

Investigate the Role of Environmental NGOs in Global Sustainable Development and Environmental Governance

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Abstract: This paper explores the role of environmental NGOs in global ecological sustainability and environmental management through an empirical approach. Multiple case studies of environmental NGOs have demonstrated positive benefits in promoting environmental regulations, popularizing environmental knowledge, and guiding ecological conservation and restoration. Environmental NGOs around the world, with their public participation and advocacy of environmental protection, not only play an important role in safeguarding biodiversity and preventing environmental damage but also provide opportunities for the public to participate in environmental management. On this issue, this paper also has an in-depth discussion on the problems existing in environmental NGOs in many fields such as environmental education, financing, and implementation consistency, and is willing to provide suggestions for the further improvement of global environmental management strategies, and then promote the better realization of global sustainable development goals.

Keywords: Environmental non-governmental organization; Global sustainable development; Environmental governance

Online publication: June 7, 2024

1. Introduction

With the rapid deterioration of global environmental problems, ways to achieve sustainable development and deal with environmental problems are urgent and essential for all governments and the public. In this context, environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a central role. These organizations can spread environmental ideas, initiate green policies, and lead the public to join environmental action, contributing to the global sustainable development process. The nature of environmental NGOs makes them the main force of environmental education. The public participation of the organization makes the transmission of environmental protection information efficient and the promotion of environmental protection concepts significantly improved. They also play an important role in ecological protection and restoration, curbing environmental pollution and other issues, and also play an important driving force for the protection of

biodiversity. However, while environmental NGOs are playing their role, there are also some problems, such as the ineffectiveness of environmental education, the difficulty of financing, and the lack of coherence in action. Research on these issues can not only optimize global environmental governance strategies and promote global sustainable development but also help environmental NGOs improve themselves and enhance their influence in environmental protection. This paper aims to explore the role of environmental NGOs in global sustainable development and environmental governance, as well as their existing problems through empirical research, to provide a theoretical basis and practical reference for further enhancing the influence of environmental organizations in global environmental issues.

2. Definition and role of environmental NGOs

2.1. Definition and characteristics of environmental NGOs

Environmental NGOs, simply put, are social organizations that are independent of the government and not for profit and are committed to environmental promotion, protection, and improvement ^[1]. Environmental NGOs play an important role in the international community by providing a variety of services, promoting public awareness, and assisting government departments to solve various environmental problems, thus playing an important role in the global environmental protection cause. The process in which they play a role, directly or indirectly, promotes international cooperation in environmental protection.

The characteristics of environmental NGOs are diverse. This is mainly reflected in their organizational structure, action orientation, and execution strategy. Organizational structures can range from small, regional groups to large, global environmental networks. Action orientation includes but is not limited to environmental education, policy advocacy, scientific research, community development, and other directions. Implementation strategies can be driven by demonstration projects that trigger policy change, or by challenging policies and corporate practices that do not align with environmental ideals.

In the context of globalization, environmental NGOs are playing a prominent role in the cause of environmental protection. They use their unique social influence to form an interactive mechanism between experience and policy, provide excellent environmental services, promote the progress of environmental education and research, influence policy decisions, undertake outstanding environmental protection work, and provide important support for environmental research. Their participation and guidance in international cooperation make the solution of environmental problems more effective ^[2].

The work process of environmental NGOs is diverse, but they mainly include several key points such as resource integration, environmental action promotion, problem-solving, and so on, which are achieved through a series of innovative ways such as public participation, policy influence, action advocacy, and constructive constraints. These approaches have made environmental NGOs an indispensable force in the global environmental field. From environmental education, to project implementation, to policy impact, they participate in environmental activities with a variety of roles and strategies.

In general, environmental NGOs have injected new vitality into the development of environmental protection with their unique structural forms, activity patterns, and role positioning. In future development, they will respond to global environmental protection issues more professionally and maturely, contributing to global sustainable development and environmental governance.

2.2. Status and role of global environmental NGOs

In the field of environmental protection, NGOs have developed into key players embedded in the structure of global governance. Environmental NGOs act as a liaison between the public and policymakers, helping

to promote global awareness of the urgency of environmental issues and influencing the development of environmental management and its strategies ^[3].

