

# Preface

The world faces urgent and formidable tasks in almost every domain related to the condition of humankind. What were once dismissed as local matters have now become of universal concern ... NGOs contribute greatly to the arousing of awareness and channeling of concerns ... They also have a principal function of operating and taking direct action in their own right (MacAlister-Smith, 1995). This book is for NGOs and all civil society organizations.

The book began out of a project Mr. Roeder did while serving as the Policy Advisor on Disaster Management at the U.S. Department of State. Knowing Roeder had worked with many humanitarian NGOs, some friends of his suggested crafting a handbook on diplomacy for NGOs. Roeder then joined WSPA, a British NGO with a focus on animal welfare. His goal was to convince the international intergovernmental community to humanely protect livestock that poor farmers and refugees need for a living or for food. A number of people he met while with WSPA had the same suggestion about the need for a handbook on diplomacy; so after completion of his contract, and at the recommendation of the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Springer had Mr. Roeder finally author the book on diplomacy. Animal welfare and conservation NGOs are often small organizations with little experience in the field.

Following that experience, some of Mr. Roeder's former colleagues recommended creating a more comprehensive version for the humanitarian community, recognizing that for purposes of this discussion we are throwing a large tent out that includes operational NGOs that might work in a refugee camp, as well as those that advocate for better standards or those that lobby for peace, the protection of cultures, and economic development. The book is intended to do three things.

- (a) *Manifesto*: Suggest that all NGOs regardless of size, should engage in diplomacy, though because of the costs, some smaller ones will need to work in coalitions. The entire book does this; but Chap. 1 is the main introduction to the concept.
- (b) *How -To*: Provide tactics on negotiations and diplomacy, including an understanding of protocol with governments and International Organizations, as well

as donors, conferences, information management, etc., as tools. Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 cover those topics and include a model for managing a diplomatic initiative.

- (c) *History/Precedent*: Some feel NGOs should simply focus on negotiating safe passage into a zone and then deliver services like medical care or road construction; but there is also a rich history of NGOs involved in diplomacy, going back to before World War I. Though Chap. 1 and other chapters also deal with this topic, History and Precedent are a special focus of case studies in Chaps. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19.

The effort is co-authored by an American and a Canadian, and draws on advice from over 45 international experts, a true team effort. Team work has been important, since diplomacy is not owned by any one country or expert. Indeed, the authors propose it is not exclusive to governments. For NGOs, diplomacy can be about obtaining permission to enter a war zone, perhaps from armed non-state actors, or gaining permits for relief supplies without duties. It is also a negotiation with local or national figures to protect human rights, or with the UN to change a rule, or fellow NGOs and the Red Cross movement to build a coalition to protect political prisoners or to foster development, many humanitarian actions. The authors also think it is about multilateral diplomacy, negotiating with the UN, its Specialized Agencies and Funds, non-UN international organizations like OECD, and NATO, perhaps the Arab League. Indeed, now is an especially good time to link NGOs and modern multilateral diplomacy. The modern form began almost one century ago with the end of World War I and the advent of the League of Nations. NGOs played an important role back then, and increasingly do so today in this important, evolving, and very complex arena. NGOs need to do more and be on the stage alongside the best diplomats any government or the UN and the Red Cross have to offer, preserving and building a better world.

To help, the authors drew on their own experiences, as well as historical precedent and the best diplomatic practices needed by even the smallest NGO to convince any organization or government to accept their policies and the written language to implement them. They also proposed an approach to prepare the NGO diplomat for the unexpected. In other words, this is a manifesto, history book, and manual all in one, encouraging NGOs to negotiate true change.

There are about 1.5 million NGOs in the USA alone, covering a myriad of topics, not all strictly humanitarian, plus millions more around the world (U.S. Department of State 2012). While “humanitarian NGOs” are the main audience, any CSO (civil society organization) can benefit from this book, as well as mediation practitioners who work with armed non-state actors (ANSAs). Indeed, it is recommended that in addition to ANSAs formally agreeing to follow international standards of behavior by signing Deeds of Commitment, they too use this book. It just might reduce some violence.

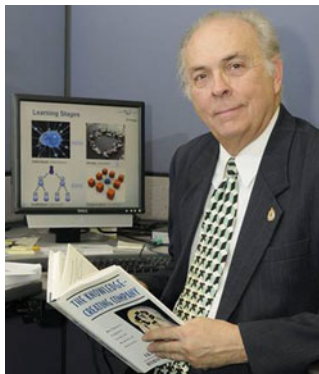
Whatever an NGO plans to do with governments or international organizations, this guidebook will be helpful, to include something of the skills known as “protocol,” and much about the rules, procedures, and funding opportunities.

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