

NGO Effectiveness
The Impact on Bolivian Youth Education

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Abstract

The dialogue on the effectiveness of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is extensive, but largely inconclusive. Context of each individual NGO significantly alters the variables that have the greatest impact on their individual effectiveness. However, there are variables that are consistently mentioned as vital to the overall success of NGO activity, which are examined in detail in this research. This study specifically analyzes NGO effectiveness in education programs for Bolivian youth. Based on previous literature analyzing NGO effectiveness in Bolivia, three important variables are discussed; dependence on funds from international donors, NGO organizational values and structure, as well as institutional limitations on poverty alleviation in Bolivia. In particular, three Bolivian NGOs largely dedicated to youth education are compared based on these variables. These organizations include Save the Children Bolivia, UNICEF Bolivia, and CARE Bolivia. Using data from the annual reports and campaign data for these organizations within the last ten years, this study draws comparisons between NGOs to evaluate which variables are most important to them. Additionally, this study takes data from the Bolivian Education Policy Data Center as well as the World Bank Bolivian Education Statistics to analyze the effectiveness of each Bolivian NGO, focusing on youth education. Data contains evidence showing that literacy rates in Bolivia generally increased from 2005 to 2015, with a sudden drop in completion of both primary and lower secondary education for both sexes in the past two years. This paper searches for a relationship between NGO variables linked to effectiveness and the rates education completion of Bolivian children. This study aims to demonstrate that large sources of international funding from the north do not guarantee NGO effectiveness in youth education. Additionally, organizational structure tends to reflect donors' wishes rather than the opinions of the served target populations, which can lead to a decrease in NGO credibility and accountability to the target populations.

KAYLY BELUSH

Nongovernmental organization (NGO) effectiveness has been a topic of debate in recent decades as nonprofit work has become an increasingly larger component of life in the global south. Much of the dialogue discusses whether NGOs do more harm or good in developing nations. In the Latin American nation of Bolivia, many international NGOs are hard at work trying to alleviate poverty in the nation and to improve water sanitation or hygiene, to name some examples. An NGO in Bolivia is defined by the national government as a "non-profit-making private organization. They may be national or international, religious or lay." According to Sonia Arellano López & James Petras (1994), their activities are directed to development and/or assistance efforts, which may be financed by state funds or international cooperation resources" (p. 559). As NGOs focus on bettering a variety of social and community aspects, serve many different populations, and maintain a varying set of values in the process, finding constants in NGO research can be problematic. For the purposes of this study, NGOs effectiveness is measured in this study following Benneker's (2008) notion that "effectiveness in policies in meeting their intended objectives is largely dependent on the process of policy implementation" (p. 47). In other words, an NGO's effectiveness in appropriately implementing their desired outcomes will largely depend on the process chosen to reach those end goals. Additionally, true effectiveness must be long-term. "NGOs' effectiveness must be measured by their impact on people and problems over the long term" (Karns, Mingst, & Stiles, 2015, p. 271). This paper will address two questions. The first, what factors are important in creating effective NGO programs in Bolivia? The second, do internationally recognized NGOs have a positive impact on the completion of education by Bolivian youth?

One of the challenges of researching the relative success of NGOs in the global south is the lack of data infrastructure that exists in many nations. Stress on reports and documentation of

NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN YOUTH EDUCATION

success may not be largely emphasized in smaller, local NGOs but rather in international NGOs that have a greater set of guidelines and protocol they are required to meet. For this reason, the three Bolivian NGOs that are the focus of this research are all internationally recognized organizations. Save the Children Bolivia, UNICEF Bolivia, and CARE Bolivia have a greater amount of informative data released due to their larger size and number of international donors. Bolivia, like many lesser developed countries, is often mentioned in dialogue regarding aiding the global south. NGOs have been working in Bolivia for decades attempting to alleviate the poverty that surrounds much of the large indigenous population residing within the nation. In these countries, NGOs oftentimes will be viewed as villains rather than heroes, as they may unintentionally be hurting their target populations that they wish to support. This idea of the global north swooping in to rescue the global south is a common one in current development dialogue. If we find it our duty as global citizens to aid those in the global south, then we should also assume the responsibility to provide effective aid. This study explores the relationships between the effectiveness of NGOs actively working in Bolivia and variables that are commonly attached to success of NGO activities. International development literature stresses the importance of public participation for NGOs to achieve success. This study will elaborate on the most important variables that tend to stand in the way of public participation, and therefore, NGO effectiveness. These factors include dependence on international funds to run programs, the organizational values of the NGO, as well as the institutional limitations on poverty alleviation in-country.

