
Expatriate Training in International Nongovernmental Organizations: A Model for Research

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In light of the massive tsunami relief efforts that were still being carried out by humanitarian organizations around the world when this article went to press, this article points out a lack of human resources development research in international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and proposes a conceptual model for future empirical research. This article reviews the three related research areas of NGO history, volunteer training, and expatriate development; discusses the possibility of integrating the theory from these three areas; and finally builds a model for further empirical studies for expatriate training in INGOs.

Keywords: *expatriate training; international training; nongovernmental organizations*

The purpose of this article is to construct a conceptual model with respect to expatriate training in international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs). Such a conceptual model is needed in the field of HRD for two reasons. First, as NGOs' roles become more pivotal internationally, their needs for more sophisticated training design increase. Influenced by the climate of globalization, the international participation of NGOs in global issues has become prominent. For example, according to the American Red Cross (2004, 2005), the recovery effort and the disaster relief operation following the massive earthquake and tsunami in Southeast Asia that occurred on December 26, 2004, will become the largest in history. In today's global village, due to political or democratic limitations, governments are hard-pressed to solve multinational problems such as natural disasters, the movement of refugees, environmental pollution, poverty, and the provision of emergency humanitarian aid. NGOs, through their efforts at international cooperation, often play an important role in managing these problems. However, although the international service of NGOs has received increasing attention, there is but a limited body of literature that systematically discusses how NGOs can provide training for employees and volunteers

involved in international work. As more NGO people are devoting themselves to working in underdeveloped foreign lands, little research has been done on how to prepare these corps to work in a different culture and environment. Training for those NGO international workers is critical because it does not merely help to improve service quality for local people; equally important, it can help these service providers understand how to maintain safety, prevent accidents, and avoid cultural conflicts.

Second, current literature lacks an integrated model to understand expatriate training in INGOs. Although studies in different arenas can contribute knowledge associated with this issue, they all have some limitations. For example, studies that discussed training in voluntary sectors mainly focused on domestic organizations, not on NGOs and their expatriates. Studies that discussed international expatriate development mainly focused on business companies, finding few implications for NGOs' unique characteristics. Finally, studies that concerned NGOs operations mainly drove the discussion from an international political perspective, rather than from that of workplace learning or staff development. All these studies relate to the issue of expatriate training in INGOs, but in a fragmented manner. An integrated framework is needed for this interdisciplinary research issue.

In addition to constructing a conceptual model, another purpose of this article is to elaborate the process by which such construction can be done. In the literature, a considerable number of studies used multiperspectives in their conceptual framework or conceptual model (e.g., Chang, 2004; Hutchinson & Quartaro, 1993; Lim, 1999; Peterson, 1997), but few articulated the process of how the framework or model was built. For example, in the article "International HRD: What we know and don't know," Peterson (1997) used three perspectives in his framework to review IHRD; the perspectives included the following: systems theory, a cultural meaning-making approach, and social-learning theory. However, little was addressed with respect to why these three aspects had been chosen and how concepts from these separated areas could be integrated. Expatriate training in INGOs is a relatively new and interdisciplinary topic. The first challenge that confronts the researcher is where to start. In the ocean of literature, where is an appropriate place for HRD researchers to place the anchor and begin their investigations? This article describes such a development process and provides background knowledge to other researchers who are also concerned about the increasingly important role of HRD in NGOs.

In this article, I first review the three related research areas of NGO history, volunteer training, and expatriate development. With regard to NGO history, this article discusses NGOs' definitions, changing connotations, cultural influence, and increasing needs for management improvement and training. In regards to volunteer training, this article discusses new types of volunteers, training outcomes, and training in nonprofit and profit organiza-

tions. In expatriate development, this article elaborates on several empirical studies, makes suggestions associated with the training design and outcomes of cross-cultural training. Following the literature review, I discuss the possibility of integrating the theory from these three areas and build a conceptual model for further empirical study of expatriate training in INGOs. Finally, I elaborate how the proposed model adds new perspectives from NGO contexts, explain the limitations of the model, and indicate implications and potential questions for future research.

The History of Nongovernmental Organizations

Definitions and Development

In 1945, the term *nongovernmental organization* (NGO) appeared in Article 71 of the United Nations Charter. Martens (2002) defined NGOs as “formal (professionalized) independent societal organizations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level” (p. 282). In addition, Mercer (2002) defined NGOs as those organizations that are officially established, run by employed staff, well-supported, and are often relatively large and well-resourced (p. 6). The World Bank defines NGOs as “private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development” (cited in *Categorizing NGOs*, 2005, p. 2).

