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The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Taiwan's Diplomatic Relationships with Africa

A Research Paper presented by:

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

Governance and Development Policy
(GDP)

Specialization:

Public Policy and Management

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The Hague, The Netherlands
December 2020

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List of Acronyms

CONGO	Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GDP	Gross domestic product
HLB	Huanglongbing
ICDF	International Cooperation and Development Fund
LIN	Luke International
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
NTD	New Taiwan Dollar
OCAC	Overseas Community Affairs Council
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OIRSA	Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China
TRMPC	Taiwan Root Medical Corps
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nation

Acknowledgement

I appreciate my parents for their unconditional love and allowing me to start this journey at ISS.

I am very grateful to my supervisor, Sunil, who took over as my supervisor when I felt frustrated by term 3.

Thank you, Peter, for being my second reader.

Thank you, Georgina, for giving me advice during the difficult situation.

Thank you, Dr Antony, for giving me the direction of the Research Paper topic.

Thank you, the technicians of technical teams, Bjorgaas Social Welfare Foundation, Taiwan Root Medical Corps, I cannot proceed with my Research Paper without the information you provided.

For being my discussants, Nia, Kiki, Michael, Wenyi, thank you for giving me a lot of advice.

For always supporting me, thank you Ridha, Himani, Dina, Andha, Huei-Ling, Hsin Cheng, Chia, Zhining, Jessing, Yanbai.

For providing me guidance, thank you Shipo, Yi-Chen, and the professor of National Taiwan University. I learned a lot from your study group.

Thank you to many people who have accompanied me during this unforgettable journey.

Den Haag,

January 2021

Abstract

This research seeks to find out the possibilities for Taiwan to maintain and build the relationships within the African continent through non-governmental organizations (NGO). The constraints on Taiwan's space in the international community makes Taiwan's diplomacy restricted in the international system, and diplomacy with African countries cannot last for long without intervention. Therefore, NGOs with low political implications play an important role in Taiwan's diplomacy. The research has two main objectives. First, to understand the role of NGOs in reinforcing the Taiwan's diplomacy. Second, to explore the contribution provided by Taiwanese NGOs.

Relevance to Development Studies

Understanding the role of NGOs in diplomacy is essential to two focus areas: global governance and soft power. In the development process, NGOs can reach the community and express vulnerable voices as a type of governance actor.

Keywords

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Soft Power, Global Governance, Diplomacy, Taiwan, Africa

Chapter 1

Introduction

In response to China's Representation issue in United Nation (UN) in 1971, the Resolution 2758 was passed by the General Assembly and the People's Republic of China (PRC) has been recognized as the legitimate representative of China (Wang, 2009). Back then, the Chiang administration as the government of the Republic of China (ROC) refused the suggestion from Kennedy, accepting two representatives of China, one from the mainland and one from Taiwan (Ibid). Chiang upholding the principle of "all-or-nothing" position, and withdrew the seat from the UN (Li, 2015).

Since then to 2020, the ROC known as Taiwan, has lost a total of 25 African diplomatic countries. By 2020, only 2 out of 15 diplomatic allies are from Africa; these are Eswatini and Somaliland. Breaking the relationships with countries has a negatively impact on Taiwan's diplomatic recognition issue which reflects state sovereignty. The concept of sovereignty refers to having both domestically and internationally accepted control of the territory (Banerjee & Rich, 2015). However, under the hegemony of the PRC in the international community, Taiwan's international recognition is precarious.

In response to this problem, Taiwan established the International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF) to undertake the technical cooperation programs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). ICDF allows Taiwan to avoid use of its official name in providing humanitarian assistance to other countries and provides relatively flexible assistances to expand substantive diplomatic relations in the constrictive international community (Lin, 2019). ICDF dispatched agriculture missions, educational missions, and medical missions all over the African continent in countries such as Cameroon, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Niger, Central African Republic, and Rwanda, etc. (Wang, 2004). Also, it assisted Liberia in rebuilding ports and airports and invested in the 270-kilometre road between Gbarnga and Mendakoma (Liu, 2005), and supported Senegal's railway construction from Tamnacoounda-Kidira to Bakel (Ibid). Additionally, to expand popular participation in overseas cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ICDF launched the Taiwan Youth Overseas Service, which is an alternative military service, recruiting the youth who specialize in agronomy or medicine, lending their expertise to assist and encourage local development.