Literature Review

KAYLY BELUSH

NGO Effectiveness

Many scholars of international development remain wary of the role that NGOs play in alleviating poverty and the effects that it has on many nations in the global south. Arellano-López and Petras (1994) are skeptical of NGO effectiveness and acknowledge that “it is not clear that NGOs are more successful in overcoming poverty than state agencies” (p. 555). There are many limitations constantly impeding upon NGO goals. These organizations need to have some type of social, political, or economic context to the work they are doing in order to find the success they are seeking. Galways, Corbett, and Zeng (2012) are also skeptical, suggesting in their study that in Bolivia, “NGOs do not target the poorest regions in the country” (p. 10). They call for improvement and greater coordination between municipalities to encourage more success of NGO activities throughout various Bolivian regions. While coordination among local organizations is an important factor to consider, there is one concrete idea throughout international development literature that tends to be advocated for in producing NGO effectiveness: public participation.

Benneker (2008) and Boulding (2010) both stress the importance of community participation and collaboration in establishing successful NGO initiatives in Bolivia. Benneker advocates for further collaboration among NGOs and the other organizations that they work with throughout Bolivia to create desired change. Her study found that NGOs had greater long-term success when they worked throughout and in conjunction with their target communities in a variety of aspects, rather than focusing on improving specific community elements in isolation. Long-term effectiveness requires a greater sense of integration within the community, which establishes trust and confidence among the target populations the organization aims to serve. Boulding (2010) credits NGOs for providing resources to all types of

NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN YOUTH EDUCATION

communities as well as a space to facilitate community association, interaction, and participation. Additionally, Boulding (2010) finds NGOs to be effective in the sense that they “facilitate collective action and political participation” (p.465).

Karns, Mingst, and Styles (2015) also mention the enhancement of public participation as a factor affecting overall NGO effectiveness. Like Boulding (2010) and Benneker (2008), they highlight the importance of measure their success over the course of time. “NGO effectiveness must be measured by their impact on people and problems over the long term” (p. 271). While many limitations do hinder NGOs' ability to bring long-term change, Karns, Mingst, and Styles are not shy when acknowledging that “many NGOs do contribute positively to the global public good” (p. 276) and are optimistic about the effects that they can and do have for many populations around the globe. Additionally, Simmons (1998) agrees with these scholars and views public participation as a crucial aspect in effective NGO involvement at all levels. “NGOs, governments, and multilateral institutions need to devise systems of public participation that draw on the expertise and resources of NGOs, their grassroots connections, sense of purpose, and commitment, and freedom from bureaucratic restraints” (p. 94).

It is obvious that many development scholars put much weight on the role of public involvement in the relative success of NGO activities. The next step in then evaluating if an NGO is indeed effective is to examine the limitations that hinder NGOs from including that crucial public participation in their program implementation. Theoretically speaking, it should be simple to include the public in the decision-making processes to better serve their needs. However, many obstacles are often present that hinder NGO success within the communities they collaborate with. This is true in many nations of the global south and seems to stand true in Bolivia as well.

KAYLY BELUSH

Institutional Limitations on Poverty Alleviation

One of the institutional limitations on poverty alleviation in Bolivia is the fierce competition among NGOs. In order to find local donors or advocates to promote for and support an organization, it must be viewed as more accountable, transparent, and/or credible to the public than other organizations working towards the same, or similar, goals. These qualities make an NGO more appealing to the public and encourage them to work more closely with the organization. "Accountability is about power, authority and ownership and defines the relations between actors through identification" (Benneker, 2008, p. 51). How an NGO holds itself to certain standards for program implementation is important to program recipients. NGOs holding themselves accountable have more clarity in their mission to serve their target populations. Reimann (2005) notes that "NGOs have been politically muzzled and have shied away from any meaningful 'empowerment' activities that could lead to real change for the poor they seek to serve" (p. 43). This leads them to be less accountable to the communities they aim to support. Malavisi (2010) agrees on the importance of NGO accountability, claiming that "central to effectiveness is the question of accountability to clients" (p. 55). Karns, Mingst, and Stiles (2015) recognize as well that to view an NGO as credible, transparency and accountability of the organization are taken into consideration.