In the 20th century, the need for multinational economic policies, international disaster relief, and global problem solving shaped the growth of NGOs and NGO alliances. Since the 1980s, this growth has intensified as people have come to realize the government’s inability to put the welfare of underdeveloped areas ahead of short-term self-interest. The literature on NGOs and the debate about their role and meaning significantly increased in the 1980s (Mercer, 2002). In the 1990s, NGOs became even more involved in poverty alleviation, infrastructure projects, and social development in low-income countries. Moreover, NGOs have been viewed as a democratizing element of civil society (Porter, 2003, pp. 131-132). As “disillusionment with government’s handling of the welfare state” has grown, the development of NGOs has come to be seen as a key alternative to resolving international problems (Eisenberg, 2000; Gibelman & Gelman, 2001, p. 49).

Most research discusses NGO development from the perspective of international politics, whereas human resources and training activities have, for the most part, been overlooked. What follows is a discussion of the important shifts that have occurred in the meaning and composition of NGOs and increasing requests for improving management quality and enhancing training function in NGOs.

Changing Connotation

Because initially the term *NGO* first appeared in a UN article that provided NGOs with legitimacy to provide consultation for the United Nations, the term *NGO* was primarily understood as referring to international organizations (Martens, 2002), and this was a fundamental difference between NGOs and the term *NPOs* (nonprofit organizations). In other words, originally the term *NGOs* was often used in UN documents and carried the connotation of being international. It particularly referred to organizations that usually received international funding (Mercer, 2002) and aimed to redeem the hard-pressed government in managing humanitarian problems, such as poverty, environmental protection, and community development (definition from the World Bank, cited in *Categorizing NGOs*, 2005).

However, such connotations have been changed as the *NGO* sector has experienced exponential growth. The scope of the *NGO* concept takes in more than international organizations; rather, it includes community-based organizations that serve a specific population in a narrow geographic area, national organizations that operate in individual developing countries, and international organizations that have headquarters in developed countries and operate in more than one developing country (classified by the World Bank, cited in *Categorizing NGOs*, 2005, para. 4). In such a wide usage, “the term *NGO* can be applied to any non-profit organization which is independent from government” (*Categorizing NGOs*, 2005, para. 2). Such a change in connotation partially explains why in the literature the terms *NGO* and *NPO* frequently are used interchangeably. Actually, both *NGOs* and *NPOs* have several characteristics in common, in that they are organized, private, voluntary, self-governing, and nonprofit distribution agencies (Salamon & Anheir, 1996).

In sum, as *NGOs* developed, authors used various terms to represent them, such as *NPOs*, third sectors, private and/or independent voluntary organizations, activist organizations, and citizens’ organizations. These various terms demonstrate overlapping meanings and illustrate that the connotation of *NGO* has become less specific and more diverse in recent years. The term has come to include various levels of society—regional, national, and international (Martens, 2002). In this study, the term *INGO* refers to those *NGOs* that are involved in international humanitarian assistance in particular.

Cultural Influences on the Roles and Strategies of NGOs

Although the connotation of the term *NGO* has become more diverse, its meaning can vary in different cultures and political systems. According to Fisher (1998) and Ma (2002, 2003), for example, in Western Europe, an

NGO tends to indicate a nonprofit organization that operates internationally. In Eastern Europe, NGO often refers to all kinds of charitable and nonprofit organizations. The official Chinese definition of NGOs does not include *self-governance*, a fundamental characteristic of the Western definition of NGO.

Cultural factors affect not only the definition of NGOs but also their operations. In other words, the culture and socioeconomic background of a particular target group would affect NGOs' operational strategies. For instance, after examining 33 NGO projects for Hungarian and Roma (Gypsy) minorities in Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Hungary, Stroschein (2002, p. 1) found that the strategies of those projects varied according to the particular group being addressed. NGO projects emphasizing Hungarian minorities tended to employ a *network strategy* to increase interaction and communication between Hungarians and Romanians, Slovaks, and Ukrainians. However, projects for the Roma tended to avoid such a strategy because of stark inequality in social status between the Roma and other ethnic groups in the region. Given such a socioeconomic background, projects for the Roma focus on status raising and self-advocacy. In addition, Cappai and Queffelec (2001) used *Aide Medicale Internatioale* (AMI), a French international medical NGO, as an example and explained the importance of adapting to the target group's culture. For instance in Haiti, local pregnant women are reluctant to go to modern hospitals for delivery. Therefore, instead of training modern midwives, AMI has chosen to train Traditional Birth Attendants who are already well integrated into and accepted by the rural community (p. 42). These examples indicate the extent to which culture influences NGOs' strategies for working with different racial groups.

In summary, NGOs can fulfill diverse roles. The issue of culture has rightfully received attention because of its importance to the self-definition and operational strategies of NGOs.

