.

This development director is passionate about creating sustainable funding for Dominican civil society groups. It would support the sector in three crucial ways: reduce staff transition, provide consistency of service, and prevent mission drift. When an organization knows the funding it will be receiving regularly it can make more long-term strategic plans. This could allow it to create more quality programming, serve more constituents, or invest in improved technologies. Each of these increases the value of care for program recipients.

Alternatively, with limited financial resources a nonprofit association must strategize to use funds efficiently. This may lead to a dependence on serving communities with the best infrastructure, preference for groups located closer to the organization base rather than finding the most destitute, or following the whims of a funder rather than adhering to organizational mission. This organization would prefer to drive social change rather than follow roads paved by influential funders.

Organization 2: Overcoming ambiguity within the Dominican regulatory context

The next organization is a faith-based nonprofit working in the subsectors of women's empowerment and workforce development. The organization draws funding from two central sources, selling goods produced by women in its employment program to local markets and a partner organization which collects donations and sells the workshop's goods in the United States. The central leadership for the Dominican organization is a mixture of Dominican locals and foreigners, with an executive director from the United States of America.

Differences in work norms for the culturally diverse staff create a strain on this organization. First, soft skills that become tacit in the western workplace such as timeliness, task focus, and impartiality between colleagues challenge the Caribbean norms of flexible scheduling, value of social connection, and nepotism. These cultural mores can undermine the intended organizational dynamics and cause the leadership to question the format for an effective program model with diverse revenue streams.

Meanwhile an active network for collaboration is a central strength of this organization. Other faith-based nonprofit organizations often recommend clients ineligible for services at their organizations who may fit the entrance requirements for a peer. The referrals increase the overall missional benefit for the community. As such, the leaders deem efforts of coordination and networking worthy despite the embedded costs. Another important collaborator is a legal organization which represents the women as necessary or serves as a liaison between the similar organizations. This collaboration expands the services of the original entity to foster a deeper impact in systemic change affecting women's issues.

For this director the topic of how to formalize an NGO in the Dominican Republic through registration and abiding ongoing regulation is a passion. She clearly believes that a streamlined process for government compliance would bring great operational growth for the Dominican voluntary sector. One suggested manner to support this need would be the introduction of public training on the myriad laws surrounding legal operations. Even handouts compiling annual timelines for reporting would help translate the legislative rigmarole for practitioners.

Acceptable budget practices for nonprofit organizations are an additional area of obscurity in the Dominican Republic regulatory context. Proper accounting and compliance documentation requires nonprofits to shop with registered businesses. This is time intensive work with little risk of consequence for mismanagement due to low levels of government auditing and enforcement. With a large majority of the Dominican private sector remaining unregistered (some reports claim over 65% of employment is provided by the informal sector (EC 2014) with women more likely to hold informal jobs (ILO, 2013)) extra effort is required to ensure compliance with accounting for organizational expenses. For this organization this necessitates that employees travel to bigger cities to shop registered enterprises, thus reducing competitive pricing options and adding costs of time. The rational for this law is to ensure that the established business is also interacting appropriately with the government in its calculation and declaration of taxes. Yet it is a law without teeth if there is no accountability mechanism in place. Either way, the ethics of this organization require that it complies, even if reluctantly.

It is for practical complications such as these that many nonprofit organizations do not engage in seeking tax exempt status in the Dominican Republic. Moreover, the provisions are listed in multiple laws which are subject to amendment and appeal (Pellerano & Herrera, 2010). Then, the provision does not cover all purchases and it is rare to find companies who are willing and able to process the request. This tendency for avoidance is represented either through a lack of training employees how to manage the occurrence of tax-exempt purchases or the use of inefficient processes to record the price reduction. Meanwhile, this NGO has tax-exempt, nonprofit status as a charitable corporation in the U.S. and can provide tax benefits to American donors (IRS, 2016). The regulatory difference allows it to engage more foreign donors; meanwhile the organization dreams of becoming sustainable from local revenue in time.

Organization 3: Maintaining mission despite prejudice in the Dominican bureaucracy

I met this executive director in a bus station café. Over strong Dominican coffee and plantain chips she detailed the registration process for her nonprofit organization. The community development institution had formed organically. It began as a community project that started receiving support from an American church in 2006. With this more regular funding, the contemporary organization was born, formalizing its programs, centralizing its location, and expanding its presence. This wave of organizational development occurred under a dedicated local leadership. The year 2014 provided the final transformation into an autonomous organization running a school, boarding house, fair trade arts shop, along with offering social work and legal assistance workshops all with a focus on Haitian immigrants in a northern region.

To apply for status as a nonprofit organization the group hired a lawyer to lead it through the paperwork. Yet, the process was more nuanced and subjective than expected. The lawyer took liberties in changing the official name of the project on public record and requesting distinct signatures of the five names that would remain documented as the governing board. Sensing that pushback would be likely due to the mission of serving an unpopular class, the lawyer aired on the side of gathering signatures of the leaders with the most Castilian sounding surnames. Regardless of what the legal papers contain, the director believes the act of registration to be immaterial to mission advancement. She carries forward with the project under its original name and has limited interaction with the federal government, turning in paperwork annually without notice of receipt.

However, her opinion of government is furthered colored by two interactions taking place in 2014 and 2015. The first was a personal involvement in adoption. Her multiracial family went to a regional child welfare office, employed with a single staff worker, to investigate adoption processes in the state. The bureaucrat they encountered was overtly uncooperative and forced the family to learn the procedure one step at a time. These limitations on a surface level came from the lack of awareness and motivation of the bureaucrat. But continued interactions with the same agency and its varied staff now form the expectation that because public management lacks a sense of accountability these inefficiencies perpetuate the public sector.

In another governmental interaction the organization worked to secure identification documents for Haitian children in their program. At one point in the stressful, charged time of a deportation moratorium, the executive director was privy to a staff meeting at the local immigration office. During this meeting an agency leader approached the topic of government officials selling pirated copies of birth certificates from the government office afterhours. The leader raised the topic without a statement of condemnation or enforcement of any consequence for illegal use of government resources. Therefore, the general understanding was that he meant to condone the practice. This extinguished any trust for the agency along with motivation to follow the laborious bureaucratic procedures to secure a notarized document. This led the nonprofit director to wonder, "When leaders are not held accountable to legal guidelines, why should the common citizens?"

The final issue this director raised related to child protection as an undeniable right. Being an organization which serves children it would appropriate for the project to receive an annual review from the child welfare agency. Yet this director supposes the agency will not perform the procedure either due to general lack of enforcement or discrimination against the Haitian clientele (personal communication with Executive Director, July 3, 2015).

Summary

In summary, these stories provide a glimpse into current conditions of NGOs across the Dominican Republic. We see Organization 1 applying a highly formalized INGO business model to the Dominican context and gaining success in expanding its capacity through extensive volunteer manpower and a variety of community partnerships. It is able to stay on mission and work against norms surrounding the legitimacy of nonprofit work. Organization 2 is meandering through legal compliance in two countries, having gained its Dominican NGO status by submitting like US paperwork to become recognized in the Dominican Republic. From the perspective of its western leader the Dominican Republic process to formalization is arduous due to cumbersome government systems and low regulation enforcement standards. Meanwhile Organization 3 functions despite subjective social standards. It would prefer greater legitimacy for its charitable efforts in place of managing the burden of social preference, yet it finds necessary validation from foreign funders. The analysis will review these conditions affecting Dominican nonprofits and further characterize elements of the Dominican voluntary sector which enhance or inhibit the role of NGOs in the Dominican Republic.

Environmental Factors

An examination of the macro-environment will highlight forces acting upon all organizations in the nation. This also provides one the ability to place discussions of the Dominican Republic in both a historical and cultural context.

Institutional Factors

Overview
Depending on the mission of the organization, full formalization of an NGO requires involvement with at least six governmental agencies. Law No. 122-05 and Regulation 40-08 outline this process. Approved in 2005 and 2008, these statutes are older than the Dominican Republic's 38th updated constitution (ratified in 2010). Laws are the first part of institutional concerns while follow-through and enforcement complete the picture. Dominican experience finds the proactive nature of legislation lacking these latter components.

Abiding, unsustainable systems that leave civil servants often overworked and underpaid lead to a lack of motivation in proactive governance (Kearney, 1986). Multiple nonprofit leaders explained a trial and error bureaucratic process where a citizen could not gather the information necessary to complete government paperwork without personal interaction with governmental staff. During these appointments these leaders often received one step of instruction at a time. This is inefficiency; meanwhile the promotion of educational literature or online resources could provide the same information more quickly as well as build trust in the public sector for its procedural leadership. Organization 3 portrays this experience within a testimony of the national adoption process. Lack of expertise is an important element to combat in NGO registration because the various sequential steps are orchestrated to be time sensitive.

While many elements of the institutional environment are consequential to NGO activity, an outline of four key areas affecting nonprofit associations follows.

NGO Regulation
Three regulations serve as central to public oversight of Dominican nonprofits. Law No. 122-05 is the current regulation concerning nonprofit associations and updates the 1982 modification (Ley No. 66-82) of the previous 1920 executive order which first outlined the

legal definitions of nonprofit associations in the Dominican Republic. This statute gives a framework of requirements for incorporation and registration, provides a taxonomy of organizations, dictates the agencies providing oversight to the voluntary associations, and details procedures for remaining in general compliance with the government.

Law No. 122-05 defines a Dominican nonprofit organization within four stipulations: 1) an agreement between five or more legal citizens 2) with the objective to develop or undertake activities of social good or public interest 3) for lawful purpose and 4) without the purpose or objective to obtain monetary or tangible benefits to distribute to its partners.

The statute then organizes nonprofit organizations into major subsectors: public benefit institutions, mutual benefit associations, mixed partnerships, and interrelating bodies of nonprofit organizations. The Attorney General maintains this level of registration. Additional standards include obtaining a taxpayer identification number, advertising the organization's intent to operate in regional media, and registering in the National Center for Development and Promotion of Non-Profit Associations (Law No. 122-05, Dirección General de Impuestos Internos).

Law No. 122-05 also establishes the National Center for Development and Promotion of Nonprofit Associations (The Center) to serve as a liaison between the state and civil society. The Center offers a clearing house of information related to national registration and public granting as well as maintains an advisory board with seats held by bureaucrats and nonprofit representatives. The central role of The Center is to "promote and encourage the participation of nonprofit associations in the management of development programs at national, regional, provincial, and municipal levels" (Ley No. 122-05).