Benneker (2008) found Bolivian NGOs to fail in their program implementation when there is a low level of accountability of leaders towards the indigenous population being served. Arellano-López and Petras (1994) have noted an increase in the number of NGOs directly linked to aiding in poverty alleviation. They find it to be "particularly associated with the retreat of Latin American states from assuming responsibility for the provision of social services and the general well-being of their populations" (p. 558). This lack of responsibility or accountability

NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN YOUTH EDUCATION

towards the people leaves local donors or program beneficiaries to donate or seek support from other organizations, therefore further increasing competition among NGOs. Wong (2012) came to similar conclusions in her study and believes that NGOs can make themselves more credible by “holding an active membership that participates in some aspect of the policymaking” (p. 92) to hold leaders accountable. Rodríguez, Pérez, and Godoy (2012) suggest that to enhance organizational transparency and accountability towards the public, NGOs should make a greater effort to connect themselves to the web and hold themselves responsible to providing effective support to not only the communities that they directly influence, but also to the rest of the world invested in their poverty alleviation methods.

Organizational Values/Structure

Institutional limitations may make it difficult for the public to involve themselves in NGO initiatives. The organizational values of an NGO help to establish those ideas of accountability, transparency, and credibility that make an organization stand out in a competitive nonprofit atmosphere. How the organization views itself and its relation to other organizations can "reflect the ethos of the organization". "Clear organizational values are considered essential for NGOs to be effective as they link the purpose, policies and strategic objectives" (Malavisi, 2010, p. 49). Whether or not an NGO maintains an organizational structure that promotes public participation contributes to NGO effectiveness. Evaluating the values of individual organizations can help determine how likely an organization is to be successful in the long run.

Wong (2012) argues that good organizational structure achieves NGO credibility, and in turn, legitimacy. She separates organizational structure into three aspects; membership, funding sources, and the distribution of agenda-setting powers. These aspects are critical in understanding what the NGO represents. Additionally, she argues that maintaining an organizational structure

KAYLY BELUSH

that holds "an active membership that participates in some aspect of the policymaking" (p. 92) will assist in holding leaders accountable. Kohl's (2003) study on Bolivian NGOs places similar emphasis on the importance of organizational structure for NGOs. He noted that four of the five NGOs he examined played a major role in restructuring Bolivian law to put a greater focus on creating participatory political institutions at a local level. Since this restructuring, NGOs have received greater funding to go directly to them or support their municipalities or community-development projects. NGOs that were incapable or adapting their organizational structure to fit these changes were left without funding, showing the importance of organizational structure for NGO success. Corell and Betsill (2008) also state that structural factors imply that NGOs are enabled or constrained by elements of the negotiating context. Those factors then help explain why, despite employing similar strategies or exhibiting similar characteristics, NGOs may have different levels of influence across cases.

Petras (1997) critiques NGOs in Bolivia specifically, saying that out of the tens of millions of dollars funded to NGOs, only fifteen to twenty percent was reaching the poor. The remaining funds were utilized to pay professional salaries and administrative costs. Furthermore, the absolute poverty levels remained at a standstill in Bolivia and the "long-term structural causes – the neoliberal policies – were cushioned by the NGOs". Petras's critique on the lack of efficiency in the use of funds by Bolivian NGOs suggests that flaws in organizational structure may lead to misuse of donations, and therefore a less successful organization. Gálvez, Pérez, and Godoy (2012) recognize as well that having a strong organizational capacity increases the likelihood of success among NGOs.

Reliance on funds from international donors

NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN YOUTH EDUCATION

Reliance on international donors is another factor that can influence how an NGO chooses to organize itself, how accountable or credible it is viewed to be by local populations, and in turn how willingly the public will participate in NGO activities. For many NGOs in the global south, the main sources of funding are not from in-country fundraising, but rather from international organizations and institutions that are persuaded to donate. This dependence on outside sources of funding can affect the nature of NGO programs as well as their sustainability in the long run.