NGO Management Improvement and Training Needs

In the literature on NGOs, they are generally assumed to be "good" because of the values they have and the missions they carry out. However, in the past few years, researchers have begun to critically reflect upon such one-dimensional thinking. Tvedt (2002) pointed out that although NGOs received both praise and criticism, mainstream research on NGOs has tended to ignore the criticism while supporting the notion of NGOs and their contributions to global civil society and democracy. Similar to Tvedt's viewpoint, Mercer (2002) found that NGOs are often assumed to have positive effects on civil society and democratization because people believe NGOs can pluralize the institutional arena, increase citizen participation

(especially of poor and marginalized groups), press for change, and provide alternative perspectives and policies. As the United States Agency for International Development (USAID; USAID, 1995) states in one policy document, "a flourishing NGO community is essential to effective and efficient civil society. Civil society organizes political participation just as markets organize economic participation in the society" (p. 2). However, without carefully examining the historical and geographic contexts in the local area (e.g., governmental systems, social differentiation, ethnical conflicts, or religious custom), such an assumption seems to oversimplify the role of NGOs and their possible intertwinement with local socioeconomic environments. For example, Pfeiffer (2003) conducted an ethnographic case study with regard to primary health care in Mozambique and found that "the deluge of NGOs and their expatriate workers over the last decade has fragmented the local health system, undermined local control of health programs, and contributed to growing local social inequality" (p. 725).

In addition to reflecting upon such assumptions, researchers have been troubled by the increasing number of NGO scandals. In their article, "Very Public Scandals: Nongovernmental Organizations in Trouble," Gibelman and Gelman (2001) analyzed publicized incidents of alleged NGO wrongdoings. They identified more than 20 allegations from 1998 to 2000 about NGOs involved in the financing or delivery of health and humanitarian services. The allegations included fraud, theft, embezzlement, acceptance of bribes, sexual harassment, money laundering, mismanagement, looting of funds, and flawed records. To correct these wrongdoings, NGO literature increasingly calls for management accountability (e.g., Dickey, 1999; Greene, 1998; McDonald, 1997). The critics have suggested that NGOs should (a) clarify board responsibilities; (b) establish and maintain internal controls to eliminate fraud or deception; (c) promote board development by providing systematic and ongoing board training, education, and assessment; and (d) increase management training for the staff (Gibelman & Gelman, 2001, pp. 61-62). Training and education were identified as a critical means to improve NGO management quality. Similarly, Hilhorst (2002) investigated humanitarian NGOs and suggested that training and accreditation for NGO workers could enhance the management quality of humanitarian assistance. In sum, although society generally has certain romantic myths about NGOs' pure virtue and status, the various allegations have raised the public's awareness of the need for more NGO accountability. To improve management, NGOs are searching for sophisticated training and education for their staff and volunteers, which indicates a need for involving more HRD professionals. As volunteer human resources are pivotal to the NGO workforce, some even being completely operated by voluntary, non-paid staff (Betcherman et al., 1998), the following section will discuss research on volunteer training.

Volunteer Training

INGOs rely on one type of volunteer to accomplish administrative work or deliver international humanitarian assistance. These volunteers are perceived as *unpaid staff* who receive no salary or limited stipend, but they often represent the vast majority of volunteers in the nonprofit sector (Wilensky & Hansen, 2001). According to a survey held in the United States in 2000, the total number of adult volunteers was 83.9 million, and the total dollar value of volunteer time was approximately 239.2 billion (*Independent Sector*, 2001). As the numbers grow, how to develop volunteers becomes a core inquiry in NGO and NPO management.

Volunteer training is generally thought to be an effective means of enhancing volunteers' capabilities and knowledge for their missions. Well-designed training programs can benefit both the volunteers and the organizations that they serve and the perceived benefits also affect volunteer recruitment, retention, personal growth, and performance quality (Farber, 2001; Keith, 2000). However, as investment in volunteer training increases, some authors have suggested NGO management pay attention to the emergence of new types of volunteers and the organizations' ability to adapt to such a change (McCurley & Lynch, 1997; Muehrchk, 1991). In the next section, I will elaborate the new types of volunteers, discuss outcomes of volunteer training, and finally indicate the differences between training in profit and nonprofit organizations.

New Volunteer Types

In the past decade, the style of volunteer involvement has changed. Contrasted with the traditional *long-term volunteer*, McCurley and Lynch (1997) suggested that more people choose to become *short-term volunteers*, getting involved in volunteer work in diverse ways and with more flexibility. Different ways of involvement generate various types of volunteers; McCurley and Lynch categorized them into 8 new volunteer types (p. 6):

1. Workplace volunteers
2. Retiree volunteers
3. Alternative sentencing volunteers
4. Professional volunteers
5. Episodic volunteers (individuals who volunteer from event to event in different organizations)
6. Transitional volunteers (individuals who take part in volunteer activities while changing their lifestyles)
7. Unemployed volunteers
8. Stipended volunteers

Faced with the new types of volunteers, a major problem for nonprofit organizations is their relative inability to adapt to the changing volunteer profile (Hutchinson & Quartaro, 1993). Muehrchik (1991) suggested management in nonprofit sectors could be improved by not only adjusting volunteers' work schedules but also by developing a whole set of new expectations, training, supervision, and recruitment procedures.