The next notable statute includes the 190 articles of Regulation 40-08 which deliver the provisions necessary for complete implementation of Law No. 122-05. (See Appendix I for a translation of the procedural portions of Law No. 122-05.)

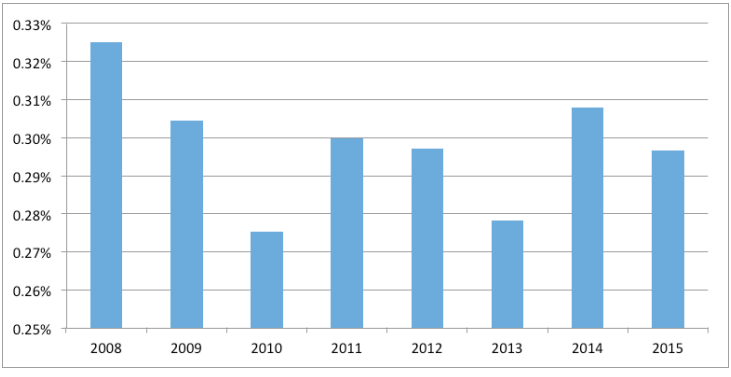
Finally, Law No. 61-13 serves to protect the rights of volunteers and collect national statistics on voluntary efforts. Implemented in 2013, the law demonstrates an effort to secure global trends in voluntary service into the Dominican lifestyle. However, an NGO alliance in Santo Domingo gathered evidence that the reporting requirements create an undue burden for nonprofit staff. With limited funding in the sector already causing a great deal of reliance on volunteers in place of

paid staff, to require extensive reporting without comprehensive public administration arguably will bring greater loss to the communities and issues in question.

Federal Budget

Another prime area for accountability is public budgeting. Due to a historical lack of transparency in public budgeting, it is difficult to observe gross domestic expenditure on key areas such as amounts allocated to voluntary organizations established by political offices, matters of social safety nets, and expenditures for research and development. While the nation recently joined the Open Government Partnership with a commitment to further engage citizens in public administration through standards of transparency and participation (Government of Dominican Republic, 2015), this action plan is not likely to change the high rates of public mistrust for some years. The public will need to see resultant programs and resources that match majority interests.

A key federal budgeting activity for the voluntary sector is annual grant provision within the state budget. The National Center for Development and Promotion of Nonprofit Associations provides the application on its webpage along with announcements of deadlines and updates. The current version of the application is five-pages long and was first posted in January 2011 (MEPyD, 2011). In 2015 the national government reported grant funding amounting to about $34 million current USD (0.3 percent of total budgeted spending for the year) to 920 nonprofit associations (MEPyD3, 2015). Between 2008



Sources: Dirección General de Impuestos Internos and MEPyD.

Figure 1: Percentage of general state budget allocated to nonprofits annually, 2008-2015.

and 2015 the percentage of general state budgeted allocated to nonprofits annually has varied from 28 hundredths of a percent to a high of 33 hundredths of a percent. See Figure 1, "Percentage of general state budget allocated to nonprofits annually," to visualize this fluctuation. As Milton Tejada, on behalf of the national NGO alliance Alianza ONG, opines in his 2011 report on the socioeconomic impact of NGOs in the Dominican Republic, "This [low level of allocations] appears to indicate that nonprofit associations are not seriously considered as implementing instruments of public policy by the Government."

Records from The Center show that since at least 2008 the top three contracted areas of nonprofit funding were through the Ministry of Health and Human Services, Ministry of the Presidency, and the Ministry of Education (MEPyD, 2016). In 2015 these percentages were 34.30, 20.14, and 15.69, respectively (MEPyD3, 2015). From similar granting in 2014, the Department of Accounts reported to its Congress that the average return of complete expenditure reporting for these associations was 55.2 percent (Ruiz). This leads to general uncertainty throughout the populace about the true recipients and use of federal funds.

Employment Law

As privately functioning interties multiple elements of employment law are relevant to nonprofit organizations functioning in the Dominican Republic. First, financial management requires awareness of minimum wage as well observing contribution minimums for the governmental programs of social security, workers compensation and pension benefits (WB3, 2016). Additionally, it is important to note that severance law retains protection of the employee no matter the cause (Law No. 16-92). While salary and benefit reporting is written to protect the poor from exploitation, the complexity within the process effectively wraps it in bureaucracy (OECD).

This intricacy and mandatory structure within the creation of employment contracts and external reporting mechanisms are barriers for novice organizations with volunteer staff. The investment of time and resources necessary to guarantee legal compliance can be cause to stifle formalization of firms. One foreign participant mused that for an NGO to formalize and follow all of these laws it would require an accountant educated in the principles of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of the Dominican Republic with experience working with local government along with high morality to motivate them to be comprehensive and honest in an environment that is generally tolerant of cutting corners (personal communication with Executive Director, July 28, 2015).

National Development Strategy 2030
The Government of the Dominican Republic has not foregone efforts for continued development. Adopted as law in 2012 under the leadership of President Leonel Fernández, the twenty-year national development strategy, Estrategia Nacional de Desarrollo 2030 (END 2030), touts four strategies for development across the nation. These strategies are:

> I. A state with efficient and transparent institutions, serving a responsible and participatory citizenship, which ensures safety and promotes development and peaceful coexistence.
>
> II. A cohesive society with equal opportunities and low levels of poverty and inequality.
>
> III. An articulated, innovative, and environmentally sustainable economy, with a production structure that generates high and sustained growth with decent work, and inserted competitively in the global economy.
>
> IV. Sustainable management of the environment and adequate adaptation to climate change. (MEPyD, 2015)

The objectives outlined in END2030 translate well into the evaluation language of international development agencies. They will be central to decisions about investment and collaboration with the Dominican government in the near future (EC, 2014). It will also provide new opportunity for politicians to demonstrate attentiveness to the popular population as the government lives out its declared objective to "advance towards the establishment of a developed nation and a cohesive society in the coming years" (MEPyD).

Overall, END 2030 provides motivation to promote NGOs as collaborators due to their similar purpose to strengthen social and environmental conditions. Similarly, the Millennium Development Goals (standardized targets for addressing multiple dimensions of extreme poverty commissioned by the UN Secretary General in 2000) brought attention, collaboration, and funding to the Dominican Republic for progressive aims in the early 21st century (UN, 2014).

Summary
Dominican policy makers have organized the Dominican Republic's laws and public agencies to a level of modern sophistication. With 22 ministries and the world's most revised Constitution, policy makers aim to be relative to the current populace (Cordeiro, 2008). However, the institutions

interacting with the voluntary sector impede this detailed forethought. Unrealistic standards and speculative processes undermine the efficacy of these institutions. For example, there exists an opportunity for nonprofit organizations to apply for tax exemption along with respective tax benefits for their donors (Law No. 122-05). Yet the rule also stipulations that an organization must remain active for two years before applying for these benefits while the philanthropic tax incentives apply only to corporations. These limitations and the ambiguous wording within the legislation concerning application instructions are likely causes for the low percentage (approximately 13%) of fully formalized voluntary organizations to achieve tax-free status (Sciacchitano, 2013). I stipulate that expanded clarity or simplicity in this application process would promote sustainability in the voluntary sector by expanding funding opportunity and budget security.

Despite such limitations, there is a strong foundation for legitimizing the voluntary sector. Select institutional factors encourage nonprofits to flourish in the Dominican Republic. First, there is the validation of organizational registration. Law 122-05 provides a process to formalize a local nonprofit with a unique name, mission, address, and board of directors. National registration subsequently fulfills a requirement to petition for public funds in the annual granting process.

Additionally, when a voluntary group has a mission that matches largely publicized public or international goals this can boost the group's local legitimacy, therefore building social capital and opening it to new networks of collaborators. Public promotion of END2030 (and the Millennium Development Goals before it) is one instance creating opportunity for the state to find reputable collaborators in human and environmental development. A domestic organization will gain the opportunity to seek public funding if it aligns with these goals. Likewise an international organization will receive greater public trust from working with local leaders. Interviews revealed that Dominicans may deem missions outside the scope of current national priority frivolous or idealistic, reducing their practical support. Organization 3 demonstrates how this relates to social conditions in the country when an organization serving a minority class realized its mission inhibited opportunities for broad governmental support.

Political Factors

Overview

The freedom nonprofit organizations have to operate and fulfill their missions is dependent on the political environment of the country within which they work. Historically, authoritarian regimes characterized political conditions in the Dominican Republic while the country is now

working toward consolidating democracy (EC, 2014). The Dominican Republic is a democratic republic, with an active, publicly funded, multi-party system used to elect officials to represent citizen interests (Moya Pons (1995), Turits (2003)). The president is both head of state and head of the government. Since the overturn of the Dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo in 1961, ten distinct presidents have headed the nation over thirteen terms of varying lengths. Reigns of provisional presidents, and local and foreign military councils separated early transitions (Moya Pons, 1995). Since 1978 and the end of Trujillo-supporter Joaquín Balaguer's 12 year rule, elections are relatively peaceful and free. Though, voters often reelect previous heads of state into this chief position (Freedom House, 2015). In recognition of multiple military coups within previous generations, active members of the military waive their right to vote.

While there are many elements of the political environment consequential to NGO activity, an outline of two key areas affecting nonprofit associations follows.

Civil Liberties

The Democracy Index rates the Dominican Republic as a flawed democracy with weaknesses apparent in its functioning of government (5.71/10 on a ten point scale) and political participation (5.00/10) alongside strengthening elements of electoral process (8.75/10) and civil liberties (7.65) (EIC, 2016). This final rating communicates that governing bodies do not consistently protect the personal freedoms allotted by the Dominican constitution. To the government's credit, freedom of religion is widely respected with citizens practicing a variety of religions on the island (Pew, 2014). Conversely, Dominican democracy does not yet fully realize press freedom and freedom of assembly.