Reimann (2005) noted that “in the area of international development, the question of NGO performance and effectiveness became a central one given the fact that aid agencies and NGOs themselves were aggressively promoting NGOs as a cost effective and better way to reach the poor” (p. 39). There are so many agencies at the public disposal now that it is difficult for many donors to determine who is worth the funds, and who is not. Donors often have a particular idea in mind for how they want their donated funds to be utilized. NGOs often fear that without appealing to the donors' desires, they risk losing donations. This “eagerness for funding and their fear of losing funding once they get it” often results in NGOs being “politically muzzled and have shied away from any meaningful ‘empowerment’ activities that could lead to real change for the poor they seek to serve” (p. 43). Reimann (2005) suggests that dependence on foreign aid can lead to a loss of legitimacy for local NGOs, therefore decreasing overall effectiveness.

Rivero (2009) discusses how the U.S. uses “significant funds for political parties, think tanks, and pro-U.S. groups that can help push U.S. interest” (p. 1), which may actually destabilize Bolivian civil society. He offers the idea that U.S. involvement can “cause significant instability in these very economically important South American nations” (p. 1). Additionally, he claims the U.S. has pursued an approach in Bolivia where they fund wealthy elites, private

KAYLY BELUSH

institutions, and NGOs to break up indigenous alliances. This suggests that donors from the global north do not always have the best interests of the global south at heart when offering funds to NGOs. Rivero (2009) utilizes evidence from declassified government documents to show “U.S. intervention further expands and mutates toward the overall goal of funding decentralization and local autonomy, especially teaching workshops, in Bolivia” (p.10). This is accomplished by the global north supporting wealthy Bolivian elites whose political desires align with U.S. policies. “The big question however is whether such assistance and support for decentralization should be considered hostile...U.S. NGO assistance has disproportionately aided the Santa Cruz elite and indigenous groups in Bolivia that are pushing for greater decentralization” (p. 11).

Petras and Arellano-López (1994) have presented findings that “one impact of the flow of international funds was that Latin American NGOs often lost many of the characteristics (participation, bureaucratic agility) that had made them seem attractive as implements of developmental assistance in the first place” (p. 561). Bolivian NGOs are almost exclusively funded by international aid programs, with most multilateral donors donating funds to the Bolivian government rather than NGO programs. This in turn decreases NGO effectiveness, as much as the money donated by the global north often does not directly reach impoverished Bolivian communities. Petras (1997) critiques Bolivian NGO effectiveness as well, stating that “in reality nongovernmental organizations are not nongovernmental. They receive funds from overseas governments or work as private subcontractors of local governments.”

A potential result from extensive dependence on international aid is that local Bolivian NGOs find themselves looking to appeal to the wishes of their international donors rather than turning first to local recipients for program feedback. This relationship between southern

NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN YOUTH EDUCATION

nongovernmental organizations (SNGOs) and northern nongovernmental organizations (NNGOs) can be counterproductive. Malavisi (2010) argues that “the relationship between SNGOs and NNGOs continues to be entrenched within a power structure based on western hegemony and a form of neocolonialism” (p. 45). The use of the term neocolonialism here demonstrates just how uneven the power dynamic is between the global north and the global south.

Despite the existing criticisms regarding foreign aid, Nunnenkamp and Ohler (2012) have suggested that overall, NGOs are thought to be more efficient in delivering foreign aid to the needy than official aid agencies. However, it is good practice to identify those aspects, such as too great a dependence on foreign aid, that decrease overall effectiveness. As supporters of marginalized populations, NGOs have the responsibility to continuously look for new ways of creating a more sustainable monetary source to fund program implementation.

Methodology

The three NGOs focused on in this study are Save the Children Bolivia, UNICEF Bolivia, and CARE Bolivia. These internationally recognized NGOs have a greater set of data regarding their projects, projects implementation, and finances. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of these NGOs particularly in the area of youth education in Bolivia. While the United States has direct guidelines on what nonprofits working within the country are to provide to the public regarding finances and annual reports, it is difficult to find similar databases created to accumulate this data for Bolivian nonprofits. While this posed a challenge, it required exhaustive research to find individual annual reports from each organization under study. While information provided by all three of these organizations was not always

KAYLY BELUSH

consistently updated, much information has been recorded in databases regarding the literacy levels and primary/secondary education completion rates. The Bolivian Education Policy Data Center as well as the World Bank Bolivian Education Statistics were particularly useful in finding that in-country data.