However, ICDF belongs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and its work shows ineffective on consolidating friendships with other countries and strengthening diplomatic relations and expanding diplomatic recognition. After the resumption of diplomatic relations with Burkina Faso in 1994, Taiwan immediately dispatched technical teams to set up a water supply system on the barren right bank of the Bagre Reservoir after a long period of planning. Today, thanks to the project, the Bagre reclamation area has a green rice field (Lin, 2019). However, despite successful projects, Taiwan still lost its diplomatic relations with African countries one after another. After Taiwan broke off diplomatic relations with Burkina Faso in 2018, Taiwan immediately suspended various ongoing international cooperation projects between the two countries, including infrastructure, medical and health care, and scholarships (Chien & Wu, 2018); Currently, only the Eswatini technical mission is left in Africa (ICDF, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to find other channels to consolidate and cement relationships.

This research seeks to find out the possibilities for Taiwan to maintain and build the relationships within the African continent through non-governmental organizations (NGO). The constraints on Taiwan's space in the international community makes Taiwan's diplomacy restricted in the international system, and diplomacy with African countries cannot last for

long without intervention. Therefore, NGOs with low political implications play an important role in Taiwan's diplomacy (Hsieh, 2001). The contributions of NGOs enable Taiwan to be known then recognized by the locals, and finally by the international community. NGOs of Taiwan have been participating in international assistance for a long time, and they are indispensable partners in assisting governments in non-diplomatic countries to promote international cooperation and development (Mao and Wu, 2014; Lin, 2019). NGOs of Taiwan in Africa mainly focus on humanitarian aid & charity, agriculture & environmental protection, healthcare, and social welfare. From 2011 to 2020, there have been projects in cooperation with ICDF in non-diplomatic countries, such as Libya, Kenya, South Sudan, South Africa, Tunisia, Nigeria, Uganda, and Malawi (ICDF, 2015). NGOs still maintain substantial cooperative relations with other countries compared with the achievements of government organizations such as ICDF (Department of NGO International Affairs, 2020; ICDF, 2020).

1.1 Problem Statement

The Taiwanese government launched its first technical assistant project called the Operation Vanguard in 1960. The project was led by MOFA, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (Former Council of Agriculture), and Council for United States Aid (Wang, 2003). This project initiated Taiwan's agricultural assistance in Africa, and subsequent medical and educational assistance programs. Since the 1990s, in order to return to the UN and expand its international space, Taiwan has tried to use economic power to strengthen relations with friendly countries and increase political and economic cooperation with other southern countries. To achieve this goal, the provision of official development assistance (ODA) to cooperating countries has become one of the important tools for Taiwan to pursue its foreign policy ambitions (Lin, 2004). At the same time, since the 1970s, in order to obtain the support of the southern countries and to suppress Taiwan's international living space, PRC has also used a large amount of economic aid as an important mean for its quest of these diplomatic relationships.

In order to gain international recognition, Taiwan wants to maintain concrete relationships with the African countries, and find the opportunity to build the diplomatic relations; thus, it is necessary to find a window under the PRC's hegemony, and NGOs provide an apolitical channel to achieve this goal.

NGOs and foreign assistance have been important issues in research field related to Taiwan's international relations, and Taiwan has always wanted to strengthen and expand cooperation with emerging African countries, but few studies discuss these three aspects concurrently and explore the interconnections. Compared with the international restrictions on official government development assistance activities such as ICDF and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (Hsieh, 2001), NGOs' international assistance activities and volunteer services in other countries are in-depth, they go beyond government-to-government interactions and reach directly into the local populace thereby holding the promise to grow deeper and more meaningful recognition and relations, which are lacking in many official foreign aid organizations.

1.2 Research Question and Objective

This research paper takes the African continent as its research scope. The research has two main objectives. First, to understand the role of NGOs in reinforcing the Taiwan's diplomacy. Second, to explore the contribution provided by Taiwanese NGOs. In achieving these objectives, the research questions of this study would be **“To what extent do Taiwanese**

NGOs contribute to reinforcing Taiwan's diplomatic relationships with African countries?". Furthermore, there are four sub-questions which comprise:

1. What types of projects they done in Africa?
2. What are the challenges faced by Taiwanese NGOs in Africa?
3. What are the results or achievement of the projects for local foreign countries in Africa?
4. What are the impact of this projects on Taiwan's international profile and diplomatic recognition?