The 2015 Reporters Without Borders Index on World Press Freedom ranked the Dominican Republic as a country with noticeable problems. With recorded harassment and violence against reporters as well as a lack of transparency in the political environment the Dominican Republic ranks similar to many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (RSF, 2015). The 2010 Dominican Constitution guarantees freedom of expression. Censorship of sensitive topics such as corruption and drug trafficking often disregards or undermines this free expression (Freedom House, 2015). Threats or acts of crimes of violence against reporters are common, resulting in self-censorship by many journalists. Known crimes against journalists are unpunished. In periods of protest both the police and the demonstrators create a threat to reporters (RSF).

Consequently, this environment compromises full expression and advocacy efforts by nongovernmental organizations.

Similarly, statutes protect freedom of assembly. However, citizen security is a practical limitation to this ideological right (USAID/ Dominican Republic, 2013). While I observed peaceful protests in the capital region, use of unnecessary force from police to demonstrators has been documented (Freedom House, 2015). This creates a barrier to association, because assembly is a central component of civil participation, necessary for voluntary groups to form securely.

Political Parties

While association may be limited due to constraints of liberty, political parties are in abundance. Political parties in the Dominican Republic are not of firm ideological leaning, and in fact often include factions within a single party. Most politicians have a stronger connection to their region and political supporters than party lines (Moya Pons, 1995). Overall, people's awareness of their rights in the democratic process is weak. The country has made great strides in recent decades, guaranteeing electoral and institutional procedures which are appropriate in their form (Oxfam2, 2016). Yet the democratic dialogue is often translated into an exchange of favors; Clientelism is common in the country. Public servants are known to trade political support for targeted public works projects and policies rather than considering popular works and promotion of general benefit for citizens. The cost to general development of the nation is certain and inherently immeasurable (Meyer, 1999).

However, global calls for transparency in governance may challenge this practice. In 2014 the Dominican Republic joined the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (WB2, 2015), a program launched by the World Bank Group in 2012 to strengthen public-sector performance and meet governance challenges in developing countries. The GPSA project claims it "is helping facilitate dialogue between civil society organizations and the ministries in Dominican Republic to address service delivery problems in the education, agriculture, water and sanitation, and public housing sectors. As a result of this, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, and public sector institutions, are working together to provide citizens with access to information and enhance collaboration between government and civil society in pursuit of improved performance and quality of public spending" (WB2, 2015). Many government ministry websites now have sections related to transparency in response to this challenge to remain accessible and representative.

Summary
Conditions that highly favor ruling parties and actively quiet dissenting or unpopular opinion make a markedly politicized environment for nonprofit work. Reports of the Latinobarómetro Corporation from the last decade show that an average of 45.72 percent of the Dominican population have "some to a lot" of trust in its government, with the largest group of those claiming "high trust" being of lower educational status (2015). Plainly, the majority of citizens are less then confident in the national government. Strategic management of this environment requires simultaneously building social networks with political power alongside maintaining autonomous stances on policy and social action.

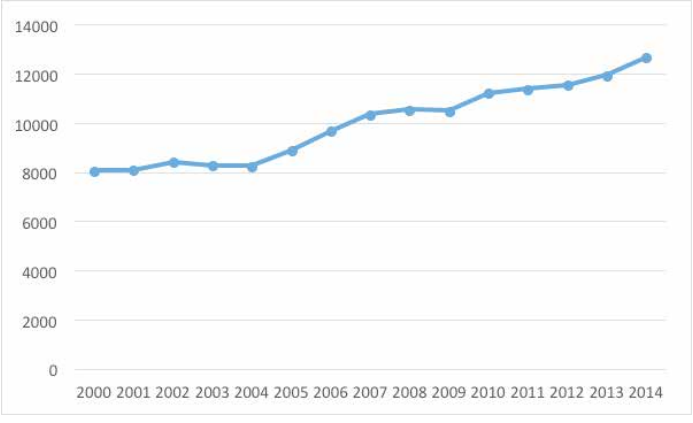
Due to the high prevalence of clientelism in the Dominican Republic nonprofits can advance in the political system through legal incorporation within the geographic span of an influential legislator. An organization would be wise to engage in political patronage and strategic political management. Even when the nonprofit does not work directly with such a leader, networks and intermediary NGOs with a political reputation can bring access to new resources and means to environmental stability. This is how Organization 1 can enter new communities in a timely manner. They partner with local longstanding organizations which advocate that the community engage in its programs for greater support for the neighborhood. However, this same strategy can challenge the ethics of an organization. With corruption ratings at 33 (where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 represents very clean) any group opposed to the use of bribes or shortcuts to compliance may face obstructions (Transparency International, 2014).

Simultaneous to these social effects in the political realm are institutional elements that bolster the existence of the voluntary sector. Dominican constitutional provisions for freedom of assembly and free speech are fundamental for an active civil society (Freedom House). While Dominicans live out these freedoms and regularly gather for personal and collective expression, anecdotal data shows that leaders must be cautious performing organizational activities which are contrary to majority opinion (Freedom House).

Economic Factors

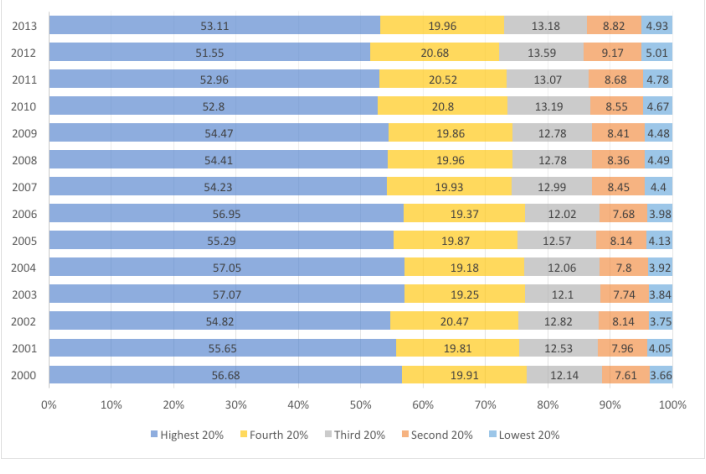
Overview
The Dominican Republic is the largest and fastest growing economy in the Caribbean region (USAID, 2013). See Figure 2, “GDP per capita in Dominican Republic 2000-2014.” It is a high-middle income economy with a nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 64.9 million USD in 2015. However, growth has failed to advance the majority, leading

to income disparity and significant markers on human development parameters (EC, 2014). See Figure 3, "Income share in the Dominican Republic by quintile, 2000-2013." Incongruous to these markers, the largest contributors to GDP are tourism and agriculture (bananas, cocoa, coffee, and sugar are key crops), which depend on marginalized, underpaid workers (Moya Pons (1995), Wucker (2000), Turits (2003)).



Sources: World Bank, 2016.

Figure 2: GDP per capita in Dominican Republic, PPP, 2000-2014, constant 2011 int'l $.



Sources: World Bank, 2016.

Figure 3: Income share in the Dominican Republic by quintile, 2000-2013.

Not only agricultural workers are underpaid. A comparison of market baskets shows that the average nonprofit worker (and any worker earning minimum wage) cannot afford average living costs in the Dominican Republic.

The Central Bank of the Dominican Republic prepares a price index of 305 goods and services that represent 90% of consumer spending for Dominican homes. Items in the index span across spending areas including food and drink, transportation, housing, health, recreation, and communication (Analytica, 2014). In February of 2016 the national average for this family shopping basket was $613 USD per month (Banco Central, 2015). In the same period the rate for the family shopping basket for the lowest quintile income (such as those receiving minimum wage) was $283 USD per month (ibid). Changes in food and drink prices will most affect this group while sensitivity to housing and transportation costs heightens for those in higher quintiles.

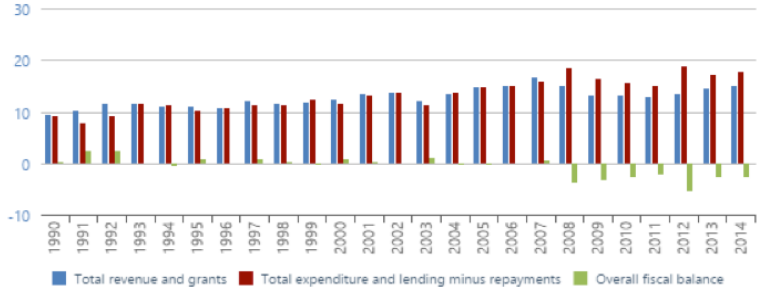
The national minimum wage for NGO workers amounts to $180 USD per month (Medina, 2015). As this amount does not cover the costs of the lowest family basket nonprofit staff cannot depend on this salary. Experience shows they will then either work multiple jobs or leave the nonprofit sector for a more lucrative position. Dominican communal culture mitigates some of this financial risk by encouraging singles to live with family until marriage and other manners of collective living, yet this variable is not enough to cover the wage gap. Actual salary ranges for nonprofit employees are not known, yet the example shows disconnect between the recognized individual need and systematic underfunding for families across the nation and employment sectors.

Due to the low amount of discretionary funds available to most citizens it is advantageous for charities to employ private sector mechanisms to gain a market share for philanthropy. From employment centers running salons and gift shops to agricultural rights groups hosting fair trade cafés with ingredients from member farms, this practice is common in the Dominican context. Within 2006-2009 national expenditure reports, nonprofit organizations disclosed that 57 percent of their operating budgets originated through commercial activities. Funding from the state in this same period accounted for only about 5.7 percent of nonprofit income (Tejada, 2011).

While there are many elements of the economic environment consequential to NGO activity, an outline of three key areas affecting nonprofit associations follows.

Government Expenditures

The Dominican Republic has relatively low revenue collection in relation to GDP (14 percent) and a heavy reliance on indirect taxes, which tend to be regressive (WB2, 2016). The World Bank purports revision to the tax exemptions system alongside a marked attempt at protecting the poor would help enhance revenue collection to finance essential services and promote social inclusion. As is, the central government has entered a stage of continual deficient. While these government expenditures and incomes are lower than regional averages, government debt is also 10 percentage points lower than the average for Latin America (OECD, 2014). Figure 4, "Central government incomes and expenditures as percentage of GDP," presents the Dominican government's incomes and expenditures as percentage of GDP since 1990.



Sources: ECLAC, 2014.

Figure 4: Central government incomes and expenditures as percentage of GDP.