Outcomes of Volunteer Training

In the literature, plenty of studies discuss volunteer training (e.g., Buchanan, 2000; Coffman & Coffman, 1993; Hutchinson & Quartaro, 1993), but generally the direct outcomes of training are less often documented (Keith, 2000, p. 251).

Many research studies of volunteer training show a positive relation between the training and the outcomes (e.g., Eckert & Falvo, 1993; Farber, 2001; Most & Guerny Jr., 1983). However, Keith (2000) collected questionnaire data from 754 volunteer ombudsmen in nursing facilities and found that participation in training before becoming an ombudsman did not necessarily diminish worry or enhance efficacy. Such an inconsistency indicates that positive outcomes of training may be attributable to the "type and quality of training activities that varied across the settings in which the volunteers worked" (p. 258). In the preceding statement, the term, *settings* is particularly important for training in INGOs as their volunteers and service are delivered in various environments around the world.

In addition, although the literature tends to be uniformly positive about the usefulness of training, Scheier (1986) warned almost two decades ago that training for staff and volunteers in nonprofit sectors might be a waste of time. He pointed out that every year in North America, the training sessions for volunteer coordinators numbered more than 3,000, and the total attendance probably exceeded 100,000; but he conceded, "I am convinced that 90 to 95% of this learning is lost" (p. 11). By "lost," he meant the training content was never transferred to the workplace. Calling himself "one of the wasters," he portrayed the so-called good volunteer workshop as being much like good theater in which participants appreciate the experience of a great performance and may be deeply moved, but they do not expect to change anything after they get back home. Similarly, Sullivan, Sharma, and Stacy (2002) evaluated a 4-hour training program for 14 lay health volunteers and found that although the results between pretest and posttest highlighted statistically significant changes in participants' knowledge, outcome expectations, and self-efficacy, no significance was noted for a change in behavior. Therefore, even after almost two decades, the question Scheier (1986) raised, how to increase transfer and avoid waste, is still a challenge for many of today's volunteer trainers.

Training in Profit and Nonprofit Organizations

Training in volunteer organizations uses many models and principles developed among for-profit business corporations. Some authors have argued that training in profit and nonprofit organizations should be equivalent; the standards and procedures (e.g., needs assessment, job descriptions, and task analyses) for nonprofits should be as rigid as those for profit sectors (“What’s different about training volunteers?”, 1984, pp. 20-25). As Wilson (1984) cogently put it, “Consider volunteers as non-paid staff, but never lower standards for them” (p. 51).

However, some other studies have suggested that we should still be careful about the difference between these two types of organizations. For example, a significant difference between paid employees and volunteers is “money.” Therefore, to satisfy the nonpaid staff, money should be replaced by involvement, recognition, personal satisfaction, and skill development that can be transferred to other career opportunities. Scott and Caldwell (1996) suggested that care and support of volunteers by volunteer coordinators, including training and educating volunteers, as well as recognizing their achievements, are important and beneficial to organizations and their volunteers. In regards to training format, compared to profit organizations, volunteer organizations often do not have large training budgets, and therefore, a workshop or conference sponsored by a consortium of neighboring volunteer organizations becomes the most common solution (Wilson, 1984, p. 52).

In sum, in the nonprofit organization, a changing work environment, the often part-time nature of the professional staff, the scarcity of budgetary resources, and the inherent limitations of the volunteer role make for a climate of “impermanence and improvisation” (Hutchinson & Quartaro, 1993, p. 95). Thus, there are limits to the extent to which voluntary organizations can follow the same standards as profit organizations. However, although it seems generally accepted that the special nature of the nonprofit sector should be taken into consideration before program planners directly apply theories from profit organizations, the field of training and development still needs more systematic studies that provide in-depth comparisons between these two types of organizations and the differences in their training.

The literature on expatriate training is reviewed in the next section. Expatriate training is critical for INGOs because they rely on many professional volunteers and staff who travel abroad to deliver services. For example, the Peace Corps, a U.S.-based INGO established in 1961, has recruited more than 170,000 volunteers providing humanitarian services in 130 countries (<http://www.peacecorps.org>). However, although those INGO expatriate workers play significant roles in international assistance, they sometimes suffer serious stress and frustration. They often need more learning oppor-

tunities to support their work and overcome mental challenges (Bjernelund, Lindmark, Diskett, & Garrett, 2004). The literature associated with expatriate development is used as a basis for developing a conceptual model of expatriate training later in the article.

Expatriate Development

In the past few decades, the growth of the global economy, multinational organizations, and intergovernmental and nongovernmental contacts has increased the number of expatriates. To accomplish international assignments, expatriates' cross-cultural competencies and sensibilities have grown in importance (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Zakaria, 2000). In the diverse global environment, the expatriate often plays a variety of roles and can be described as an explorer, refugee, mercenary, architect, outsider, and tightrope walker (Richardson & McKenna, 2002).