In this research, completion rates of both sexes are compared from 2007 to 2017. I aim to find correlations between the fluctuations in these numbers and the changing finances, organizational structure, or institutional limitations on NGOs advocating for increasing the level of childhood education within Bolivia. I base my search for these corrections on the following hypotheses:

- H₁: NGO effectiveness in education programs for Bolivian youth decreases when reliance on funds provided by foreign donors increases.

This hypothesis is supported by Petras (1997). In his critique on Bolivian NGOs, he found that increased international funding to nonprofits was not beneficial to these organizations. Instead, he argues that this extra funding was not appropriately funneled to provide the needed assistance to impoverished communities. Petras's study supports that international funds are often given directly to the foreign governments, which are then utilized at the government's discretion. Based on this argument, I hypothesize that an increase in international funds will result in a decrease in effectiveness of NGO in providing education for Bolivian youth.

- H₂: NGO effectiveness in education programs for Bolivian youth increases as accountability to the target population increases.

This hypothesis is based on Petras and Arellano-López's (1994) study that elaborates on the institutional limitations that hinder NGO effectiveness. They note that when NGOs try to hold themselves accountable to their target populations, they encounter institutional barriers that make providing this responsibility to the community more difficult. They argue that increased reliance

NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN YOUTH EDUCATION

on international donors hinders the ability of NGOs to remain accountable to those they support, as they are forced to appeal to the desires and wishes of international donors to maintain the inflow of funds. My hypothesis argues that as Bolivian NGOs are able to remain responsible to their target populations, their effectiveness in youth education programs will increase.

- H₃: NGO effectiveness in education programs for Bolivian youth increases as organizational values based on the needs of the target population increases.

This hypothesis is supported by the Malavisi (2010) study, which argues that organizational values between donors and NGOs should be congruent in order to be most effective. In my research, I apply this theory to the relationship between NGOs and their program recipients. My hypothesis supports that the effectiveness of Bolivian youth education programs will increase as organizational values better reflect the needs of program recipients.

Findings and Analysis

UNICEF Bolivia

UNICEF Bolivia does not provide regular, annual country reports to the public regarding their fundraising and program initiatives. Reports found from the last ten years were from 2010 and 2016. The 2010 report included an emphasis on cooperation among the global south to lessen dependence on the global north. These partnerships created consisted of nearby countries such as Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, and Ecuador to strengthen areas such as education, HIV/AIDS medical attention, and water sanitation. In 2010, UNICEF Bolivia reported only 52% of children measured with the Nelson scale of early childhood development had normal or superior levels of development. They did not stay consistent with this measurement of childhood development over the next few years however, as it is not included in the 2016 report.

KAYLY BELUSH

The 2016 annual report stressed different points than in 2010. UNICEF Bolivia seemed to drift away from focusing on this south-south cooperation that had previously been a priority to them. Instead, there was an emphasis on fundraising and financial cooperation with other organizations and businesses in Bolivia. A long-term alliance with the Banco Nacional de Bolivia had been achieved and more than twenty relationships with public and private Bolivian companies were reported. Additionally, they received \$700,000 USD through national committees. While UNICEF Bolivia tried to make project funds within the country more sustainable, they also stressed on their recently initiated partnerships with the Italian government, worth \$2 million USD. Also, they received a large amount of funds from their “excellent partnership with Sweden” through the Swedish International Development Authority, which offered flexible continued funds throughout 2017. While there is much dependence still on foreign aid, UNICEF Bolivia appears to be taking strides in finding reliable, long-term sources of funding in-country.

