



Snakes in Paradise: NGOs and the Aid Industry in Africa

Hans Holmén

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
Snakes in Paradise: NGOs and the Aid Industry in Africa Hans Holmén

- * Questions many key assumptions about the efficacy of NGOs and civil society in development.
- * Provides suggestions on how to improve NGO performance and how NGOs can better link with local African initiatives and agendas.

Beginning in the 1980s, sub-Saharan Africa witnessed a veritable explosion of NGOs and CSOs engaged in efforts to develop the subcontinent. Often praised for their commitment, flexibility, close contact with grassroots movements and marginalized groups, these organizations have become the darlings of donors and the UN system. During the same period, however, rural Africa has sunk deeper into poverty. The massive NGO engagement appears not to have made any meaningful progress.

Snakes in Paradise breaks through the generalizations and neat theories to discover why these efforts have failed. Focusing especially on those local NGOs that are frequently overlooked by studies that cover the major international players, Holmén uncovers a NGO landscape that is considerably more ambiguous than the popular development literature would have people believe.

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