

**NGO ESTABLISHMENT AND  
OPERATION IN ETHIOPIA**



**Christian Relief and  
Development Association  
(CRDA)**

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## INTRODUCTION

Born out of a crises and set up as an association of NGOs, by the good will of 20 church based agencies, 33 years later, its membership has grown in number and diversity.

The Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) has been working, with its ever increasing membership, in bringing about a better life for the poor and marginalized sectors of society. By first rallying to save the lives of people from hunger and starvation and rehabilitating these and later on providing them access to basic necessities of life, it has made significant contributions in bringing about a better future for the less fortunate.

In Ethiopia, the number of NGOs/CSOs has increased from time to time. The membership of CRDA is also increasing with the wide scope of involvement in more development activities. Currently the number of CRDA member agencies reached 253 out of which 175 are indigenous NGOs and faith based agencies.

A number of CRDA member NGOs are involved in policy advocacy and lobbying along with other diversified areas of concern to the CRDA membership.

Majority of CRDA member NGOs are engaged in the following activities and operate in all regions of the country.

- Agricultural Development
- Child right advocacy and formal and non formal basic education
- Support to disabled people
- Food Security
- Gender
- Health
- HIV/AIDS
- Income generating activities/schemes
- Institutional Development and Local Capacity Building
- Natural resource conservation and environmental development
- Water and sanitation
- Refugee/repatriation

- Research
- Training
- Disaster preparedness and relief
- Rehabilitation

## **BACKGROUND TO NGOS**

### **Who are NGOs?**

- Voluntary organizations established with the commitment to help disadvantaged or marginalized sectors of society;
- Not-for-profit (not self-serving) organizations established to support and help less fortunate communities and members of society with little or no income.
- Non Governmental Organizations established in such a way that any support they appeal for or secure is undertaken independent from Government.

### **Types of NGOs**

NGOs operating in Ethiopia could be categorized into two main categories:

#### **1. Indigenous NGOs**

These are NGOs established in the country by either Ethiopians or non-Ethiopians.

#### **2. International NGOs**

These are NGOs, which have their head offices abroad and obtain support from those offices.

Again from within these NGOs another category could be established:

1. Secular NGOs
2. Religious NGOs

Sectoral classification of NGOs is also possible, i.e. NGOs focusing on various sectors such as water, health, children, integrated rural/urban development, etc.

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## History and Facts on NGOs

Voluntary organizations are an old phenomenon in Ethiopia and were established based on social, religious, locality or kinship criteria. They existed as self help institutions providing support in times of hardship. For instance, organizations for labour sharing known as DEBO and for religious purposes known as mahaber, senbete, tertim, existed. Missionary organizations were also voluntary organizations some of which grew to become NGOs.

These organizations have played an important role in Ethiopia's development by laying the foundation for Ethiopia's modern health and education system.

NGOs first started to appear in Ethiopia in the 1960's and these were mostly of European origin. In the 1970's more NGOs emerged especially in response first to the 1973/74 famine and later on to the 1983/84 famine. The number of NGOs continued to grow after the overthrow of the military regime (Derg) in 1991. However, their activities were principally limited to relief and rehabilitation before they became more development oriented.

NGOs fall into their own classification of development agencies where they;

- play an important role in the provision of services where no government facilities exist;
- can develop and pilot innovative approaches on a small scale; and
- have a good track-record in promoting participatory development.

The growth of NGOs in Ethiopia has been robust over the last two to three decades. The number of NGOs, especially indigenous NGOs, has been rising. The number doubled in the last five years or so. About 500 NGOs operate development programs across the country today. (NGO Contribution 2005)

Their capacity to play a discernible role in the country's development agenda has been steadily growing.

According to a study on NGO Contribution, 2005, the major achievements of NGOs in the period 1997—2001 are in the areas of food security, health and water, education, capacity building, physical infrastructures and emergency operations. During this time, some 360 projects were implemented by 271 NGOs (188 local and 83 international) during the period.

#### **HOW TO ESTABLISH AN NGO IN ETHIOPIA**

Both foreign and local NGOs can be established in Ethiopia. However, knowing the requirements for establishment is necessary in order to be registered with the Government of Ethiopia and operate legally.

##### **(A) Registration Guideline for Foreign (international) NGOs.**

- Any foreign NGO, which intends to carry out activities, shall produce its written application to the NGO Registration Office at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).
- The Office will provide four copies of an application form to be filled by the applicant (applying organization).
- The applicant ought to fill out carefully all the questions and in addition, is expected to produce various documents.

##### **(B) Registration Guideline for Local (indigenous) NGOs**

- Any local NGO, which intends to carry out activities, shall produce its written application to the NGO Registration Office at the Ministry of Justice.
- If established in Ethiopia and is led by Ethiopians and operates in more than one Region of the country or its donor (s) supports programs found in more than one region, various supporting documents will be required by the applicant NGO:

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### **(C) Operational Agreement with DPPA**

Following registration with the Ministry of Justice and obtaining of Certificate, NGOs are required to sign Operational Agreement with the Federal Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA). The applying NGO is required to:

- Produce copy of the certificate of registration with the Ministry of Justice. The DPPA is also informed of the registration of an NGO by the Ministry of Justice through copy of a letter issued to the NGO.

Upon submission of certificate of registration, the applying NGO will be provided with three copies of Operational Agreement forms along with Basic Information on new NGOs by the DPPA to be filled, signed by the head of the organization (the person acknowledged by Ministry of Justice) and sealed and returned to DPPA.

The Deputy General Director of DPPA will sign the Agreement form on behalf of the DPPA. One copy of the Agreement signed and sealed by both the NGO and DPPA will be given to the NGO.

Following the signing of Operational Agreement with DPPA, an NGO is expected to enter into specific project agreement with the concerned regional government offices depending upon the type and the nature of the project prior to the implementation of a project.

***For details on documents required by the NGO registration Office, please contact either the MoJ or CRDA.***

### **HOW TO BECOME A CRDA MEMBER**

Any Civil Society Organisation shall be eligible to become and remain a member subject to the following criteria:

- A valid certificate of registration with the relevant government authority.
- That the organisation is active in pursuing its mission, including current engagement with its constituency where appropriate.
- Acceptance of and adherence to the Memorandum and Articles of the Association.

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- Acceptance of and adherence to
    - the Code of Conduct for NGOs in Ethiopia, or
    - any other code of conduct, which the General Assembly of the Association may from time to time adopt either in place of the Code of Conduct for NGOs in Ethiopia, or in addition.
  - Recognition and respect of other standards and international conventions to which the Association is a signatory.
  - Payment of membership fees and dues agreed from time to time by the Membership Assembly of the Association.
  - The NGO should have an agreement with an appropriate government agency.
  - The NGO should be a voluntary, humanitarian and/ or development organization which has been operational in Ethiopia for not less than six months and has an office base and representative in the country.
  - The NGO should be able to exhibit transparency and integrity in its operations.

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