Regarding accountability to the public, UNICEF Bolivia does not have clear-cut mission or vision statement and does not appear to promote accountability as a primary value of the organization. Organizational values and structure are not distinct. Their website is cluttered, difficult to follow, and it was a challenge to obtain valuable data. However, the online presence of UNICEF Bolivia could vary drastically from their community presence in the cities where they have established themselves. From my analysis of UNICEF Bolivia’s reports and their online presence, it does not seem that they have had an effective influence on the community at all, as their listed programs are outdated and ill-described. UNICEF Bolivia’s low prioritization of organizational structure and accountability to their target populations appear to make them less effective in conducting successful educational programs for Bolivian youth. This is in support of both my second, and my third hypotheses.

NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN YOUTH EDUCATION

Save the Children Bolivia

Program reports provided by STC Bolivia were the most elaborate. While data on Bolivian education statistics in general was not extensive, STC Bolivia provides detailed information on statistics from its funded schools and projects, stressing that they are a voice for Bolivian children. In their efforts, STC Bolivia does appear to be increasing the statistics on the number of children they impact each year. Their 2015 report from sponsored schools in Cochabamba reported that for basic education, 96% of the children in sponsorship programs reached the fifth grade. This number is up from 2014, where 80% of sponsored children reached the fifth grade. Additionally, this report states that “3,920 secondary school students participated in vocational workshops to create life plans for the future. This is up from 866 students in 2014.” It appears that providing information on the successes of these educational sponsorships from children has become more consistent and frequent in the last 10 years.

No annual financial reports published to the public were found. However, STC Bolivia’s country website includes a section dedicated to thanking their donors. The list of donors making the largest financial contributions include BVLGARI, Unilever, the Swiss International Development Agency, the *Banco de desarrollo de América Latina*, ADM, the Spanish Embassy in Bolivia, the Suzanna Sorensen Foundation, Christadelphian Meal-a-Day Fund of the Americas, Disney Friends Around the World, Latin American Children’s Trust, and the Canadian Global Affairs Institution. Additionally, STC Bolivia mentions and thanks over 100 in-country allies and agencies. These organizations are not separately recognized.

While Save the Children is incredibly dependent on foreign funds, their documentation of educational programs for Bolivian youth show tremendous growth in the numbers of children they are influencing each year. These reports are tailored to attract foreign donors and stress the

KAYLY BELUSH

increasing numbers of children being impacted by their programs. This does not necessarily mean that their programs are being effective. However, it does appear that STC is reaching out to a greater number of Bolivian youth in their education programs than UNICEF and CARE Bolivia. This high stress on appealing to donors in reporting supports that there are agendas that come with foreign aid. STC Bolivia's website and reporting style appear to look effective on paper but are not so influential realistically for the students. This observation is drawn primarily from person volunteer experience with STC Bolivia in the summer of 2016. The concepts needed to bring success were present, but the infrastructure to make effective education programs was lacking. On the other hand, the social influence and the concepts of self-empowerment and equality that STC shared with sponsored Bolivian youth had a significant impact in the community, even if this impact did not appear as a greater statistic in primary or lower secondary education completion.

CARE Bolivia

Reported annual reports were not available to the public. All information had to instead be taken from CARE Bolivia's country website. CARE Bolivia advertised themselves by ensuring accountability and responsibility in their programs to the people, whether successes or failures, as a main principle. Transparency in thought, word, and action is also advertised as an important value. They aim to serve the poorest Bolivian families and communities while trying to influence political decisions at all levels. There is no elaboration on how they aim to influence political decision-making processes. While transparency and accountability are listed as main priorities to CARE Bolivia, information on project information is not displayed appropriately. The latest updates on CARE projects are dated from 2010.

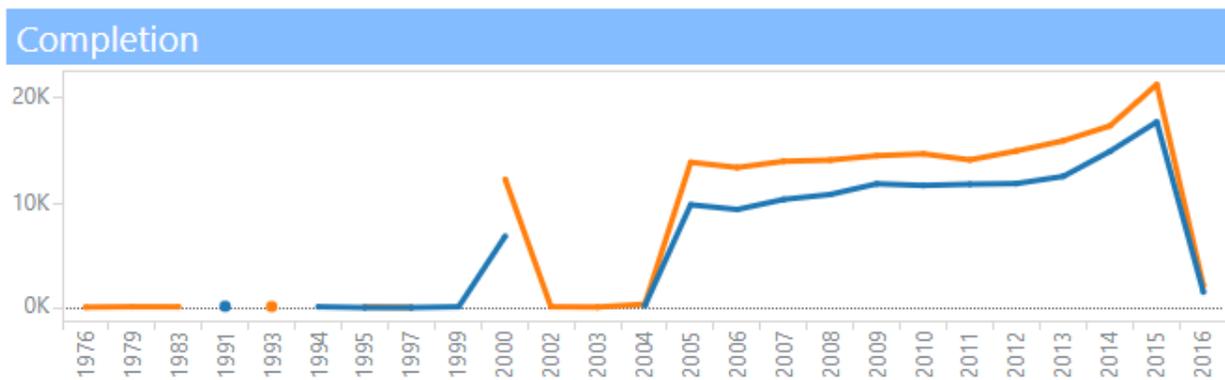
NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN YOUTH EDUCATION