1.3 Organization of the Paper

This research is divided into six chapters to summarize and analyze two Taiwanese NGOs' activities in Africa. Chapter 1 is the introduction and provides a contextual background on the international status of Taiwan. The first and second sections elaborate on the research statement and objectives; the third section explains this paper's organization. Chapter 2 discusses related literature, including the definitions of NGO, global governance, the relationship between NGOs and diplomacy, and the concept of soft power. Chapter 3 explains the structure and design of this research and the method of collecting and analyzing data. Chapter 4 describes the findings from interviews of two Taiwanese technical assistance teams and two Taiwanese NGOs, including the project's content, the difficulties encountered, the sources of funding, the interactions with the local governments, and the interactions with the Taiwanese government. Chapter 5 makes a closer analysis of the findings described in Chapter 4, sorts out the network of technical assistance teams and the two NGOs, and analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of the two networks. Chapter 6 is the conclusions and provides recommendations to further research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter aims to present the concept of NGOs' contribution to diplomacy and why NGOs are becoming critical in today's society. This chapter is built around four main parts and a conclusion. First, defining the terminology of NGO. Second, discussing the pivotal status of NGOs under global governance and explaining NGOs' role in the international arena. Third, explaining the role and function of NGOs in diplomacy. Fourth, discussing the concept of soft power and how NGOs can be used in diplomacy within this context.

2.1 Definition of non-governmental organizations

Salamon (1992) defines a non-profit organization (NPO) as a non-governmental legal person organization. It is also an organization whose primary purpose is to pursue public activities such as health care, education, scientific progress, social welfare, and the promotion of diverse values. The composition of NPO includes six characteristics: formal, private, not engaged in surplus distribution, autonomy, voluntary service, and public welfare. Compared with the definition of NPO, the definition of NGO is divergent. Malena (1995) 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". The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) proposed the definition of a non-governmental organization in Resolution 1996/31, that is, "any such organization that is not established by a governmental entity or intergovernmental agreement shall be considered a non-governmental organization"(UN, 1997). Chung (2003) believes that NGOs are "non-profit, voluntary people's groups formed in a region, country or internationally. The group is composed of a group of people with a common philosophy. Its primary task is to achieve its ideal goals". According to the above definitions, NGO is a broad term encompassing a wild array of diverse organizations.

Lin (2007) believes that NPOs and NGOs have considerable overlap in actual content, and it is difficult to make a precise comparative analysis of the differences between the two. Lin pointed out that the so-called NGOs refer to "all kinds of organizations other than the government, for-profit organizations or political parties" mentioned in Article 71 of the UN Charter. She believes that NGOs should be able to include the characteristics of NPOs, but NPOs cannot fully cover the characteristics of NGOs. Taking everything into consideration, the organization used in this study is more inclined to the terminology of NGO.

2.2 Global Governance

According to the UN Commission on Global Governance's definition of global governance, global governance can represent a governance structure. Within that structure, governments, international alliances, non-governmental or non-profit organizations, civic movements, multinational corporations and other global issue actors can govern the world. The structure can also be regarded as a governance process; that is, the process of interaction between actors related on global issues (Liu, 2003). Moreover, these actors involved in global governance also can influence the global situation and have had many effects on the global environment that exceeded expectations. Wang and Zhao (2008) also defined global governance: "global governance is the term of a sociological or international relation. It refers to the political consultation between countries to solve a particular problem beyond a country or a

region.” Chiang (2010) thinks that this definition seems to be limited to the joint handling of international issues between countries, ignoring the role of non-governmental actors in international issues. Chang (2008) pointed out in her article analyzing China’s strategy in Africa that, under the trend of global governance, diplomacy with Africa must include different levels in addition to government elites, including multinational corporations, civil society, and NGOs.

Furthermore, Usui (2003) provided a new model of governance, which is a combination of vertical (international-national-local) and horizontal (public, private and third sectors) alignments. It symbolizes that state power is increasingly spreading to non-governmental departments, including NGOs and NPOs, and it also means that the roles and functions of NGOs are becoming increasingly important to participate in the development of foreign affairs of the international community (Lin, 2007).

2.3 NGOs in diplomacy

In the 1960s, only a few associations did small-scale charity work in Taiwan, such as distributing milk, rice or quilts to the poor people. Most of their members consisted of only a few middle-class people and upper-class elites. In the 1980s to 1990s, Taiwan’s economy took off, however, many new social problems were created, which the government was unable to solve alone. In 1987, President Chiang Ching-kuo (6th-7th president of Taiwan) announced the lifting of martial law and Taiwan experienced changes in its political and social structure. The people’s thoughts, speech, and social activities were provided with open and expressive channels, giving space for the development of civil society (Kuan and Chiou, 2003; Lin, 2004). In 2000, Taiwan’s NGOs gradually paid attention to global issues and take globe action, such as environmental protection, women’s rights, worker’s rights, and human rights. Judging from Taiwan’s current difficult diplomatic situation, space for Taiwan’s NGOs to participate in international affairs is much larger than that of traditional government agencies that use traditional diplomatic methods to operate on the international stage (Hsieh, 2001; Chen, 2002; Mao and Wu, 2004; Lin, 2007; Chien and Wu, 2018).