Oxfam reports that the Dominican government's "levels of investment in social expenditure are among the lowest in Latin America and it is third from bottom of the countries in the region as far as taking advantage of economic growth to improve health and society is concerned, with around [a significant percentage] of the population still living under the shadow of poverty" (2016). An Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean supports this claim, reporting that public social spending is consistently the lowest in the region. The Dominican government spent 7.1 percent of GDP on social spending in 2011 (UN, 2014).

As part of the expenditures of the state, recent Dominican government pledges aim to spend 4 percent of annual GDP on pre-tertiary education (WB2, 2016). The national government also offers free health care to its citizens and a conditional cash transfer program

(Solidaridad) for those eligible. Housing and transportation costs are low across the nation, yet housing waiver programs (Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda (INVI)) and public transportation discounts are available for select populations.

Infrastructure

A specific expenditure resultant of public investment, infrastructures is a practical concern for civil leaders because it affects one's ease to traverse the nation to connect, train, and collaborate. Due to investments in previous decades, there are major highways and public transportation opportunities stretching between the largest urban areas along with a relative density of small public cars traveling routes between towns (Haggerty (1989), Moya Pons (1995)). Investments in the early twenty-first century include the metro system opened in the capital region in 2008 with its two lines hosting 35 trains to serve citizens and guests daily (Metro Santo Domingo, 2016).Transportation infrastructure affects the voluntary sector as a means to permit interaction with communities and project areas in order to evaluate need and compare practices.

Ease of access increases when individuals each own a vehicle, but this is not a common commodity for the Dominican. The most recent national census reports that less than 20 percent of the populace has an automobile for private use (IX Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda, 2012). Securing a budget for taxi and other forms of public transportation are a necessary consideration for the formalized nonprofit. This was certainly the case for Organization 2 which cannot rely on local merchants for its organizational purchases, but instead supplies workers with fare to Santo Domingo to purchase additional supplies.

The quality of remote connectivity through internet and telephone means affects organizational activity as well. One NGO interviewed closed its office for two weeks when internet and electrical issues disrupted everyday efforts (personal communication with Volunteer Coordinator and intern, June 26, 2015). While its directors were required to work from personal Wi-Fi connections, nonessential staff took unpaid leave for the fortnight. To put this in perspective, the nation has consistently invested in electrical connectivity throughout decades of economic development. Currently about 95 percent of the population has access to electricity, though there is a high rate of black-outs (average 18 per month) compared to the region (average 2.5 per month) (World Bank, 2014). This practical disturbance to a contemporary society, which runs most efforts out of electrified offices dependent on lighting and internet services, significantly impedes service delivery.

The lack of development and reliability within these elements create capacity building challenges that NGO managers must account for in program delivery and budgeting.

Remittances & Donations

Government expenditures are contained within Dominican political boundaries while high levels of emigrant populations pull national income from around the globe. Over 1 million Dominican citizens live abroad (13 percent of the population in 2014) with the normative expectation that they regularly send payments home to the Dominican Republic (UNESCO, 2015). As one of the top contributors to GDP, the magnitude of remittances is near equivalent to that of the tourism industry (Dominican Republic Central Bank, 2012). Personal remittances have stabilized to about 7 percent of GDP in the last five years (World Bank, 2016), making them one of the top sources of foreign income to the Dominican Republic (Panamerican, 2014). Remitters usually send these payments to individuals rather than institutions (Meyers, 2002).

Meanwhile the largest source of philanthropic contributions to Dominican nonprofits is international. In 2006-2009 over 55 percent of donations came from foreign funders (Tejada, 2011). This is the second largest financial stream for Dominican nonprofits after income gained from commercial activities (Alianza ONG, 2014).

Summary

The economy of a nation will affect opportunities for the growth of a third sector. Individuals must have the means to employ additional income to voluntary efforts as well as the autonomy to choose social investment of personal and public funds. Therefore the economic decisions of the state make an impact on the availability of nonprofits to assist in the pursuit of public good.

The Dominican economic environment shows lags in funding to social programs despite continued growth in the market economy. This creates an opportunity for nonprofit assistance to arrive and take part in filling in the gaps, yet there is also the consequence of a reduced availability of educated, healthy, financially independent citizens of varied societal classes to complete the work.

In addition to social investment, national public goods must also be available to ensure mutual structural confidence for practitioners across the country. From roads to electric lines, the capital expenditure

and ongoing maintenance of infrastructure delivers greater efficiency for the local population. These resources allow laborers to be consistent and proactive. They can make more sustainable plans when they can rely on these tangible elements of the external environment. Therefore, a more reliable external environment could be the catalyst for greater nonprofit impact.

Individual budgets are another consideration for the efficacy of the voluntary sector. Nonprofit leaders reported that funding was the greatest challenge to organizational sustainability in the Dominican Republic (personal communications with Development Director, Program Manager, and Development Associate June 26, July 9, and July 24, 2015). NGOs will often conform to a granting agency's goals and run short-term programs rather than have the assurance that they can be selective to find grants that match their desired programs.

Concurrently, options for individual philanthropy are constrained by inequitable wealth distribution. The top 40 percent of the population in the Dominican Republic holds over 72 percent of the nation's wealth. (See Figure 3, "Income share in the Dominican Republic by quintile, 2000-2013.") These numbers include the income Dominican families garner from remittances, a common funding stream from emigrants with high populations in the United States, Spain, and Italy (WB3, 2015). Without a broad dispersion of domestic wealth to reinvest in charity or institutional support for public-private collaboration, foreign funded NGOs with the relative wealth and philanthropic norms may be more stable.

Accordingly, commercial endeavors deliver the most constant funding stream for nonprofits (Tejada, 2011). Many groups will produce with a social surcharge and reinvest the money raised in the voluntary program. This allows both the consumer and the organization to gain something tangible from the philanthropic interaction.

Social Factors

Overview

The motto of the Ministry of Tourism is "Dominican Republic has it all" to express the diversity of the topography, environments, culture, gastronomy, industry, and recreational activity available on the island (Dominican Republic Tourism Ministry, 2016). First colonized by Spain, the national language of the Dominican Republic is Spanish, though increasing numbers also speak English. The official religion is Roman Catholic, and many organizations attached to the Vatican receive preferential treatment. The Dominican Republic is a globalized

nation, actively engaging in the increased trade of materials and communications made available by the technological innovations of the latest decades (Haggerty (1989), Moya Pons (1995)).

The Dominican Republic is a hierarchical society. "This means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification…In the workplace the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat" (Hofstede Center, n.d.). Additionally, the Dominican Republic is a collectivistic society. People's self-identification is highly correlated with the definition of "we" as attached to a close, long-term commitment to a member group such as family or extended relationship networks (ibid.).

Therefore, social class is very important in the Dominican Republic. Members of the dominant class are ensured a comfortable, well connected future (Government of Canada, 2014). The history of Trujillo and other aristocratic leaders has made military service a fast track to social mobility (Derby, 2009). The intangible benefits of increased education, wealth, and connections from serving in public defense can later be exploited in business and political relations. Due to the close tie between military power and past authoritarian regimes, current service people forfeit their right to vote while in active service.

Living in a time of continuing development, the general Dominican attitude expects inconvenience. Due to common occurrences of traffic jams, broken equipment, extended meetings, or consequences of political upsets, a flexible perspective and use of buffer time is anticipated. This can lead to a lack of urgency or a deferral of one's anxiety and blame placed on process rather than recognizing the opportunities created with proactivity. This perspective may be offsetting to foreign workers more comfortable with outputs management and production than making concessions for inputs and relationships. However, it is often the latter that gains traction locally and provides legitimacy with the key programmatic stakeholders (Bedggoodd & Benady, 2010).

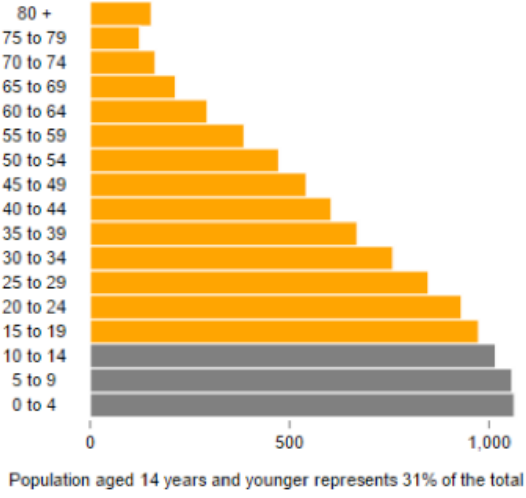
While there are many elements of the social environment consequential to NGO activity, an outline of five key areas affecting nonprofit associations follows.

Demographic

The population of the Dominican Republic in 2014 neared 10.3 million (UNESCO, 2015). The Dominican Republic has a net migration rate

of -2.8 percent, expressing that more people leave the country than relocate to it (ECLAC, 2016). Emigrants principally relocate to the United States and European countries such as Spain and Italy (OECD, 2009). Major trends in emigration came in the 1980s with the economic crisis along with a devaluation of sugar production leading Haitian immigrants to enter other sectors such as construction, manufacturing, and domestic service (ibid).

The population of the Dominican Republic is young, with about a third of the population aged 14 years and younger (UNESCO, 2015). See Figure 5, Total population by age group as of 2013. This creates a high need for productive education and health development. Thirty percent of the total population lives in rural areas and the average life expectancy is 73 years (ibid). Opportunities in manufacturing and tourism over recent decades resulted in mass urbanization. This has created an age disparity with younger, working families moving closer to the free-zone manufacturing and hospitality centers around major cities.
In turn, approximately a quarter of the employees I observed in NGO offices across the nation were 40 years of age or older. Of these eldest professionals, the majority were foreign nationals who moved to the Dominican Republic to participate in NGO work. It is notable that few Dominicans are career nonprofit professionals.



Sources: UNESCO.

Figure 5: Total population by age group, 2013 (in thousands).

Religion

As the official and majority religion, the Catholic Church carries influence in the Dominican Republic. Accordingly, Church leaders played a role in politics over the years. A concordat signed by the Roman Catholic Church in 1954 under the reign of Trujillo continues to allow the religion privileges that do not apply to other religious sects, including a complete waiver of customs duties on imports. Other religious groups must apply for similar exemptions (Haggerty, 1989). One Catholic, nonprofit boarding school interviewed spoke of the valuable benefits it received from being able to import foreign vehicles. They simply show customs officials a letter written from the dioceses to have the fees waived (personal communication with Board Member, July 28, 2015).