A small number of private donors are mentioned as supporting sustainable social action for children. The main financial supporters, however, are all from the global north. CARE Bolivia gives no percentages or numbers on the amount of funds provided by each of these donors. Donors include USAID, the European Union, the European Commission, Zonta International, Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, the Department for International Development, COEUR, and CARE.

The CARE Bolivia does provide a clear vision and mission statement, but their credibility and accountability to the people as of late is questionable. The information they provided did appear to be organized and valuable. However, as of the beginning of December 2017, CARE Bolivia allowed their website domain to expire. This sends a strong message to both the public, and international donors, that CARE Bolivia is not as credible as other established Bolivian NGOs. I find this to support that CARE Bolivia is not as organized as it has promoted itself to be, and that it tried hard to appeal to foreign donors. In the end, I believe this has damaged their internal structure, as the focus was not enough on their own operations, but rather on how to achieve a sustainable source of funds from the global north. This would support my hypothesis that the expectations that come with foreign aid decrease the overall effectiveness of NGO programs.

Bolivian Youth Education Statistics and Analysis

While UNICEF Bolivia, CARE Bolivia, and STC Bolivia are all enthusiastic about their influences on children's education in Bolivia, the overall statistics provided by the World Bank at the end of 2016 are not as promising. While there is a steady increase in both primary and lower secondary school completion from 2005 to 2015, at the end of 2016 these numbers decreased significantly.



Key:	
■	Primary completion rate, both sexes
■	Lower secondary completion rate, both sexes

	Primary Completion Rate	Lower Secondary Completion Rate
2015	21,235.2	17,667.4
2016	2,024.7	1,437.6

When comparing the numbers of children completing primary and lower secondary education at the end of 2016 to the Bolivian youth population overall, the numbers are staggering. I found that roughly .057% of children completed primary school in 2016 and .041% of children completed lower secondary school in 2016. To get these approximations, I took the most recent Bolivian demographic information, which breaks down the Bolivian population into age ranges. I believe these numbers were extremely low due to the fact that I had to use age ranges, and not specific ages, to find this information. The youngest age range included is from ages 0-14 grouped together. I used the statistical information from this age range, as there is no specified age during which Bolivian children will complete either of these stages of schooling. It may vary widely depending on the personal abilities of the child and the financial situation of the family. It is not uncommon for Bolivian youth to take off certain years of school due to economic hardship.

NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN YOUTH EDUCATION

Because there are so many factors influencing what age children start and finish school, if they do indeed complete their primary or lower secondary education, I believe my calculated numbers are not very reliable. However, I find it valuable to leave these numbers in my research as a testament to the frustration and difficulty in trying to access and produce statistical information reflecting education completion by Bolivian youth.

While there was a steady increase in the numbers of children completing primary and lower secondary education from 2004 to 2015, it appears that this initial increase and the staggering drop of numbers in 2016 are not related to the influence of NGO programs, but rather political and economic events. While they may have had an influence on the small growth in numbers from 2004 to 2015, this is impossible to discern without access to consistent annual reports on educational program successes and statistics as well as yearly finances. I theorize that the drastic spike in primary and lower secondary education in 2005 resulted from the election of the first indigenous president, Evo Morales, as he made efforts to alter the structure of Bolivian education, politics, and economics to better support the majority indigenous population of Bolivia. Particularly, Evo Morales took strides in implementing new policy to make education more accessible and inclusive for indigenous populations.