Taiwan’s NGOs participate in various international activities through different development strategies especially in international humanitarian assistance and Taiwan has experience in international relief since the 1990s. For example, Taiwan Root Medical Corps (TRMPC), Noordoff Craniofacial Foundation, and The Relief Agency of Taiwan all work in various countries overseas to provide different types of medical assistance. Moreover, Taiwan’s NGOs are turning to developing grassroots organizations in other countries and using technical cooperation with other international NGOs, adopting long-term plans to achieve the goal of sustainable development, and enhancing the accumulation of social resources. For example, the Pingtung Christian Hospital and Bjorgaas Social Welfare Foundation have been cooperating with Norway’s INGO Luke International in Malawi. Taiwan’s NGOs are now well established and recognized internationally, putting them in a key position to impact international affairs and potentially affect diplomacy.

According to Wight et al. (1978), diplomacy is communication, negotiation, and information. With the deepening of international interdependence nowadays, non-governmental actors are becoming vital factors in relationships governments. Mao and Wu (2004) believed that NGOs could do what a government cannot. They stated that under PRC’s suppression, Taiwan could not follow traditional diplomatic channels to interact with other countries, and Taiwan’s NGOs who have abundant resources can strengthen the importance of non-state actors. Mao and Wu summarized the role of NGOs in diplomacy into three categories, namely "intermediary, ambassador, and surrogate". "Intermediary" represents the government’s handling of aid activities, such as government subsidies for NGOs to deliver materials

to disaster areas, avoiding corrupt recipient countries, and ensuring that materials can be delivered to victims. "Ambassador" means that when there is no official diplomat stationed in the country, NGOs can play the role of diplomats. For example, Taiwan Buddhist Tzu-Chi Foundation donated masks and looked after international students in the United Kingdom (UK) during the COVID-19 outbreak (Peng, 2020). In addition, a government can get to know the condition of local society, politics, and economy through NGOs based on its assistance projects, reports and evaluations. "Surrogate" means that NGOs can spread the values of the government from their home country. For example, USAID decided that US NGOs should follow the democratic concept in order to achieve the Foreign Assistance Act of 1967, thereby requiring that NGOs promote democracy while maintaining and establishing new international influence (Smith, 1990).

Some scholars and NGOs themselves contend the antagonism and autonomy between non-government and government organizations. However, they ignored the complementarity and mutual support between official and unofficial relations. Moreover, cooperation can exert more significant diplomatic influence (Soong, 2006). Roeder and Simard (2013) stated that NGOs have been at the heart of important multilateral negotiations and diplomacy since the 19th century. NGOs, who have emerged over the last half century without the taint of politics and thus can be invaluable partners with governments and the multilateral community, are in a position to help the disadvantaged. Better yet, governments and the multilateral community can be their partners. Moreover, Roeder and Simard argued "governments must govern and NGOs have to be a valued partner to keep governments connected to the will of the people".

2.4 Soft Power and Influence

The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) became the ruling party in 2000, which was Taiwan's first power transition. In his inaugural address, President Chen Shui-bian (10th-11th term) highlighted the essence of NGOs¹, opening up a new mindset for public diplomacy (Office of President, 2000). After that, President Chen Shui-bian and the next President Ma Ying-jeou (12th-13th term) both highlighted democracy and civil society as a source of Taiwan's soft power and claimed that soft power featuring democracy, peace and prosperity is vital for Taiwan's future domestic and cross-region development (Wang & Lu, 2008).