Likewise, many schools and hospitals now under public domain were founded out of Catholic charity and first run by nuns and priests rather than the central government (Haggerty, 1989). The Church continues to influence the education system. In 2000 a law, that is not strictly enforced, passed that requires all public schools to include Bible readings in their activities (Real Plant Group, 2011).

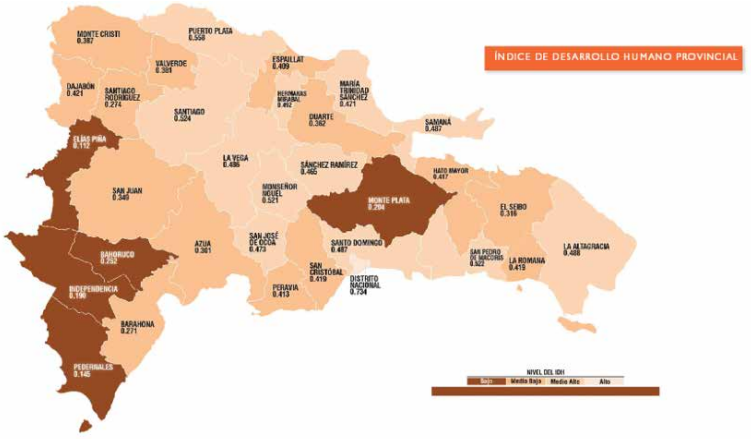
While external markers do not show the institutionalized freedom of religion, Pew Research Centers found that in 2014, approximately 57 percent of the nation identified as Catholic, while 23 percent identified as Protestant, and the remaining 20 percent considered themselves unaffiliated or other. This is notable for charitable groups of the same order or ideology.

Human Development

Following Haiti, at .715, the Dominican Republic has the lowest rating on the Human Development Index (HDI) of the Caribbean nations, where lower ratings represent lack of development as defined within parameters of education, health, and standards of living. The discounted value that adds inequality to the equation produces the Inequality-adjusted HDI rate of .546 (World Bank, 2015). These numbers indicate the potential HDI rate without inequality and the near actual rate of HDI, respectively. Figure 6 shows the HDI per province in the Dominican Republic in 2013.

Trends in public funding and nonprofit classification demonstrate education and health to be top areas of investment for national development. In 2014, civil society organizations reported nearly 70 percent of programs executed aimed to eradicate extreme poverty and

hunger (Alianza ONG, 2014). END 2030 promotes similar social gains. Education and health initiatives are essential to meeting these goals.



Sources: UNDP, 2013.

Figure 6: Provincial HDI data, 2013.

Of first consideration, the indicators surrounding education show both an immediate opportunity for third sector assistance and project future quality of local nonprofit professionals. Of the nations in Latin America and the Caribbean the Dominican Republic has one of the lowest investments in education; the Dominican Republic spent about 11 percent (10.8) of total government expenditures for pre-tertiary education in 2012 (UNESCO (2015), Save the Children (2016)). Decades of under investment in this area has led to widespread illiteracy, affecting occupational development and relative income earning capacity for an individual (and GDP growth for a nation). These elements compound to stunt civil engagement from a large majority of citizens (Literacy Foundation, 2016). One of the UN Millennium Development Goals was equal access to education for children of each gender. In the Dominican Republic the average girl stays in school until she is 13 (Save the Children, 2016). This age is older than males, with 23 percentage points more women in tertiary education than men (UNESCO, 2015).

The Dominican government has made important investment in this area in recent years with a promise to increase public expenditure on education to 4 percent of annual GDP. This action has resulted in expansion of classrooms and reduction of student teacher ratio since

2012 (WB3, 2014). Consistent underperformance in this element of public service provides a suitable collaboration opportunity for voluntary organizations.

Subsequently, the Dominican Republic is realizing slow, yet steady growth in its health sector. The capital city recently began 911 emergency response for citizens, including ambulatory services. Public hospitals serve the majority of the population while there is a robust private medical sector in more urbanized areas (Ministerio de Salud, 2015). Total expenditure on public health stands at 5.4 percent of GDP (UNESCO, 2013). Preventative programs such as household filters for water purification and increased food security to diversify nutrition are mechanisms of public health advancement that currently fall to the voluntary sector.

Employment

Workforce development and consequential income generation for individual citizens is another aim of END2030. In practice, social connections are extremely important in the Dominican culture. Hiring often occurs within the ranks of extended families and friends, making social capital pivotal for advancement in Dominican society (Bedggoodd & Benady, 2010). Nepotism is an accepted process and accounts for an element of turnover for nonprofit professionals. With uncertainty in funding structures, the promise of more secure work in a familial business or public service offers financial benefits along with intangible connections.

Competition for laborers will originate from formally incorporated and informal entities alike. Some measurements find the informal economy to account for more than 65% of employment (EC, 2014). From street vendors of food, jewelry or housewares to unlicensed public transport (especially motorcycle taxis) and the undocumented day laborer, this unregulated economy is neither accountable to paying taxes or can receive enforcement of labor and business law (Oxfam, 2016). Children and youth are often seen working at these community enterprises to augment familial income.

In the same fashion, much voluntary work remains undocumented. This negates systematic awareness of repeated efforts or attention to equality in service provision. This lack of awareness of stakeholders reduces the opportunity for cross-sectoral partnerships and occasions for collaboration (Agranoff, 2012).

The Role of Race

Racial stratification shapes Dominican society, portrayed with many words to describe the mixture of color and ethnic composition. As is common in the Latin American region, the powerful and the well-resourced tend to be lighter skinned while the poor and underrepresented tend to be darker skinned (Bedggood and Benady, 2010).

This dominant stratification can affect the preferences and perceived need for a nonprofit organization. One leader of a newly formalized voluntary group offering health outreach in the slums of Santo Domingo claims it is difficult to find funding because the key clientele are of Haitian descent. The leader runs the outreach with her three sisters during the weekends. Each regularly donates materials, time, and expertise for holistic healthcare programs. If any of these siblings were to lose their active employment and relative salary, the organization would also lose a major donor. While these sisters feel compelled to respond to a humanitarian need, the local residents they approached for support would prefer to discourage Haitian immigration and instead invest their charitable budgets towards serving the poorest Dominicans (personal communication with Executive Director, June 8, 2015). This sentiment is common to the pervasiveness of antihaitanismo, or being anti-Haitian (Howard, 2007).

Political scientist Ernesto Sagas claims "Antihaitanismo is the present manifestation of the long-term evolution of racial prejudice, the selective interpretation of historical facts, and the creation of a nationalist Dominican false consciousness" (quoted in Bedggood and Benady, 2010). In a nation where national identity is determined by heritage rather than birth place there will be certain conflicts for any organizational mission claiming to serve a non-Dominican clientele.

Summary

Dominicans are known to be a warm, personable people prone to social interaction. My experience with local nonprofit leaders revealed that Dominicans lean into their civil freedoms and regularly gather to review the daily news and baseball statistics, enjoy hearty meals, and partake of festivals, parades, and protests. Therefore, there are natural gathering points in the Dominican context to disseminate information and make full use of civil society in order to educate, advocate, and motivate altruism.

The given selection of social factors demonstrates the need for groups working in workforce and human development. The traditional market failure model predicts that if government does not do this work, then the voluntary sector will rise to fill the need. Yet a more nuanced

theory based on social origins predicts that as a nation where the state holds considerable power, low levels of government spending on social welfare will limit the size of the nonprofit sector (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). This is due to limited funding streams for charitable and social benefit projects. This research also shows that elements of racial and social stratification create barriers to enacting these efforts.

Taking these social factors into account, the mission of a voluntary group can boost its legitimacy when it matches largely publicized goals. An additional caveat for national groups may be to focus services on more traditional Dominican families while an international organization has equal opportunity to serve immigrant populations and national populations alike. Global media has publicized widely about human rights concerns for Haitians living in the Dominican Republic. This leads conscientious foreign investors of social and financial resources to consider the topic of Dominican nationality and the quality of life for those living within Dominican borders.

In the Dominican Republic the optimal setting for building social capital is casual and personable. For this reason, I find that foreign groups incorporated in the Global South garner a legitimacy built on trust for their (often) shared language and more common history than a foreign NGO from the Global North. Though the foreign nature alone can bring an element of financial legitimacy due to expectation of sustainable funding streams from the home country, reputation built on regional personality has more utility. Practically, there is also the ease of less cross-cultural translation if the foreign group is also from a Latin background allowing organizational leaders to build relational networks more quickly. This element is central for Organization 1.

Internal Factors

An examination of select internal characteristics will demonstrate key areas where voluntary groups can seek success and sustainability in the Dominican environment. The given factors of mission, site of incorporation, reputation, and scope represent generally measurable characteristics. Meanwhile, a comprehensive review might also include subjective or less publically recorded aspects such as leadership quality, size of the organization, size of the budget, revenue streams, administrative and programmatic costs, type of programming, relative political climate, and staff demographics (nationality, gender, age, education, etc.). It would be of outstanding benefit to see this data collected and statistically analyzed.

Mission

The mission statement, alongside a vision statement and articulation of values, makes a family of statements that exist to explain the who, what, when, where, why, and how in a manner that is relatable to all stakeholders (Oster, 1995). Mission statements are a central element of nonprofit formation because they guide the direction of the organization. The mission will state the organization's reason for existence while also distinguishing how the organization is different from others doing similar work (IULSP, 2015). Therefore, mission statements have an internal purpose to focus and encourage those within the organization while also acting as a marketing and communications tool to engage those in the external environment.

There are varied methods to separate and organize the missional areas of nonprofit programming. Some common groupings include environmental protection, child welfare, or healthcare. The United States' legal code includes 26 broad categories to differentiate nonprofit efforts (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2016). In the Dominican Republic, Regulation 40-08 classifies 18 types of public benefit, mutual benefit, and mixed benefit associations (Annex I). At an international level, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals raised 8 areas of focus for development efforts.

Use of these groupings allows fellow voluntary organizations to determine like organizations or potential partners. Analyzing the quantity of a particular mission type in an area requires a context for consideration. High concentrations of a particular mission group could highlight a need that the third sector has risen to fulfill. Or it could

be the product of strategic outsourcing from the public sector to the voluntary sector through contracting. It could also represent redundancy of response to a perceived need, bringing undue competition and inefficiency to the particular field.