The role of environmental NGOs in global governance is clear. According to the data, the number of environmental NGOs is constantly increasing, highlighting their indispensable status for global environmental governance. Large multinational environmental organizations, such as the World Wide Fund for Nature, Greenpeace, and Conservation International, have played an important role in global environmental policy-making. Because of their independent status and unsurpassed influence, these environmental groups are sometimes seen as third parties in international negotiations, acting as bridges between governments, businesses, and the public ^[4].

The role of environmental NGOs in environmental protection is not only manifested in the promotion of policy but also in the promotion of public awareness of environmental issues and participation in sustainable environmental behavior. By organizing various activities or launching green projects, these organizations have effectively raised the public's awareness of environmental issues and promoted the public's environmental spirit. Issues such as wildlife conservation, calls to reduce carbon emissions, and advocacy for sustainable development are at the heart of these groups' efforts ^[5].

More notably, environmental NGOs play an important role in global environmental policymaking. Environmental issues have increased their importance in the global policy agenda, guiding policymakers to pay attention to and deal with various environmental issues with actions. The signing and implementation of environmental protection agreements play an important role in coordinating and promoting them. After decades, environmental NGOs have gradually formed the influence of environmental policy in the world, through the sensitive understanding of environmental problems, combined with the effective action of globalization, and jointly created a new chapter of environmental protection ^[6].

Although environmental NGOs are influential, they do not stop there. In response to the magnitude of global environmental problems, these organizations began to play a public role.

With their authoritative status and influence, environmental NGOs have successfully led the public to understand the nature of environmental problems. Small and medium-sized environmental organizations are more focused on regional and ecological issues and are crucial to spreading environmental knowledge, guiding public action, and driving local environmental policy development. Environmental NGOs play an irreplaceable role in global environmental governance and sustainable development ^[7]. They are involved in global policymaking to put environmental protection in the global spotlight. At the same time, they encourage public participation and popularize environmental protection knowledge and concepts through a variety of activities and projects. The efforts of these organizations have undoubtedly injected strong momentum into the cause of global environmental protection. In the future, the role of environmental NGOs will continue to expand, and their influence in global environmental governance will become more significant ^[8].

2.3. Working process and activities of environmental NGOs

Environmental NGOs work through a variety of processes and activities, including policy advocacy, environmental education, public mobilization, and field protection. In terms of policy advocacy, environmental NGOs often publish surveys or global environmental reports on a certain type of environmental issue regularly to put pressure on policymakers. In terms of environmental education, they will promote the popularization of environmental education in schools, organize public environmental protection activities, and raise public awareness of environmental protection. In terms of public mobilization, they will mobilize the public to participate in specific environmental protection projects through platforms such as media and social networks.

In terms of field protection, they will actively participate in environmental protection actions through land purchase and protection, afforestation, and garbage removal ^[9].

The above discussed the definition, characteristics, status, and role of environmental NGOs as well as the working process and activity mode, and further revealed the importance of environmental NGOs in environmental protection. Environmental NGOs play an important role in promoting environmental policies, promoting environmental awareness, or directly protecting the environment.

3. The role of environmental NGOs in global sustainable development

3.1. Contribution of environmental NGOs in promoting green policies

Environmental NGOs play an important role in promoting sustainable development on a global scale. They provide an effective platform for global environmental governance through cross-border cooperation and advocacy of green policies. Environmental NGOs have established extensive networks of cooperation in many countries, sharing experiences and resources to develop positive environmental policies. For example, WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) promotes policies to protect wildlife and natural resources globally and works with governments to promote the development and enforcement of relevant laws and regulations, while Greenpeace is committed to promoting the reduction of fossil fuel use and the development of renewable energy, offering the world a new path to sustainable development ^[10].

3.2. Role of environmental NGOs in environmental education and public participation

Environmental NGOs play a vital role in environmental education and public engagement. They raise public awareness and awareness of environmental protection and sustainable development by organizing various environmental education activities ^[11]. For example, Friends of the Earth organizes regular lectures and exhibitions on environmental protection to encourage the public to take action to protect natural resources. They also spread environmental knowledge through platforms such as social media to guide changes in public behavior. Environmental NGOs also often organize environmental protection activities, such as garbage removal and tree planting, which attract a large number of volunteers. Through these activities, NGOs not only raise public awareness of environmental issues but also promote public environmental action ^[12].