The discussion of soft power today is mostly based on the principles defined by Nye, which is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through "attraction rather than coercion or payment" (Nye, 2008, p. 94). Nye believes that compared with the previous emphasis on material capabilities, the post-Cold War era countries no longer focus solely on military power and conquest. Additionally, factors such as technology and education have increasingly become important issues in global development, and the role of culture and ideology in international relations have become significantly critical (Yu & Chang, 2011). Betsill and Corell (2007) pointed out that before discussing the influence of NGOs in diplomacy, one must first define what influence is. They proposed the definition of influence offered by Cox and Jacobson "modification of one actor's behavior by that of another." However, Nye believes that soft power is not equal to influence because the use of hard

¹ President Chen said, "We believe that the Republic of China, with its democratic achievements and technological and economic prowess, can certainly continue to play an indispensable role in the international community. In addition to strengthening the existing relations with friendly nations, we want to actively participate in all types of international non-governmental organizations. Through humanitarian care, economic cooperation, cultural exchanges and various other methods, we will actively participate in international affairs, expand Taiwan's room for survival in the international arena, and contribute to the welfare of the international community" (Office of President, 2020).

power can also bring influence (Yu & Chang, 2011). Therefore, he argues soft power is an attractive power based on intangible assets such as an attractive personality, culture, political values and institutions (Nye, 2008). Betsill and Corell (2007) later pointed out that people have moved from thinking that countries possess the military, economic, and political resources used to exert influence in international relations, to people becoming increasingly aware that non-state actors also possess capabilities that can be used to shape international outcomes.

Rely on the fact that Taiwanese NGOs offer attractive intangible assets to recipient countries with not political strings attached. As a result, NGOs by definition are a form of soft power and therefore can influence international relations. Particularly within the context of the new mindset for public diplomacy as well as the centrality of democracy and civil society in current Taiwanese politics.

2.5 Conclusion

International studies on the influence of NGO's on diplomacy mostly believe that NGOs can convey the exact needs of the people and are closer to the underprivileged minority than governments. Moreover, under the network of global governance, NGOs can express opinions on international organizations and even negotiate with governments of other countries to influence the formulation of policies. The difference is that Taiwanese scholars, and even Chinese scholars, when discussing the influence of Taiwan's NGOs in the international arena, focus on the visibility NGOs can bring to Taiwan. Lin (2004) points out in her master's dissertation that the effectiveness of discussing NGOs under this view is biased. In this research paper, the researcher affirmed the achievements and efforts of the two NGOs used as the case study and explored whether such "added value" is beneficial to Taiwan's diplomacy based on the process of their humanitarian assistance and cooperation with local areas in other countries.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This chapter presents how the researcher collected and used data to answer the research questions and meet the research objective. Therefore, this chapter comprises four sections, which are study design, data collection, data analysis, and conclusion.

3.1 Study Design

The design of this research employs a case study approach which puts the cases in the context of Taiwan's space in the diplomatic realm and uses various data to conduct in-depth and multi-faceted investigations. As a research method, the main design of a case study is based on causal-process observations. When conducting a research, the background, context, and development of the case itself are described in detail, and the research data are explained and inferred in causality (Seawright, 2016).

The cases are two Taiwanese NGOs, Bjorgaas Social Welfare Foundation (Bjorgaas) and Taiwan Root Medical Corps (TRMPC), which both work in the humanitarian sector, particularly in the area of healthcare. In addition to the healthcare area, Bjorgaas Social Welfare Foundation is dedicated to education and microfinance in Malawi as well.

In order to collect the data sources, the research uses desk study and qualitative interview as the methods to explore the contribution of NGOs, and then analyze the relevant sources with theory.

3.2 Data Collection

Desk Study

Multiple data sources were used for this research. The primary data sources for understanding the strategy of Taiwanese foreign policy were the documents from the website of MOFA, such as International Cooperation and Development Reports and the press releases. The sources from the website of ICDP were to comprehend the cooperation projects with foreign countries. To know the NGOs, the website of the department of NGO International Affairs offers a clear map of Taiwanese NGOs, in which the simple introduction of the NGOs and the current projects can easily be found. Moreover, in order to collect information such as the evaluation criteria when engaging in foreign assistance activities, the selection of cooperation targets, the interaction with the perception of government departments, it was necessary to conduct qualitative interviews.

Qualitative Interview

Qualitative research is subjective in nature and involves examining and reflecting on the less tangible aspects of a research subject such as values, attitudes, perceptions (Gill, et al., 2008). Regarding the qualitative interviews, this research used a semi-structured interview format. The semi-structured interview allows the professionals to express their opinions openly and demonstrate their professional knowledge (Barriball & While, 1994).

The respondents were the key informants directly related to the key functions of the NGOs and government agencies in similar functions. There were two types of actors among the interviewees. The first actors were the representatives from the NGOs such as Bjorgaas Social Welfare Foundation and Taiwan Root Medical Corps. The interview questions

addressed the current status of the operation and development of the Bjorgaas Social Welfare Foundation and Taiwan Root Medical Corps; thus, the design of the questions concentrate on (a) The content of assistance or cooperative programs of NGOs in Africa; (b) Sources of funding for NGOs in Africa; (c) The interaction between the NGOs and foreign governments; (d) The interaction between the NGOs and local communities. (e) The interaction and interdependence between the NGOs and the Taiwanese government.