The obvious plunge in education statistics in 2015 perhaps stems more from economic factors rather than a lack of NGO effectiveness. A large drought in the past two years has drastically influenced the economic sector of the country, leaving many in need of more work to pay for potable water for their families. This however, is only speculation and requires a more detailed analysis of Bolivian education. Because it seems that political and economic factors take such a toll on child enrollment in and completion of school, these numbers need to be analyzed in their relation to these other influences, as they are so tightly intertwined.

KAYLY BELUSH

I determine that these drastic fluxes in education completion data did not originate from NGO influence after looking at the time span under which the three organizations I researched had been established and working in Bolivia. UNICEF has been working in Bolivia since 1950, CARE since 1976, and Save the Children since 1985. If these organizations were the primary ones drastically impacting education completion by Bolivian youth education, then the World Bank statistics would have shown changes before the spike in 2005.

Conclusion

Determining the influence of internationally recognized NGOs working in Bolivian youth education was difficult to measure, and I did not find long-term success. Statistics and reports found were inconsistent, making the data found less reliable. The lack of data infrastructure in Bolivia led my work overall to remain largely inconclusive in terms of statistical information and to be based largely on qualitative data and theories on NGO success. Although these three organizations did not appear to have any sort of significant influence on the education completion overall in-country, the program reports did reflect an increase in the number of children positively influenced in the sponsorship schools. However, these sponsored schools are centered in larger, more urban areas such as La Paz, Cochabamba, Sucre, and Potosí to name a few. Many rural communities are isolated from the positive influence that NGOs do have on youth education, as education infrastructure becomes even more sparse the further one travels into rural Bolivia. It would be valuable to study the influence that smaller, local NGOs have that work specifically in isolated regions of the country.

All three of the researched organizations displayed a heavy dependence on aid from the global north to fund their programs, lessening program sustainability in education. This

NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN YOUTH EDUCATION

dependency impacts the accountability that organizations have towards their target populations. Funds come with strings attached, and the political and/or economic expectations tied to foreign funding can negatively impact communities with the greatest need. I found that receiving international funds does not guarantee effective programming. When comparing country reports, the sources of international funds varied over the years, showing that NGOs often only receive money from large institutions in the global north for a few years at a time. The competitiveness of the NGO atmosphere in the global south puts non-profits in the position of forever searching for more funding and always seeking out the best way to appeal to donors. Donors' expectations on how to utilize these funds complicate matters for NGOs, and these expectations are difficult to break away from. Perhaps, to help diminish the negative effects of this issue, NGOs could refocus their branding techniques and appeal to less-restrictive donors. This process, however, would be slow, and it would take time to establish strong donors in this area.

While the accountability and credibility of NGOs to their public does seem to be lacking, this could improve by establishing measures to explain to the public exactly how the organization plans to hold itself responsible. This would give the organization a structured guideline on how to measure their successes or failures in representing the needs of the populations they serve as well as create a greater sense of trust throughout the local community. By taking a measure as small as this, NGOs may find themselves being much more effective in serving the needs of those they seek to help.

It was disappointing that the lack of data led to a largely inconclusive conclusion in terms of the direct impact that NGOs have on completion of primary and lower secondary education for Bolivian youth. For future research in this area, focusing on one NGO would yield more comprehensive results. While the numbers found in this data were disheartening, the work of

KAYLY BELUSH

NGOs is much more than simply increasing statistics of children completing school or literacy rates among adults. Regardless of their effectiveness when it comes to statistics, NGOs undoubtedly have a strong impact on the mentality of the communities that they work in. While they may not always reach their goals, they help instill values in both youth and adults alike of empowerment, equality, and help push and support them in their will to survive in a world that seems to be built against the impoverished. For this reason, it is important to support NGOs in the future years. While many organizations in the global south are unorganized, it will take trust to help them grow and become a greater influence. As donors from the global north, it is important to believe that NGOs in fact do know how to best serve their target populations, and that they will do what is right in support those who need it most.

NGO EFFECTIVENESS: THE
IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN
YOUTH EDUCATION

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KAYLY BELUSH

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NGO EFFECTIVNESS: THE
IMPACT ON BOLIVIAN
YOUTH EDUCATION

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