In the literature on expatriates working in multinational organizations, many studies have reviewed the problems and difficulties that expatriates face and have called for more preparation and training. Rankis and Beebe (1982) revealed a number of factors contributing to expatriate executive failure, including culture shock, family problems, differences in managerial style and practice, insensitivity to host cultures, and overlooking the geography, history, and language of the host nation. McFarland (1996) interviewed some U.S. expatriates in the Netherlands, Belgium, and France and found that the expatriates felt unprepared, misunderstood, and forgotten. In addition, Selmer (2000) studied the work values of 67 Swedish expatriate bosses and 104 local Hong Kong managers. The study revealed that Swedish bosses correctly estimated only one third of local middle managers' work values, which indicated a need for cross-cultural training for expatriate managers. In addition, Li (2002) used expatriate teachers in China as a sample and found that miscommunication of teacher-student role conceptualizations and expectations were central issues. The study suggested that expatriate teachers should understand their roles in cross-cultural settings and find a pedagogical fit in intercultural classroom communication. These studies revealed the need for expatriates to receive specialized training.

Suggestions for Course Design

In the past decades, many authors have provided suggestions for designing expatriate development programs. Table 1 shows several examples.

In addition to the suggestions for curriculum design, some scholars have been concerned about the time and place of training, stressing the importance of after-arrival training in the host country (Forster, 2000; Suutari & Burch, 2001).

TABLE 1: Suggestions for Expatriate Development

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Suggestions</i>
Tung (1982)	Cross-cultural training for expatriates should include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information about geography, climate, accommodation, and schools 2. Introduction of local culture, values, and customs 3. Cultural assimilation training 4. Language training 5. Sensibility training to develop attitudinal flexibility 6. Field experience
Oddou (1991)	Expatriate training and support should include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language training 2. More time off to prepare for the move 3. A clarification of performance criteria 4. Consistent expectations between the domestic and the international site management teams 5. Initiating regular communications with the expatriates 6. Having assigned mentors 7. Providing a social network for expatriate families
Brewster and Pickard (1994)	After investigating cross-cultural training in European cooperation, they suggested training should develop expatriates' <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness of culture and its influence 2. Knowledge to survive and succeed in a different culture 3. Skills to understand and handle emotional challenges
Zakaria (2000)	The author suggested a new <i>cross-cultural training</i> model, which included two types of training programs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experiential training to trigger affective and behavioral responses, which are the basis of intercultural effectiveness skills, and thus enhance psychological adjustment 2. Cognitive training to trigger cognitive responses, especially cultural awareness and interpersonal skills, and to enhance sociocultural adjustment.
Petranek (2004)	The author suggested a "four C approach" for global human resource development: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cooperation 2. Collaboration 3. Communication 4. Culture

Finally, the influence of expatriates' cultural backgrounds has also received attention. Osman-Gani (2000) surveyed 501 American, German, Japanese, Korean, and Singaporean managers working abroad and found significant differences in their views of types of training (including

predeparture, postarrival, repatriation, language, cross-cultural) and methods for appropriate delivery. The study indicated that expatriates' cultural background, corporate culture, and individual attitudes influenced these viewpoints (Van Reine & Trompenaars, 2000).

Outcomes of Cross-Cultural Training

Although many studies have supported the need for expatriate training (e.g., Mendenhall & Stahl, 2000; Selmer, 2000), some scholars have called for careful examination of training outcomes. A survey reported by Oddou (1991) pointed out that only 26% of the expatriates who received training believed that the training helped them to perform well. However, Oddou argued, "This doesn't mean training cannot be effective, but it is important to match the type of experience the expatriate will have with the corresponding training method and content" (p. 304).

Some researchers suggested that the effects of cross-cultural training for expatriates varied depending on their backgrounds (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Forster, 2000). Zakaria (2000) noted that due to differences in the impact of foreign cultures on expatriates, it is difficult to determine the influence of cross-cultural training on their overseas adjustment. Indeed, as cultural adjustment involves expatriates' (including their families') daily life experience, the training outcomes could be explicit or implicit, short- or long-term, and work- or life-related, which increases the difficulty of developing a standardized scale by which to measure a program's effectiveness. To improve the measurement for the outcomes of expatriate training, Luthans and Farner (2002) developed a 360-degree feedback questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed particularly to evaluate expatriate cultural training and included six dimensions: technical competence, management skills, interpersonal skills, confidence and/or efficacy, leadership effectiveness, and cultural fit (p. 787).