The second actors were manager and technician of ICDF engaged in foreign assistance activities in Africa and Central America. The interview questions were presented focused on the local cooperation plan, the cooperation with the local government and the people, the communication with NGOs, and the perspectives on NGOs.

Table 1 The list of Interviewees

Interview code	Interview method	Recording	Interview time	Interviewee position
A1	Online interview	V	2020/11/01	Expert of agricultural team in Central America
A2	Online interview	V	2020/11/03	Project manager of educational team in Burkina Faso
A3	Small conversation		2020/11/18	Technician of agricultural team in Eswatini
B1	Online interview	V	2020/11/18	Chairman of Taiwan Root Medical Corps
C1	Communication app		2020/10/30	Volunteer of Bjorgaas Social Welfare Foundation in Malawi
C2	Online interview	V	2020/11/20	CEO of Bjorgaas Social Welfare Foundation

3.3 Data Analysis

This research developed a structural framework from qualitative data by conducting inductive analysis. In general, qualitative analysis uses grounded theory, discourse analysis, and phenomenology (Creswell, 1998). However, Thomas (2006) strengthens this framework by providing a direct and straightforward method to conclude fundamental evaluation problems: the inductive approach. The inductive approach allows analysis of the qualitative data to identify themes in the text data related to the evaluation objectives. It allows research results to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or essential topics inherent in raw data without constraining structured methods. Data analysis in this research was built in three steps. In the first step, the researcher read the raw data in detail and narrowed down the qualitative data into a summary format. In the second step, the researcher established a clear connection between data and the research objective. The final step is to create a small number of categories and develop a framework from the qualitative data. In this step, the researcher presented the respondents' words as quotations to explain the finding.

3.4 Conclusion

This research used Bjorgaas and TRMPC as a case study to discuss Taiwanese NGOs' work in the African continent. The researcher collected the required information from secondary data to understand the research background. Furthermore, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with key informants and analyzed the qualitative data using by the inductive approach to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4

The Development of Taiwanese technical assistance teams and the NGOs in Africa

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section elaborates the findings from the Taiwanese technical assistance teams. The second section introduced two of Taiwanese NGOs, Bjorgaas and TRMPC, engaged in international development and humanitarian assistance in the African continent and focuses on their current development status, and the problems they faced, and their government interactions.

4.1 Summary of Finding from Former Taiwanese Technicians

This section presents the findings of two former technicians from Taiwanese technical assistance teams. One was the expert of an agricultural team in Central America; the other one was the educational team's project manager in Burkina Faso. Not being able to interview current government officials working in technical assistance teams in the African continent was a limitation of this study. Therefore, the researcher interviewed two technicians who resigned during the recent year. Although one of them was not working in Africa, the findings still have value as a reference for their mode of operation.

Table 2 Summary of Finding from Former Taiwanese Technicians

	Expert of agricultural team	Project manager of educational team
Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huanglongbing (HLB) project • Healthy Seed Potato Production Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational Training Technical Assistance Project
Implementation Area	Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama	Burkina Faso
The difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inefficient local government • Conflict of interest • Internal affairs of the local government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inefficient local government • Lack of employment opportunities • Internal affairs of the local government

The agricultural team expert participated in the Healthy Seed Potato Production Project and Huanglongbing² (HLB) project in Central America.

Honduras invited Taiwan to implement the Healthy Seed Potato Production Project from 2014 to 2019 (ICDF, 2020). Potatoes are one of the staple foods of Hondurans. Many farmers in Honduras rely on potato cultivation as their main livelihood. However, Honduras did not have a healthy seed potato production system, and all the seed potatoes came from other countries. In addition to high import prices, the supply of seed potatoes is unstable, which hinders domestic potato production. Therefore, the seed potato project's main focus

² Huanglongbing is a disease of citrus fruits. It was detected in China in 1947.

was to adjust the seasonal production of seed potatoes by introducing trial studies to provide a stable supply of potato seedlings without relying on import.