Data from The Center shows that registered groups started by non-legislators understand the priority needs areas to be education, health, and recreational sports. These nonprofits accounted for nearly 43% of the sector in 2015 (see Table 2 below).

Site of Incorporation

The Dominican Attorney General will register a nonprofit founded in the Dominican Republic or recognize an association granted NGO status under foreign law. The nature of domicile is noteworthy because it often correlates to the organization's impetus for founding a voluntary organization in the Dominican Republic and the relative perspective for its work (Malena, 1995). There are domestic organizations which rise from the Dominican residents or its emigrant populations, with central leadership that is ethnically and culturally Dominican. In contrast, this is rarely the case for foreign NGOs. Characteristics of NGOs from the Global North can be distinct from those of the Global South due to differences in funding streams, historical connections, and political motivations for involvement in the nation. Additionally, multilateral organizations (such as International Monetary Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, and United Nations Organizations) have a large presence in the country. Often founded under the auspices of development or aid work, these organizations are collaborations of countries perceived to pursue global objectives rather than individual motives.

A central reason for the distinction of initial location is the difference in funding streams and effective donor audience whose decision power determines programmatic efficacy (Meyer, 1999). My observations included two organizations with similar missions serving different donor audiences experiencing dissimilar reception in Dominican civil society. The first, a Catholic NGO under foreign leadership gives attention to the treatment of Dominican-born Haitians. This nonprofit organization was able to collaborate with UNHCR, the UN refugee agency. With UN support the nonprofit organization hosts legal clinics and community education in the sugarcane slums. Its funders generally acclaim the organization's efforts. However, the story of Organization 3 tells of a local group serving mostly children of Haitian immigrants that Dominican locals narrowly grant legitimacy on its own merits.

Likewise, funding source and consistency may differ between foreign and locally incorporated nonprofits. One practical element depends on global systems of currency exchange. An organization interviewed has networks of funders around the world. After working in the Dominican Republic over a decade, it was able to prepare nominally accurate budgets each year by applying knowledge of previous donor patterns. Then in 2014 the devaluation of the euro notably affected its budget. The organization had less incoming, unrestricted cash (even with consistent donation amounts) as well as fewer volunteers arriving from Europe to provide volunteer hours and bring in-kind donations (personal communication with Board Member, June 27, 2015). The organization continues to seek new ways to diversify its revenue in order to safeguard from global economic consequences.

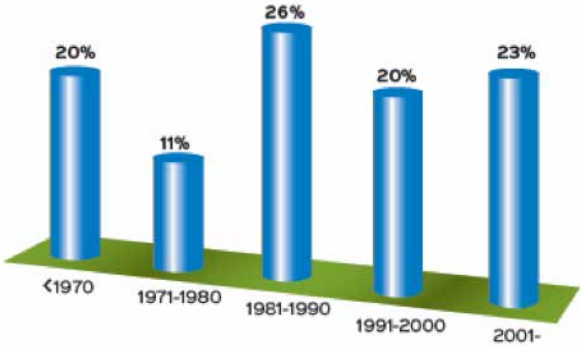
Additionally, project prioritization may differ for nonprofits reporting to headquarters domestically or abroad. This can affect internal and public-facing projects. Due to the formalization necessary to operate across greater geographic area, INGOs may require more reporting or procedural process to communicate up a hierarchical structure and out to donors than their local counterparts. The more formalized organizations may also involve more decision makers, have written policy sanctioning approved actions, or require clearance from leaders outside of the Dominican Republic. An organically driven organization has the flexibility to respond as needs arrive and involve direct observation more immediately into a decision (Carroll, 1992). Funding patterns in the Dominican Republic show that local donor cultivation will apply commercial marketing techniques more than philanthropic methods.

Thus, while missions may appear similar for organizations working in the Dominican Republic, site of incorporation affects motivation and procedure towards mission attainment.

Reputation

Reputation is an organizational characteristic that reveals the relevance and recognition of an organization. We will determine reputation within this discussion by size of an organization in terms of number of employees or longevity of activity in the country. The latter is easiest to measure, while number of cities in which the organization hosts projects may serve as a proxy for the former.

There is no central database to determine either metric. A 2013 survey of 35 organizations across the nation shows the majority were founded in the 1980s with near equivalent growth to the sector in the decades following (Alianza ONG, 2013). Figure 7 shows this in detail.



Sources: Alianza ONG database, 2013.

Figure 7: Founding dates of voluntary organizations in the Dominican Republic.

This can be a difficult data piece to determine. Many organizations on the community level may not track their founding date, instead joining and dissolving as needs arise in the community. Mergers and informal beginnings may also skew this data element by disproportionately populating newer dates for organizations that utilize historical institutional knowledge to support their management and growth.

While a local organization may not have notoriety, a contractor or funder may. For example, working with USAID from the United States, an agency of the United Nations, or Catholic Charities is likely to have name recognition. This can produce greater social ties and ability to interact in the political environment.

One finds reputation reflected in the network connections, environmental knowledge, and resiliency of a voluntary organization. As an organization proves itself relevant to the community and sustainable in its practices it will garner more attention and attract new partners. I propose that reputation correlates positively to legitimacy and leadership in the civil sector. Civil society often asks those who show themselves able to manage responsibility within their organizations to assume more on behalf of society as a whole.

Scope

Scope of service refers to the geographic presence of an organization. Organizations that serve a community will differ from those expecting to represent a city, multiple cities, a region, or the nation. Focus on urban or rural populations will also bring distinct perspectives and priorities.

My review determined that most voluntary groups in the Dominican Republic serve a small scope. This gives them the flexibility to interact closely with community leaders and tailor both programmatic elements and philanthropy efforts. Likewise, they can react more quickly to community circumstances than the voluntary group or government agency engrossed in formal process or distant leadership. Yet a challenge for the organization serving a smaller scale is its relative human and financial capacity. These will likely be disproportionately small compared to the needs of a community.

One analysis through the Dominican network of NGOs named Alianza ONG confirms my observations; finding that the majority of civil society organizations serve at a regional, provincial, or municipal level while the next greatest concentration of organizations is national and the final group have an international scope (2014).

Data and Analysis

Before researchers can make meaningful comparisons or evaluate the efficacy of the voluntary sector in the Dominican Republic it is important to determine baseline characteristics of the sector and its organizations. Identifiers such as mission focus or location begin to paint a comprehensive understanding of contemporary activity.

Advances in the presence of Dominican nonprofit organizations began in the 1960s with an influx of foreign aid to the country following the death of Trujillo, though the public sector received the majority of the foreign funding in this era (Meyer, 1999). After the financial crisis of the mid-1980s, this funding shifted to NGO work and primed the way for the current voluntary sector that includes a mix of domestic and foreign organizations (IBID).

Registered Organizations

Since the development of the national registry for nonprofits in 2005 nearly 7,000 organizations have registered with the National Center for the Promotion and Development of Nonprofit Associations (MEPyD4, 2015). This demonstrates near complete formalization for an NGO and provides the opportunity to apply for government funding. Table 2 shows the categorization of these organizations by principal area of activity as of March 2015 (MEPyD2). Between June 2010 and November 2015 nearly 2,650 new nonprofits registered with the National Center for the Promotion and Development of Nonprofit Associations. That is a growth rate of 9.35 percent for the five year period. If we assume a similar pattern for the next five years, by the end of 2020 the Dominican Republic would have approximately 10,800 registered organizations. The subsequent question is, will the registration inflow originate more from current voluntary groups that invest in formalization or newly founded organizations?

While these listings are informative and give a general glimpse into the composition of the Dominican voluntary sector, there are also incomplete. For one, the registry does not differentiate between local and internationally founded organizations. Additionally, there is no evidence of a review process to remove defunct organizations. This results in a high likelihood of inflated data. It is important to consider this discrepancy because the largest percentage of the reported nonprofits are hosted by governmental agencies (known as presidential nonprofits); common knowledge asserts that presidential nonprofits disband soon after completing a targeted granting project or the founding legislator leaves office.

Main Sector of Activity	Number of Organizations	Percentage of Total
Presidential*	2,422	36.88%
Education	*1,686*	*25.67%*
Health	*716*	*10.90%*
Sports	394	6.00%
Agriculture	293	4.46%
Environment	219	3.33%
Women's Issues	216	3.29%
Culture	198	3.01%
Youth Development	119	1.81%
Child Welfare	96	1.46%
Industry and Commerce	72	1.10%
Science and Technology	43	0.65%
Workforce Development	38	0.58%
Tourism	28	0.43%
Other	28	0.43%
TOTAL	**6,568**	**100.00%**
**Includes entities that realize activities in education, sports, physical education and recreation, environment, agriculture, social assistance and justice.*		

Sources: MEPyD2.

Table 2: Registered nonprofits by principal sector as of March 3, 2015.

The top grouping of presidential NGOs directly aligns with the highly political environment. Legislators start these organizations to direct public funds to their regions. These funding routes partially account for the financial benefits of clientelism (Meyer, 1999). While many of these organizations have short tenures, this comprehensive listing of NGOs in the country shows that the most commonly registered organization has a powerful founder. We then see the HDI measures of education and health as the leading areas of nonprofit work. With both highly acclaimed as national and international development goals as well as the state's promise to increase funding in education these subsectors are likely to continue to grow.

In addition to these highly formalized nonprofit associations many civil society groups gather to orchestrate activities for social good without being registered. The neighborhood groups that respond to the needs of neighbors, gatherings of professionals who meet and share

meals, or small assemblies of youth that speak towards the change they wish to see in their country may not see themselves as civil society, yet in providing a place for citizens to engage in conversation and expand mindsets they become essential to it. Some projections augment the voluntary sector to 15,000 organizations when informal groups are considered (personal communication with Executive Director of Alianza ONG, July 26, 2015).