Brewster and Pickard (1994), looking at the relation between training outcomes and support systems, tellingly found that with the same predeparture training, expatriates who received support from a local expatriate community after arrival adjusted better and tended to have positive feelings about the training they had received beforehand. In line with such a finding, Suutari and Burch (2001) also emphasized the importance of local support systems. They wrote that "on average expatriates perceived the host company support practices as necessary with regard to issues both outside the workplace and at the workplace" (p. 308). Therefore, support systems from organizations (e.g., a mentor) and from the host country (e.g., a local expatriate community) are important elements for successful adjustment. In other words, the influence of training outcomes may be oversimplified if we conduct a one-shot measurement after a course.

The research literature in three areas related to training in INGOs has been reviewed—the history of NGOs, volunteer training, and expatriate development. Based on this review, there are several reasons to suggest that *culture* is a prominent issue that would have critical influence on training functions in NGOs. First, based on the UN Article, NGOs are established in international contexts where different national cultures interact and confront each other frequently. Second, as NGOs cross country boundaries to assist in humanitarian needs or area development, the culture factor affects both the NGOs' internal actions (e.g., interaction between the headquarters and local affiliates) and external actions (e.g., the utilization of different strategies for different ethnic groups). Third, as NGOs send a great number of people abroad to provide service (e.g., the Peace Corps), how to appropriately equip those expatriate staff and/or volunteers to adjust to different cultures and handle conflicts is a major challenge for NGOs. Finally, because NGOs' expatriate staff and/or volunteers often come from diverse cultural backgrounds carrying different perceptions with regard to training, teaching, learning, and evaluation, how to design training programs to accommodate their differences, but still accomplish similar training outcomes would be another compelling task for HRD professionals. Based on the recognition that cultural factors significantly affect INGOs' operations, *expatriate program design* is a major component in the proposed conceptual model and *NGO environment* and *training in voluntary sectors* are proposed as supportive components.

A Conceptual Model of Expatriate Training in INGOs

The proposed model includes three components—expatriate program design, NGO environment, and training in voluntary sectors. This section discusses the important aspects associated with each perspective and elaborates on what is known about expatriate training and how the proposed model extends our understanding of this phenomenon.

The three components of the conceptual model are, in turn, composed of subordinate concepts. The *expatriate program design* component of the model has three major concepts—cross-cultural curriculum, training contexts, and transfer support systems. The *NGO environment* component of the model has three concepts—international missions, cultural influence, and training needs. Finally, the *training in voluntary sectors* component has three concepts—volunteer types, training resources, and trainee motivation. The relationship among the three components of the model is shown in Figure 1.

Expatriate Program Design

Cross-cultural curriculum. As expatriates often have to confront different cultures, the major question for program design is: What should be included in

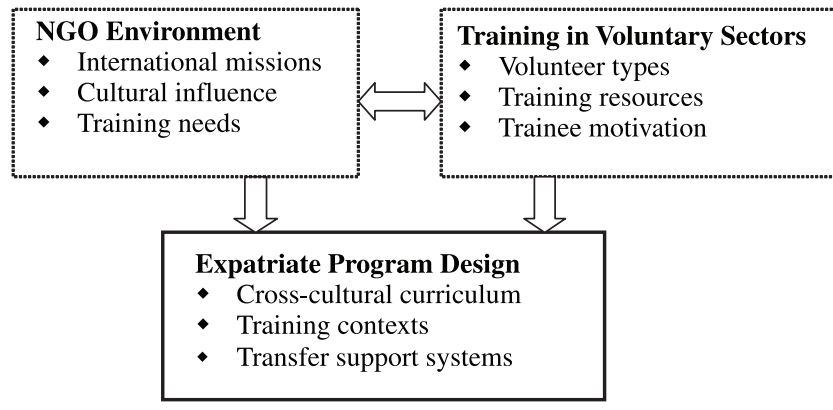


FIGURE 1: A Model of Expatriate Training in International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs)

the cross-cultural training? Generally, scholars suggest that cross-cultural curriculum should include an introduction associated with local information, language improvement, cultural awareness and/or sensibility, and emotion management (Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992; Brewster & Pickard, 1994; Ivancevich, 1969; McGrath-Champ & Yang, 2002; Oddou, 1991; Tung, 1982). These suggestions provide general guidelines, but lack specific explanation about how to collect, select, and arrange the curriculum. What should be included in the curriculum for expatriates in multinational cooperation and INGOs is different. For instance, for INGO expatriate medical corps, knowing whether local people accept blood checks or surgery is more important than knowing the nation's gross domestic products (GDP).

Training contexts. The main issue in training contexts is where and when to train. Whereas numerous studies have focused on predeparture training, some authors have noticed the importance of onsite training after expatriates arrive in the host countries (e.g., Forster, 2000; Mendenhall & Stahl, 2000; Ross, Churchill, & Zifkin, 2000; Suutari & Burch, 2001). However, we need to recognize that these approaches to INGO training could sometimes be problematic. For instance, during the massive tsunami emergency, there was limited onsite training available for volunteers from countries around the world. Such a design (onsite training) would be successful when the INGO has midterm or longterm projects but less effective when trained personnel are needed immediately. Because INGOs have such diverse approaches to involvement in local affairs, considering training contexts during program design becomes extremely important.