3.3. Impact of environmental NGOs on biodiversity conservation and environmental remediation

The impact of environmental NGOs on biodiversity conservation and environmental remediation is significant. They provide effective support for biodiversity conservation and environmental restoration through a variety of channels, including scientific research, monitoring and feedback, and policy advice. For example, The Nature Conservancy protects biodiversity by acquiring and managing nature reserves to protect habitats for rare species. In addition, Wetlands International has improved the natural carrying capacity and ecological functions of wetlands by restoring wetland ecosystems, thus contributing to the restoration and protection of wetlands around the world ^[13].

Environmental NGOs have played an important role in global sustainable development. They contribute to the achievement of environmental governance and sustainable development goals by promoting green policies, environmental education, public engagement, biodiversity conservation, and environmental restoration. Environmental NGOs also face some challenges in promoting sustainable development, such as tight funding and insufficient coherence of action. To further enhance the role of environmental NGOs, cooperation with governments and businesses should be strengthened, funding sources should be increased and action coherence

should be improved to achieve more effective environmental governance and sustainable development ^[14].

4. Problems and optimization strategies of environmental NGOs in environmental governance

4.1. Problems and improvements of environmental NGOs in environmental education work

Environmental NGOs are faced with some problems in their environmental education work, which need to be taken seriously and solved. There are problems in the communication and acceptance of environmental education. The mission content of some environmental NGOs is too specialized and theoretical to meet the needs of the public. The form of education is too simple, and there is a lack of diversified communication methods for different groups. Furthermore, the effectiveness of advocacy is difficult to quantify, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness of missionary work ^[15].

To improve environmental education, environmental NGOs can adopt the following strategies. The content of education should be closer to the needs of the general public, and pay attention to explaining the practical application and benefits of environmental protection knowledge to arouse the interest and participation of the public. Various forms of publicity can be used, such as social media, promotional videos, speeches, and so on, to attract the attention and participation of different groups. In addition, environmental NGOs can cooperate with schools, communities, and others, to carry out serialized and regular education activities to improve the sustainable communication and acceptance of education messages. By establishing an evaluation process and strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of the mission work, problems can be identified on time to improve the work ^[16].

4.2. Challenges and solutions for environmental NGOs in terms of funding and operational coherence

Environmental NGOs face several challenges in terms of funding, which has a negative impact on their operational coherence. Due to the non-profit nature of environmental causes, environmental NGOs often find it difficult to obtain adequate financial support. Fund-raising relies too much on a small number of donors or institutions and lacks diversified funding sources. Due to the long-term and complex nature of environmental affairs, some environmental NGOs lack coherence in their actions and are unable to work sustainably ^[17].

To address these challenges, environmental NGOs can take several solutions. They can actively carry out fundraising activities, including providing transparent donation channels to the public, organizing charity sales, and so on, to increase the diversified sources of funds. Partnerships can be established with governments and businesses to seek more sponsorship and cooperation opportunities. Environmental NGOs can also explore the establishment of a long-term cooperation process by forming alliances with other organizations or institutions to jointly promote the continuity and sustainable development of environmental protection ^[18].

4.3. The optimization strategy of environmental NGOs based on empirical research is proposed

To further optimize the work of environmental NGOs, the following optimization strategies can be proposed based on empirical research. Environmental NGOs can establish a scientific and effective performance evaluation system, evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the organization's work through regular data collection and analysis, and improve the work strategy based on the evaluation results. Environmental NGOs should strengthen the organization's professional management capabilities, including human resource

management, project management, and so on, to improve the organization's executive power and efficiency. In addition, environmental NGOs need to strengthen cooperation with relevant government departments and international organizations, establish information-sharing and exchange processes, and form a multi-party force to jointly promote the progress of environmental governance. Environmental NGOs should actively advocate environmental awareness and values, guide the public to pay more attention to environmental protection through education, publicity, and other means, and promote environmental protection actions in the whole society ^[19].

By solving the problems of environmental NGOs in environmental governance and adopting corresponding optimization strategies, the role and influence of environmental NGOs in global sustainable development and environmental governance can be further enhanced. These optimization strategies can provide strong support for the promotion of environmental protection and promote environmental governance work to achieve better results ^[20].

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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