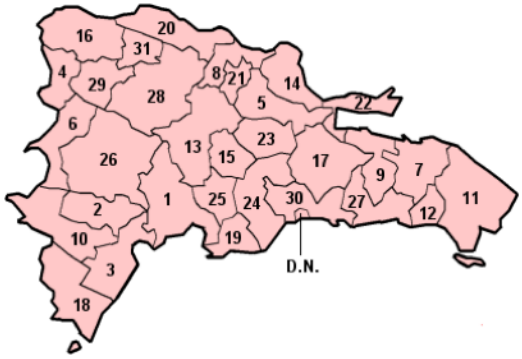
International NGOs carry the same legal definition as Dominican voluntary organizations with the modification that original articles of incorporation are filed outside of the Dominican Republic. Yet, their role can be quite different. For one, these organizations maintain global operations and rely on funding from an external public. In as much, they produce goods for the international community rather than the Dominican context. These groups will also generally manage larger budgets and are at a place of greater capacity through technology, social capital, education, and resources (Smith, Stebbins, & Dover, 2006). Review of individual INGO websites reveals that many of the largest groups that work in Haiti are not in the Dominican Republic (including CARE, Doctors without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières), and Mercy Corps) (August, 2015). Meanwhile, multiple UN agencies are well established in the country.

The number of international voluntary organizations invested in the Dominican Republic is hard to determine. The national registry maintained by the National Center for Formation and Promotion of Nonprofit Associations does not differentiate between local and international groups. Additionally, some international NGOs seek to produce international directories. Yet there is no centralized clearing house for these massive undertakings, making them dependent on response rates by individual organizations (DevDir.org). In turn, compilers do not update them often.

Geographic Spread

Nonprofit density in the Dominican Republic mirrors population density. NGOs group around the populated areas of the country, principally near the capital. Most NGO headquarters are located in the Santo Domingo region, especially when considering those registered with main offices in the National District (MEPyD, 2014). Ease of access to public institutions, infrastructure, travel accommodations, and urban amenities along with a condensed population representing every social class make this a likely finding. Accordingly, Santiago, the second

most densely populated province, in the northcentral region hosts 398 registered nonprofit groups and San Cristóbal, the third most densely populated province, in the southcentral region hosts 254 NGOs (Consejo Nacional de Población, 2014). The remaining 27 provinces are home to less than 200 NGOs each, with a range of registrations from 18 (Pedernales) to 171 (Valverde). See Figure 8, "Map of the provinces of the Dominican Republic," and Table 3, "Nonprofit organizations registered with The National Center for Development and Promotion of Nonprofit Associations by province (as of September 2014),"for more information.



Sources: Wikimedia Commons, 2009.

Figure 8: Map of the provinces of the Dominican Republic.

Analysis

"As NGOs educate, train, network, and raise awareness they build human and social capital…creating economic investment as a political transformation of the parties involved (Meyer, 1999)." Put another way, a robust voluntary sector will influence every segment of society through development of the individuals and systems in which it actively invests. Certainly, current authorities have self-interest to limit this influence of a more connected majority to maintain their position and preference. But I argue that building productive frameworks in the Dominican third sector will not impede its government, but instead further legitimate its current endeavors for increased public transparency, national development, and citizen interaction.

In the end, much of what the third sector consistently provides is capacity building services; more advocates, more researchers, more hands to perform services, more minds to produce meaningful leadership, more compassion to reach the underserved and the minority. To provide

Province	Number of Registered NGOs	Percentage of Total	Map
Azua	68	1.07%	1
Bahoruco	*75*	*1.18%*	*2*
Barahona	*98*	*1.54%*	*3*
Dajabon	30	0.47%	4
Distrito Nacional	764	12.00%	DN
Duarte	83	1.30%	5
El Seibo	47	0.74%	7
Elias Piña	64	1.01%	6
Espaillat	77	1.21%	8
Hato Mayor del Rey	51	0.80%	9
Hermanas Mirabal	53	0.83%	21
Independencia	87	1.37%	10
La Altagracia	46	0.72%	11
La Romana	66	1.04%	12
La Vega	131	2.06%	13
Maria Trinidad Sánchez	**33**	**0.52%**	**14**
Monseñor Nouel	**155**	**2.43%**	**15**
Monte Cristi	**71**	**1.12%**	**16**
Monte Plata	**83**	**1.30%**	**17**
Pedernales	**18**	**0.28%**	**18**
Peravia	**94**	**1.48%**	**19**
Puerto Plata	**105**	**1.65%**	**20**
Samana	**27**	**0.42%**	**22**
San Cristóbal	**254**	**3.99%**	**24**
San José de Ocoa	**35**	**0.55%**	**25**
San Juan	**122**	**1.92%**	**26**
San Pedro de Macorís	**155**	**2.43%**	**27**
Sánchez Ramírez	**68**	**1.07%**	**23**
Santiago	**398**	**6.25%**	**28**
Santiago Rodríguez	**46**	**0.72%**	**29**
Santo Domingo	**2792**	**43.85%**	**30**
Valverde	**171**	**2.69%**	**31**

Sources: MEPyD, 2014.

Table 3: Nonprofit organizations registered with The National Center for Development and Promotion of Nonprofit Associations by province (as of September 2014) .

practical support for the third sector will open pathways for collaboration and embolden sectoral workers to use more diverse resources. This in its own manner will be a beacon of goodwill to impart trust between citizens and their government. New solutions will become available for social problems because the increased capacity from the third sector workforce will expand the space for production, testing, evaluation, and dissemination. When the government of the Dominican Republic directs its resources to national priorities it will discover additional collaborators and companions to pursue public goals.

The Dominican populace earnestly awaits such improvements. Respondents of the World Bank Country Survey in 2013 indicated that government effectiveness (55%), education (50%), and reducing corruption (49%) were the most important development priorities facing the Dominican Republic. While these elements can be barriers for nonprofit work they also create opportunity. When the entity designed to serve the populace loses public trust citizens will look to civil society groups and NGO partners to uphold public interest (Gutiérrez Resa, 1997).

Elements that Advance Nonprofit Presence

Select Dominican factors encourage nonprofits to flourish. After the constitutional provisions for freedom of assembly and free speech, the validation of organizational registration and subsequent prospect to apply annually for public funds provide institutional encouragement to organize.

However, just as in the private sector, no one can guarantee success of a voluntary group. It is important for organizations to respond to the environmental factors and make an educated assessment of readiness for public service. To begin a conversation about how to mark organizational success in the Dominican environment I identify six opportunities for nonprofit groups to gain legitimacy, funding, and efficacy in the Dominican Republic.

Firstly, mission can boost the legitimacy of the voluntary group when it matches largely publicized goals. Promotion of the Millennium Development Goals and END2030 creates pressure for the national government to achieve objectives for human and environmental development. Meanwhile global media has publicized widely about human rights concerns for Haitians living in the Dominican Republic. These lead conscientious investors of social good and financial gain to consider the topic of Dominican nationality and the quality of life for those living within Dominican borders.

Furthermore, I find that foreign groups incorporated in the Global South garner a legitimacy built on trust for their (often) shared language and more common history than a foreign NGO from the Global North. Though the foreign nature alone can bring an element of financial legitimacy due to expectation of sustainable funding streams from the home country, reputation built on regional personality has more utility.

Additionally, voluntary groups' finances are more stable when the funding source has a common identifying characteristic with service community. Be the manner through commercial activity or traditional philanthropy, donors often give to groups with whom they can identify (Meyer, 1999). For example, Catholics support Catholic charities, emigrants invest in their homeland, or young families donate to orphanages or schools. One of my contacts always planned business meetings at a fair-trade coffee shop because an organization of her same faith manages it. Sports professionals provide a classic model for this. MLB pitcher Pedro Martínez and his wife launched an educational program in their Dominican hometown community from their foundation, The Pedro Martínez and Brothers Foundation, because they felt an obligation to the region of their youth (Sánchez, 2012).

Likewise, there are advantages to gaining funding from the Global North. These nations consistently hold stronger currencies (though instability of the markets and political climates will impact NGOs garnering funding from another nation), have a history of philanthropy based on faith-based charity norms, and supplement organizational work with in-kind value such as sending distinct practitioners and technologies to the country.

Beyond legitimacy and funding there is import in developing areas of efficacy. Bottom-up or participatory development is a classic strategic choice for nonprofits and this process is especially effective for groups of smaller scope. Dominicans are a talkative, collective, opinionated demographic. It is good practice to achieve community buy-in through raising awareness of any potential project and asking the community what they want. These elements of transparency contrast to the workings of government to increase trust and interest of key stakeholders.

Finally, nonprofits can attain efficacy in the political system through establishing their headquarters in a region with a powerful legislator. To engage in political patronage and strategic political management is a honed skill of the effective Dominican. Even if access is not direct, being involved in networks of nonprofits and working with intermediary

NGOs can increase access to human and capital resources as well as contribute to environmental stability.

Elements that Inhibit Nonprofit Presence

Alternately, many elements will test the survival of a nonprofit. Institutional elements of corruption, complex regulatory processes coupled with lack of enforcement, public mistrust, low financial support from public agencies, and limited cross-sectoral collaboration all affect the composition of the voluntary sector.

Additionally, there is risk in creating a new organization. Economic and human development indicators imply that a large subset of the population will not have the financial means and technical knowledge to organize a voluntary group, let alone invest in creating an enduring nonprofit. Then, organizers will need substantial time and agency over their schedule to complete the process to incorporate. Legal registration is laborious in being paperwork heavy, obligating waiting periods, and taking place in multiple government agencies. Conversely, if one has the means to start a business (Doing Business 2016 report claims the cost is around 16.4 percent of income per capita), he can complete the seven procedures in about two weeks (WB3).

Organizations should also be aware of the following six challenges to gaining legitimacy, securing funding, and measuring efficacy in the Dominican environment.

To begin, legitimacy will be tested by any action opposing the before mentioned strengths for support. NGOS should be conscientious to avoid introducing an irrelevant program model to the community. Related, serving a minority class might inhibit opportunities for broad governmental support. Likewise, missions outside the scope of current national priority risk being labeled irrelevant or idealistic.

Organizations must also consider the match between their values and societal norms. With corruption rankings in the highest fortieth percentile internationally (Transparency International, 2014) any group opposed to the use of bribes or shortcuts in compliance may face obstructions. Annual nonprofit accounting reports mandate authorized expense receipts include the business' assigned tax identification number from the Department of Internal Taxes (Número de Comprobante Fiscal). However with the high frequency of informal businesses it could be simpler, faster, and more convenient to buy outside of the formal market. As the plight of Organization 2 portrays, registered NGOs interviewed regularly face the decision to travel further in

order to buy supplies at higher prices from registered stores. One nonprofit took this commitment seriously because it wanted employees to understand that it was not acceptable in the organizational ethics to take shortcuts for any purpose.

