

FOREST PROTECTION NGO'S

Environmental NGO's

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Introduction

Non- Governmental Organizations are an important part of the society and represents the values and ideas of highly diverse groups and organizations engaged in a wide range of activities, and take different forms in different parts of the world.

Forests are complex ecosystems vital for both local and global natural cycles. Globally, forests comprise an indispensable component of the carbon cycle with trees being natural storages of carbon dioxide. When trees are cut down, they discharge stored carbon dioxide into the air, thereby causing carbon dioxide release to the atmosphere (Woodwell, et al., 1983). Deforestation is therefore considered to be a major factor contributing to global climate change due to the creation of a carbon-cycle feedback loop (Cox, Betts, Jones, Spall, & Totterdell, 2000). Moreover, forests are not only crucial components of the carbon cycle, but also of the water cycle. Plants absorb rain and produce water vapor they in turn release in the air. Underground, roots of trees anchor the soil in which they are entrenched, thereby preventing soil erosion and land slides (Reubens, Poesen, Danjon, Geudens, & Muys, 2007). Locally, plants and animals are living constituents of the forests complex ecosystems. Due to species specialization and adaptation to their environment through evolution, loss of habitat can cause species extinction (Turner, 1996).

Focusing on the environmental aspect, especially on the forest preservation, we can find that there are many important stakeholders which depend on the forest and its resources.

The rainforest is a place full of a diverse and unique wildlife, which plays an important role on the ecosystem. And where there is wildlife, we can find human activity. Undeveloped ethnic tribes have been living in the forest for centuries without being bothered, but nowadays the exploitation of resources have brought a change that these people cannot handle, being in total control of the companies exploiting the land.

Now, on the global picture, we can find stakeholders who have nothing in common with the rainforest in a direct way, but in an indirect one. Companies which exploit the resources from the forest and sell their products to the consumers not always follow a “moral path”, without informing in a correct manner to the consumers.

It is on the consumers to act according to their moral beliefs, boycotting the company products, raising awareness or by founding an NGO to protest and fight the company. Of course, there are companies which obtain profit in a fair way, being respectful with the environment and the people involved in it.

The exploitation of natural resources is a matter that moves a lot of money, and power.

Governments take a part in this business, and it is on their behalf to control the exploitation in a sustainable way. Even though in the past that has not been the case, there has been an improvement during the last decades controlling the way companies act on their land.

An overview of which NGOs are campaigning on the issue, what niche each NGO is taking, and describe shortly what kind of campaigning each of these NGOs is doing + finance

The Forest Stewardship Council particularly focuses on promoting responsible forest management worldwide, which provides environmental, social and economic benefits (Forest Stewardship Council International, 2012). Their main campaigns are working with the commercial and governmental sector, doing nature protection work and lobbying. In details, FSC Certification is one of their campaigns, which aims at recognizing the forest-friendly products, and forest owners and managers based on a series of principles and criteria. There are three kinds of certificate, including Forest Management certification, Chain of Custody certification and Controlled Wood.

Different sections of the production related to forest are involved, such as forest owner and managers mentioned before, and manufactures, processors and traders.

In term of finance, according to Forest Stewardship Council International (2013), their major sources of revenue are accreditations, donation and membership. There are no further details stated on the Council International website. In US, it is funded by membership, distribution of annual administration fees from FSC International, Charitable Foundations, sponsorships and corporate support (Forest Stewardship Council US, 2015). Furthermore, three out of six largest donors of the organization are from business sector.

WWF Forest for life

This NGO is part of the global WWF foundation, which treats lots of different problems around the world. This branch objective is geared toward halting deforestation and forest degradation around the world, from rainforests to temperate forests.

The main goals achieved by this organization are the creation of national parks and other protected areas, bringing more attention to responsible harvesting and trade of timber products helping to increase transparency and continual improvement in forest markets. They work in close cooperation and coordination with other stakeholders to trigger new thinking and innovative solutions to tackle the vast resource challenges facing the world.

Financially, they sustain on donations and memberships, using volunteers to do the field work.

Reforesta

Reforesta is an small organization working exclusively in Spain. Their main goal is to fight against desertification in a local scale, while concerning and working on environmental education. It can be considered to belong to the left side of the spectrum.

Working on environmental education and direct actions, such as planting trees on deforested areas, they managed to get the attention and respect of their community.

This NGO Works closely with local schools and with the local people, managing to sustain themselves financially by donations, volunteer workers and diverse activities. For example, you can gift someone with the plantation of a tree, and the money will be used in favor of the organization.