The hazard of HLB seriously threatens the citrus industry in Central America, causing severe economic losses. Since Taiwan has invested in research on HLB-related sectors for nearly 60 years, it has rich experience in detection, epidemic prevention, testing, and production systems for specific pathogen-free seedlings. Therefore, the Panamanian government and OIRSA³ invited to cooperate with Taiwan to implement the HLB project from 2012 to 2017 (ICDF, 2017). Nine countries and OIRSA jointly implemented the HLB project to cultivate healthy citrus seedlings and sell them to farmers at reasonable prices. As Taiwan had no diplomatic relations with two of the nine countries, thus, it only cooperated with the seven countries listed in the table.

The HLB project was enormous. It had meetings with technicians and officials from participating countries, OIRSA's technicians, and Taiwanese officials and technicians. All participating countries went to Honduras to join the conference in the first year. The project was implemented for five years. However, the implementation rate was almost zero in the first year because much time was given over to several discussions and meetings. Ultimately, the HLB project only succeeded in a few countries because it adversely affected local private orchards and citrus juice companies' interests.

The Healthy Seed Potato Production Project encountered the same problem, and met opposition from agricultural importers. The agricultural team also had to pay attention to the issue of power transition in the local countries. Power transitions would impact the project because the opposition party would limit resources available for the agricultural team.

In contrast to the HLB and Healthy Seed Potato Production Project, the Vocational Training Technical Assistance Project was strictly bilateral involving Burkina Faso and Taiwan. There were three stages in the Vocational Training Technical Assistance Project implementation. Firstly, construction of a vocational training centre in Burkina Faso started in 2010 and was completed in 2012. Secondly, training local teachers and assisting in recruiting students. The educational team was helping with operations and conducting the teacher training in the first two years. During that time, the educational team dispatched Taiwanese teachers from the vocational training centre to train local teachers. The educational team planned to do skills verification and assess skills completion as a mean of evaluation in the following two years. The third stage involved assisting local students in gaining employment after completing the vocational training. Employment was the biggest goal of the educational mission. However, the educational team later discovered that Burkina Faso had a low economy and few job opportunities. Therefore, the educational team's plan in 2017 and 2018 was to focus to assist the students in finding employment. In addition, the Taiwanese government offered internships for some hard-working students from the vocational training centre.

Both Taiwanese and local people participated in Vocational Training Technical Assistance projects. Although the Taiwanese technical assistance teams had its working group, a project office was established locally with the stipulation that the supervisor must be a local person. The supervisor had their subordinates, including an accountant, cashier, and subject area experts. The Taiwanese technical team usually obeyed the opinions of the local technical supervisor. There was a hierarchical system in the local administrative system that also needed to be observed, and the minister needed to be consulted for any matter, no matter

³ Organization for Plant and Animal Health (Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria, OIRSA) was established in 1953. It is a regional organization aims to assist nine member countries (Belize, Dominica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, Mexico, and Costa Rica) in improving the safety production capacity of crops and agricultural products, as well as protecting and strengthening the development of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in the region.

how trivial. The procedure amounted to red tape mainly when the project involved registration, local regulations and licensing systems.

In addition, the educational team was impacted by the coup in Burkina Faso in 2015. Until then the Compaore administration was pro-Taiwan. After the coup happened, the new ruling party began to play the two-faced tactics. On the one hand, it obtained Taiwan's resources while it still had many exchanges with China behind its back.

In general, the findings reveal that the Taiwanese technical assistance programs suffered from similar implementation difficulties regardless of region and are of technical focus. Both respondents reported that the projects were hindered by inefficiencies in the local governments as well as being impacted by the internal affairs and political shifts of the local government.

4.2 Justification of Bjorgaas and TRMPC

Bjorgaas and TRMPC are representations of Taiwan's NGOs participating and engaging in humanitarian assistance and cooperation with local communities in medical assistance and local development. Both NGOs are active in countries in the focus area of this study, Africa.

Bjorgaas was established in 2013 and operates in Malawi. However, some of the members had participated in local development projects in Malawi long before the establishment of the foundation. In addition, Bjorgaas has been cooperating with Luke International (LIN) in Malawi. Lin is an NGO co-established by Taiwan's Pingtung Christian Hospital and a Norwegian international non-governmental organization, which has implemented small development projects and held sport activities in Malawi. Bjorgaas's aim is to empower local people and enable local organizations to be self-reliant. The three main cooperation areas are education, economy and health. The projects include educational scholarships, entrepreneurial microfinance, and the installation of water filters. Bjorgaas's comprehensive development cooperation program and its initiatives for women's rights in local villages, coupled with long-term work in Malawi, are the reasons why the researcher chose it as a case study NGO in the research paper.