Another practical consideration is the limited financial interaction between the state and nonprofit groups. The annual opportunity to secure federal funding has limited marketing to potential applicants. Beyond ambiguity in the application process the likelihood of securing funding is unknown. Then, there is a low rate of return on respective spending reports to the federal government, especially from presidential nonprofits (Ruiz, 2015). Thus, many organizations are bound to be unaware of how to utilize the opportunity. Consequently, small budgets and limited revenue streams reduce the ability of small to medium sized organizations to think concretely about long-term plans or employ staff in their nonprofit.

The need for infrastructure investment alongside recent trends for public deficits (see Figure 3, "Central government incomes and expenditures as percentage of GDP") shows more reason for the government of the Dominican Republic to maintain records of how the funds it releases through Presidential NGOs are used. Lack of transparency in this initiative discourages active participation. Voluntary groups do not want to be associated with a defunct or corrupt system. It is unknown if formal public granting to nonprofits is low (0.3 percent of 2015 budget) due to lack of allotment or lack of application. Either way, in 2014 the state shared $58.3 million USD with third sector partners (Ruíz) who completed a five-page grant application.

Following, there are shortcomings in efficacy. A lack of integration of the less formalized, unregistered nonprofits will impede comprehensive growth and cooperation in the sector. This is important to consider for it will be difficult to generate systemic progress for the country without the inclusion of all types of knowledge, capital, and social class.

Plus, technical elements currently limit the sector, including poor database management and minimal maintenance of public source resources. The national database of nonprofit organizations is an underperforming tool due to the ambiguity of the information. The Center updates the registry with new information and this could serve as an opportunity to seek partnerships and contacts. However, because The Center does not regularly clear the registry for attrition and mergers there is no way of knowing which organizations remain in operation. New NGOs could also use these as tools to pre-evaluate need for

services if type of organization was publically available to be cross-listed with geographic area. This would be especially important for NGOs considering entering a new region. They can confirm the current actors' strengths and enter the community if they have something novel to offer. This potential not only creates an opportunity to expand services but also acts as protection against suppressing small, local movements.

Conclusions and Opportunities for Future Research

This compendium of characteristics shaping the voluntary sector of the Dominican Republic is rich for analysis. Researchers could review innumerable external environmental factors of institutions, politics, economy, and society affecting organizations across sectors. This study focuses on major elements influencing nonprofits from the structural elements of statutes and budgets to the normative perceptions of liberty, class, and race. It then reviews individual, internal characteristics of nonprofit organizations. Combining the macro-environmental factors with observations on mission, site of incorporation, reputation and scope I argue for combinations of elements that can enhance or reduce organizational legitimacy, funding, and efficacy. The report concludes that institutional inefficiencies, widespread economic and social inequalities, and mistrust in political leaders significantly reduce the benefits to civil society and human development available from a largely informal, yet robust voluntary sector. Proposals for reform suggest streamlining processes, enforcing accountability measures, and investing in capacity building mechanisms. Longstanding lack of transparency and inadequate investments in governmental capital will oppose these proposals, yet this makes any manner of change in the sector significant and necessary.

It is important to note, I do not assume that a larger registered nonprofit sector will improve efficacy (the immediacy of the NGO republic of Haiti is an example of the marginal benefit of unchecked sector growth (Edmonds (2012), Katz (2013)). Instead the increased legitimacy will combine with a more accurate depiction of the third sector to form a better basis for planning efforts across all sectors. This provides opportunity to reach national development goals alongside building elements of social cohesion (Gazley & Brudney, 2007).

This discussion leads to many opportunities for future research. With a mindset of utility, researchers might focus on manners of nonprofit efficacy in the Dominican context. To further methods of classification the researcher might identify organizations in terms of role: direct service organizations, resource networks, funders, political movements, etc. For additional review of the social and economic environment one might investigate how entrepreneurial norms affect the Dominican voluntary sector. It would also be valuable to know more about the local perception of nonprofits. How is trust level of NGOs? Are there perceived gaps in service? Finally, practitioners might benefit from study into the economic impact of expanded access to tax-exemption as well as potential mechanisms for more public and/or consistent funding models.

This analysis revealed central elements that combine to advance and inhibit the role of nonprofits in the Dominican Republic within the development era characterized by END 2030. Advocates for civil society have already begun to focus on developing volunteer norms and encouraging citizens of all interests and backgrounds to empower their freedoms of speech and assembly. Organizations are utilizing the internet to learn about the registration process, make contacts, and download forms for reports and granting. Meanwhile further attention from the public sector on streamlining processes and financial benefits could strengthen partnerships across sector lines for greater advancement of public goals. The best mechanisms for these changes are something for further study. Myriad discoveries about the Dominican voluntary sector await.

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Megan Beddow is a nonprofit advocate and academic from Florida, USA, with over a decade of experience in program design and project management in the U.S., Mexico and Chile. She participated in the Fellows Program from June to August 2015. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Mathematics, Sociology and Spanish from Florida Southern College, and a Master of Public Affairs (MPA) specializing in international nonprofit management with a Master of Arts (MA) in Caribbean and Latin American Studies from Indiana University. Megan hopes her work can help practitioners, funders, and policy makers alike contribute to strengthening civil society.

GFDD

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GFDD is a non-profit, non-partisan, organization dedicated to the advancement of global collaboration and exchange relevant to Dominican professionals, general audiences and institutions in the homeland and abroad by implementing projects that conduct research, enhance public understanding, design public policies, devise strategies, and offer capacity building in areas crucial to social, economic, democratic and cultural sustainable development.

GFDD promotes a better understanding and appreciation of the Dominican culture, values and heritage, as well as its richness and diversity, in the Dominican Republic, United States and worldwide.

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Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo (Funglode) is a private, nonprofit, and pluralistic organization devoted to conducting high-level research, and committed to academic excellence and the promotion of culture and art.

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FUNGLODE

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The Fellows Program, an extension of the internship and academic exchange program InteRDom, was developed in 2009 to respond to the desire of GFDD and Funglode to develop a community of scholars that contributes to the Foundations' growing body of research on matters of international concern that directly impact the Dominican Republic. The Program complements the overall mission of GFDD and Funglode to promote academic exchange, generate scholarship, and influence the creation of public policy related to economic and social development both at the national and international levels.

Through the Fellows Program, GFDD and Funglode seek to generate scholarship on issues at the forefront of the United Nations' agenda in order to give voice to national and regional concerns and offer viable solutions to domestic and international challenges.

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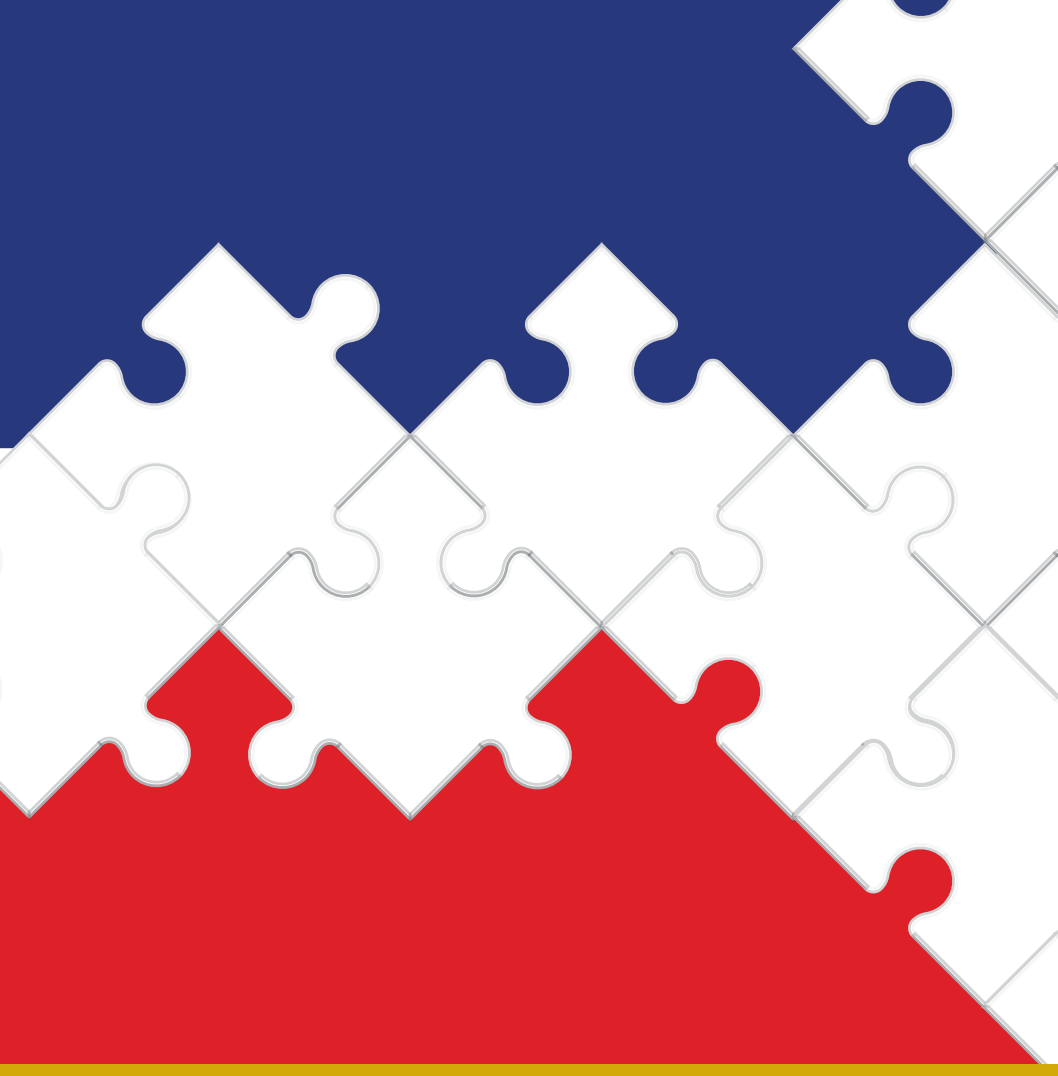

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