Transfer support systems. The major question in this aspect is how to provide the necessary support to enhance training transfer. Generally, the training

literature suggested that a supportive environment could catalyze training transfer. For instance, Baldwin and Ford (1988) suggested “work environment support” and “opportunity to use” were important input to enhance training transfer. Using drug and alcohol safety training in Australia as an example, Pidd (2004) examined the impact of workplace support on training transfer and suggested that both personal and situational factors would interact to influence learning and transfer. Furthermore, Hawley and Barnard (2005) studied a 2-week course for performance improvement that included 21 nuclear managers and further elaborated on how factors in work environment such as transfer climate, peer support, and supervisor support can influence training transfer. Focusing on expatriates, Brewster and Pickard (1994) pointed out the importance of local community support for the expatriates’ success. In addition, Suutari and Burch (2001) conducted a study in Finland and found a lack of support for expatriates in many multinational companies. They suggested that in addition to pre-departure training, companies should actively intervene in expatriates’ cultural adjustment and provide more support during the transfer process.

Derived from the existing literature, the proposed model identifies the cross-cultural curriculum, training contexts, and transfer support systems as critical aspects when considering expatriate training in NGOs. However, a significant limitation of existing expatriate literature is that most findings were drawn from business contexts; little consideration is given to the specific characteristics of the NGO environment or voluntary sectors. To address this deficiency, the conceptual model includes the NGO environment and the nonprofit sector as a unique context for expatriate training. These two major components of the model are discussed next.

NGO Environment

International missions. In spite of the involvement of some NGOs in domestic affairs, numerous NGOs are still involved in international humanitarian assistance. Generally, international missions can be divided into emergency relief, midterm assistance (e.g., construction work after a disaster), and long-term area development. For example, the Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), the INGO that received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999, defines itself as an international humanitarian aid organization that provides “emergency medical assistance” to populations in danger (MSF, 2000). In addition to different timeframes, the approaches taken to getting assistance also varied among INGOs, including how they obtained financial support, equipment donations, medical assistance, infrastructure development, education, engineering, and technology improvement. Different timeframes and approaches affect how an expatriate training program is designed by INGOs.

Cultural influence. The concept of *culture* is broad and seems to have unlimited meanings. Given the NGOs’ international connotation, the concept of cul-

ture, as adopted in this model, refers to people's diverse ethnic backgrounds and each nation's unique socioeconomic situation. The aspect of *cultural influence* in the model assumes that people's backgrounds and national socioeconomic contexts would affect NGOs' operation strategies, service types, assistance approaches, and logistic preparation, and that all of these factors could affect training design. Culture is also influenced by the nonprofit status of the organization, which, in turn, is expected to influence training.

Training needs. Higher expectations of INGOs now exist for management quality and accountability. Society asks not only whether they "do the right things," but also whether they "do things right." Such expectations indicate a new era for NGOs in which being professional and ethical become basic requirements. These requirements open a new learning window in INGOs and suggest more needs for expatriate training. However, although the existing literature includes much discussion with regard to needs assessment techniques, our knowledge about their application in an NGO environment is still significantly underdeveloped. Two fundamental questions should be asked: (a) How can the researcher assess INGOs' training needs at organizational, task, and personal levels? (b) How can INGOs' training needs in service areas be evaluated, especially when many of them are abroad in remote, underdeveloped areas where it is often difficult to keep in contact?

Training in Voluntary Sectors

As one type of voluntary sector, INGO training planners should take their sectors' characteristics into consideration. For example, INGOs rely heavily on volunteers and public donations, some have very limited training budgets and, compared to employees in business companies, people in an INGO receive lower pay or no pay at all. Derived from the literature review, the model identifies three aspects of the volunteer sector, which are discussed next.

Volunteer types. In INGOs, many expatriates are volunteers. A typical example is the Peace Corps, which recruits hundreds of volunteers each year to go abroad assisting in humanitarian service. Although organizations need not pay for volunteers' work, the uncertainty of the commitment of volunteers represents a cost to INGOs. Although increasingly diverse types of volunteers may indicate that more people are becoming involved, it also presents a new challenge for the voluntary sector. A systematic investigation to understand the different types of volunteer involvement and a comprehensive system to manage volunteers is an antecedent for expatriate training design.

Training resources. When compared with business companies, voluntary sectors often have fewer employees and lower budgets for training (Betcherman et al., 1998; Hutchinson & Quartaro, 1993). Therefore, training

planners are concerned about monetary resources for training, especially for expatriate training in INGOs. As mentioned, their work environment is often in underdeveloped mountainous areas or small villages in jungles. The training concepts that we take for granted in our societies, such as *workplace learning* or *onsite job training* could be an unrealistic for local agents because of undefinable tasks, limited equipment, and scarcity of instructors. Faced with a very different frontier, people who conduct expatriate training in INGOs need a creative and critical mind when applying existing training models.

