

Transparency and coordination are needed to improve public health outcomes and resource allocation for the \$300B Global NGO and charitable organization market.

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Executive Summary

The global NGO and charitable organization market is a billion-dollar industry. Most NGOs work in isolation despite the widely held belief that unorganized humanitarian efforts tally substantial costs in terms of resources wasted, poor accountability and sub-optimal public health outcomes.^{1,2,3,4,5,6} Multiple forms of coordination have been tried with limited results. An artificial intelligence-based database could add transparency and facilitate coordination.

Background

The global Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and charitable organization market was estimated to be worth \$291,030,000,000 in 2022 and is growing at 8.8%.⁷ The total number of NGOs at work in the world is unknown but is estimated to be in the millions.⁸ The United Nations (UN), although internationally recognized to be a central voice in world affairs,⁹ wields little power to evoke more than voluntary cooperation between groups.^{10,11,13} Efforts to improve NGO effectiveness have focused on creating coalitions and inter-coordination between humanitarian groups,^{9,12,13,14,15} accountability and transparency of major funders,^{4,10,11,16,17} and better understanding recipient needs.^{18,19} Current attempts to increase transparency and coordination rely heavily on voluntary member participation. The result is individualized, partial depositories which have only increased overall fragmentation, duplication and waste.

Artificial intelligence database technology has the ability to create meaningfully linked datasets without the need for human data entry.^{20,21} "Machine learning algorithms can be used to automatically extract information from unstructured data sources such as social media feeds, news articles, [and other websites], and add them to the database. Natural language processing (NLP) techniques can be used to analyze and categorize the data, making it easier to search and retrieve."^{22,23}

Policy Options

1. Mandate all UN member states to share information regarding international NGO activity quarterly. Publish a searchable database of NGO names and mission locations with their objectives. Contact information with planned or completed mission dates would be available with appropriate UN clearance.
 - + Creates a standardized, searchable platform of information
 - The volume of stakeholders makes data organization an untenable undertaking with costly maintenance.
 - Member states do not currently collect this information internally
 - Unenforceable

2. Expand voluntary involvement in the Partnership Platform¹⁰
 - + Consistent UN branding for all UN based programs adds legitimacy
 - + Inter-NGO cooperation is a proven method of increasing effectiveness
 - Significant investment has already been made with only a tiny fraction of the world's NGOs participating

3. Add artificial intelligence-based internet search capability to the Partnership Platform
 - + Automatically populate and maintain a database of worldwide NGO activity
 - + Draws on freely available information from all stakeholder groups
 - + Established trusted platform currently in place
 - + May enable data analysis to assess NGO effectiveness
 - Requires human oversight for quality maintenance

Recommendation

I recommend the UN expand the Partnership Platform to include an automated, AI-based depository of current internet-accessible information on the world's NGOs, categorized by organization, location, field, date, and funding source. Requiring UN Partnership status for access mitigates security risks inherent in coalescing data. Human fact-checking of auto-generated reports would be highly encouraged. Targeted marketing materials could be produced to promote NGO inter-cooperation and the use of appropriate tools for safety and growth. Correlating NGO activity with changes in recipient need analysis becomes the standard of measuring effectiveness.

Find Partners Easily – Incentivize Cooperation / Education – Track Progress with Data

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