

KNOWLEDGE, NGOS AND NETWORKS*Applying Epistemology To The Work Of Development*

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Abstract: Non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) are increasingly adopting knowledge-based roles such as lobbying, advocacy, policy formulation, research and dialogue facilitation. At the same time, they have on the one hand been criticised for knowledge errors and failures, and on the other been urged to adopt knowledge networking technologies. Building on earlier work which developed a three-dimensional model of knowledge based on contemporary epistemology and cognitive science, this paper develops a knowledge-based view of NGDO activity, arguing that there is evidence of a complex range knowledge roles, involving some very demanding informational, epistemic and conceptual challenges. The expertise, skills and resources required for effective knowledge work can be supported by networks and networking technology, but only if deficits as well as benefits are recognised and if informational, epistemic and conceptual capacities are developed alongside technical expertise.

Keywords: Knowledge, development, NGOs, NGDOs, Internet, networks, epistemology, information, conceptual development.

About the Author

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