Trainee motivation. During the 3rd Academy Human Resource Conference in Asia in December 2004, I heard an intriguing comment from one participant who said, "I teach motivation, but I don't believe we can really motivate others." This comment pinpoints the ineffaceable autonomy of individuals' behaviors. This factor is especially important considering that many INGO volunteers have given up convenient lifestyles and higher-paid jobs in their own countries. However, some may argue that in contrast, a certain number of INGO staff accept the expatriate mission in order to get higher pay or a more luxurious life abroad. Indeed, such diverse situations illustrate a wide range of motivations that affect expatriates' decisions. Understanding expatriates' motivation helps training planners to communicate the programs and increase expatriate involvement. Unless trainers understand the core values and motivations of trainees, they cannot expect to enhance trainees' motivation to participate.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

The model developed in this article extends our understanding of expatriate training by including consideration of the characteristics of an NGO environment and the training conditions in voluntary sectors. Two limitations with regard to this model should be identified. First, this model is based on the assumption that expatriate training should be implemented in INGOs. Although such an assumption applies to many INGOs, it does not apply to all of them. Some INGOs that mainly donate money to areas in need view cross-cultural training as unnecessary, and for those INGOs that still struggle with chaotic situations and scarce resources in local areas, training is not yet their priority.

Second, this model assumes that training theories derived from business settings should not be directly applied to voluntary sectors, such as NGOs. Although such an assumption seems to be widely accepted, there is still a knowledge gap with regard to how different characteristics of NGO and business organizations will affect training design.

For further research, more empirical studies of INGOs and voluntary sectors should be done to explore how much training has been conducted in these sectors and to understand the pros and cons of applying existing training theories to these contexts. For example, Scheier (1986) studied the train-

ing transfer in nonprofit organizations and suggested a *stretched model* to help remedy the low transfer rate. The model emphasized management engagement, relevant attendees, and follow-up examination by consultants. Although these concepts are similar to those used in business, people would have more confidence about their application to a nonprofit practice based on Scheier's observation. In addition, Clarke (2002) pointed out that "despite significant progress in the field of training transfer research over the past two decades, very little empirical research in the area has been conducted within human service organizations" (p.146). Using a UK social service department as an example, Clarke found that Baldwin and Ford's (1988) model is potentially generalizable to human-service agencies. To increase our knowledge of the extent to which the existing literature can be applied in nonbusiness work settings, future studies should include more diverse samples from INGOs, nonprofit sectors, or social-service organizations.

Researchers can use perspectives from this conceptual model as the foundation for research questions about the INGO context. For example, instead of asking broad questions such as "how do HRD practitioners design cross-cultural programs in INGOs?" or "how do INGO managers promote the transfer of learning by volunteers?", researchers can combine two perspectives in the model and draw more concrete questions such as "given different types of international missions (emergency, mid-term, and long-term tasks), how can HRD practitioners design cross-cultural programs for INGO expatriates who are involved in different types of missions?" or "how do INGO managers promote the transfer of learning by volunteers who work in remote areas?" As the latter two questions include perspectives of *NGO environment* and *expatriate program design*, they become more INGO-oriented and relevant to theory and practice.

Conclusion

Including multiple perspectives in a conceptual model is not uncommon in HRD. However, the process, advantages, and limitations of such an interdisciplinary approach have not been examined for expatriate training in INGOs. This article demonstrates how such a model is developed and raises questions for further research.

The process of constructing a conceptual model is like assembling a jigsaw puzzle without a standard solution. During the construction, different angles are tried to integrate existing training literature that is mainly based on business examples with INGOs' work environment. Such a process may stimulate more dialogue between existing HRD training theory and the nonprofit sector. When this model was first presented in the 3rd Asian Academy Human Resource Development conference, a participant asked me why I

had used the theory from HRD to study nonprofit organizations. He openly said, "I work in an NPO, and we don't like the term *HRD*." He mentioned that some practitioners in nonprofit sectors viewed HRD as a means for managers to manipulate employees; therefore, they hesitated to draw on theory and research from the field of HRD. Such resistance actually represents an opportunity. Today, as the HRD field extends its boundary from individual growth and organizational performance to community development and the quality of citizens' lives (Garavan, McGuire, & O'Donnell, 2004), HRD researchers should be aware that some resistance to the application of HRD theory and methods exists in the nonprofit sector (including INGOs). Such resistance creates opportunities to correct misunderstandings and to enhance two-way communication between HRD and the nonprofit sector. It is hoped that the conceptual model in this study will provide grounds for further dialogue and debate.

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