Although they do not work closely with bigger NGOs, there is a cooperation with other organizations in a lower scale, coming these ones from others parts of Spain. Working on diverse activities and programs to reach to a larger number of people

Rainforest foundation

The Rainforest foundations' philosophy is that forest protection and human rights are interconnected. Indigenous peoples lead sustainable lives in the forests, like they have done for centuries. The rainforest foundation's goal is to empower the local communities' rights to the forests and their possibilities to protect their environment. More specifically, they cooperate with and direct financial support to local NGO's that reinforce indigenous groups by providing education about their rights and how they can protect their forrests. They also assist local leaders communicate and meet with policy makers wich ables them to influence laws and policies to protect their resources. The Rainforest foundation cooperate with more than 70 local environmental and human rights organizations in 11 different countries.

The funding comes from private donations, and from different encouraged campaigns hosted by private organizers. These campaigns are for instance “Save an acre” (<http://www.rainforestfoundation.org/protect-acre>), which is directed towards school classes as fundraisers, or “Rock for the Rainforest” which is a benefit concert concept.

In Norway, the government donates money to the Norwegian branch of Rainforest foundation.

The Forest Trust

TFT collaborates with big companies who produce all sorts of products. Some of the companies they work with, are regarded as some of the worst enemies of several environmental NGO's. TFT wishes to build a bridge between the NGO's and the companies, and believe that the best way to change how companies work, is to inform them about the damage they cause, and assist them in making changes for the better.

In more detail, what they do is to support their members to turn their values into actual policies and guidelines. Furthermore they develop a supply chain map and trace products back to their source in order to identify social and environmental impact.

After the mapping, the real change can be made by working on the ground with suppliers, NGO's and regulators and clean up the supply chains. Moreover TFT helps facilitate monitoring by international and local NGO's both to get an independent verification, and to constantly improve and learn.

The organization has offices in 14 countries, on all continents. I has been difficult to figure out how they are financed.

Global Forest Watch chiefly does scientific research about forest around the world (Global Forest Watch, n.d.). It provides an interactive online forest monitoring and alert system, which can indicate tree cover gain and loss, and land use in different

regions, and even set up profile and ranking for countries. Specially, their data are open for sharing, which definitely helps other environmental NGOs, government and commercials to conduct forest conservation worldwide. The Global Forest Watch is owned by the World Research Institute (World Research Institute, 2014). It is financed by other governmental or international sources, foundations, corporations and US government.

By comparing with the organization stated above, FERN (2015) conducts their campaigns on the European Union level because of their belief the unjust power structure is the root of problem. Wide range of spectrum is covered, from working with the private companies, government, and doing investigation, lobbying, to doing nature protection work, environmental education, symbolic actions and direct actions. For instance, the organization are trying to limit the industrial use of wood for energy in EU by analyzing the impacts of these action, purposing solution should be used by EU, and creating civil society dialogue. Approaches which work inside and outside the system are used. Financially, it is supported by government, non-governmental organization, academy and foundation, including several Delegations of the European Commission, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, University of Wolverhampton, Both Ends from Netherlands, and The Sigrid Rausing Trust from UK (FERN, 2015).

Where do NGOs cooperate and which synergies does that give

In term of cooperation, Forest Stewardship Council cooperates with commercial sector, social organizations, and internationally well-known environmental NGOs, including World Wide Fund for Nature and Greenpeace (Forest Stewardship Council International, 2012). For instance, WWF developed “WWF Forest Certification Assessment Tool”, which aims at accessing the standard and system of the certification, such as FSC certification (World Wide Fund For Nature, n.d.). Further

opinion, comment and suggestion will be given after the test. Simultaneously, as WWF focuses on environmental education. Promoting FSC is also one of their targets. Another example of a successful synergy is between Greenpeace and TFT.

Greenpeace did a lot of campaigns directed towards Nestlé's deforestation a few years back. Nestlé received massive negative PR because of this, and at just the right time TFT started cooperating with Nestlé, helping them to change their supply chains.

Global Forest Watch (n.d.) has a partnership with International Union for Conservation of Nature. It also set up the open data policy which shares the statistics of forest worldwide with environmental NGOs, government, businesses and everyone (Global Forest Watch, n.d.).

FERN(2015) mainly cooperates with governmental sector and locals. For instance, by using Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade, it started building close relationship with local community within the European region. Rainforest foundation is working with a lot of local NGO's, and this very cooperation is a crucial part of how they work.

Where do NGOs operate independently from one another, are there also synergies here? Or do they hinder one another?

It is not obvious to tell NGOs hinder one another. The closer example could be the cooperation between WWF and FSC. In the assessment stated above, although the formal partnership between two organizations, the tools still has the effect of monitoring. Indeed, it is not hindering.

A few ideas on how campaigning this issue could be improved

The cooperation between different NGOs in the varied positions of the spectrum should be strengthened. There are no clear evidence that shows those organizations has a close relationship with each other. If a well-organized network of information, research, planning, campaigning could be formed, the

effectiveness of actions can also be maximized.

Overall, majority NGOs stated above have high financial transparency by uploading their audited financial statements on the websites. But, there are some grey areas, including not providing specific information or details of the donation. Even, some of it do not publish their statement.

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