Dr Liu established TRMPC in 1995 to provide free healthcare clinics in remote areas in Taiwan. In 1999, the Yugoslav War opened TRMPC's first overseas medical disaster relief. After that, TRMPC went to Liberia to set up the first free clinic in the African continent in 2000. There has been free clinics in Africa for half a month every Chinese New Year for 20 years since then. So far, TRMPC has been active in Liberia, Madagascar, Eswatini, Senegal, Malawi, Gambia, Somalia, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Chad, and South Africa. Moreover, TRMPC joined the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO) under the name of Taiwan in 2003. When TRMPC provides medical assistance, it insists on providing the local people with the same medical standards as those in Taiwan. It can be said that TRMPC is a representative NGO for Taiwan's medical disaster relief in Africa.

4.3 Summary of Findings from Bjorgaas and TRMPC

Table 3 Summary of Findings from Bjorgaas and TRMPC

	Bjorgaas	TRMPC

Project	Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarship • Feminist initiative Economy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Trade • Microfinance Health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water filters • Toilets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing free healthcare • Medical Education exchange
Implementation Area	Mzuzu, North Malawi	Countries which GDP are below 500USD of the world development indicator
The difficulties	Cross-cultural communication	There will be different difficulties every time

Projects

The first part of the Bjorgaas education project is scholarships, which provide opportunities for children from vulnerable families to enter primary, secondary, and university programs. The second focus area is the feminist initiative, including menstrual education and gender education, to prevent girls from dropping out of school due to their menstrual period. In support of this effort, Bjorgaas also established workshops for making homemade sanitary napkins. In the economic sector projects, Bjorgaas assists widows and persons with disabilities by providing microfinance and personal loans to improve their living conditions. In addition, to implement fair trade, Bjorgaas purchases coffee and tea from local farmers in Malawi at reasonable prices and then brought the coffee and tea back to Taiwan for sale. In the health sector projects, Bjorgaas installs water filters in places prone to cholera and cooperates with schools to build toilets in an effort to boost hygiene levels and reduce the spread of infections.

Regarding providing free healthcare, TRMPC insists on treating the local people with medical standards that can be obtained in Taiwan no matter where they set up a clinic. Its medical team includes doctors, dentists, pharmacists, medical technologists, registered nurses, anesthesiologists, and, in recent years, doctors of traditional Chinese medicine has joined. Apart from conducting free clinics, TRMPC also provides medical training to the local doctors. The medical training is in cooperation with the Taipei Medical University Hospital. TRMPC facilitates the signing of contracts between foreign governments and the Taipei Medical University Hospital to send ten local doctors to Taipei for training. For instance, in the case of Kenya, TRMPC was instrumental in identifying training candidates and formalizing the relationship between the local government and the Taipei Medical University Hospital. Once the groundwork was established through TRMPC, Taiwan's MOFA took over the follow-up work and funding.

Implementation Area

The main work area of Bjorgaas in Malawi is in Mzuzu. The main reason why Bjorgaas implements its projects in Mzuzu is because of geographic relations based on the fact that Taiwan's medical team was based in Mzuzu in the early stage. In addition, the capital Lilongwe and the economic city Blantyre both have a population of more than one million,

however, the third-largest city Mzuzu, has only 200,000 population, which shows a difficult living environment.

When TRMPC started providing free healthcare overseas, the way to choose a country in which to provide services was to refer to the GDP of the world development indicator. In the past 25 years, TRMPC has made friends with influential people in the developing world, such as members of parliament and politicians, but not for political purposes, so they are often invited by friends to provide medical assistance in other countries (13 September 2020, video recording). In addition, TRMPC participates in joint meetings of international NGOs. Therefore, representatives from other countries will often approach TRMPC staff at the meeting whether TRMPC can go to particular local areas to assist in medical treatment.

The difficulties

The difficulty encountered by Bjorgaas was in enabling local people to operate cooperative projects independently and being assured that Taiwan's donations will be used properly. In addition, Bjorgaas faces cross-cultural communication issues which impact the ability to instantly assess and understand problems. For instance, various Malawi cities had been lockdown due to the COVID-19 impact in 2020. Some countries have implemented online education to maintain school curricula. However, because of the lack of infrastructure, it is impracticable to implement online courses in Malawi. In recognizing the importance of cross-cultural communication, Bjorgaas highlighted the vital need for both sides recognize and understand the difference before finding a solution. Cross-cultural communication presents a continuous challenge to successful international cooperation and establishing effective working relationships in different places around the globe.

Furthermore, Bjorgaas brought up Pingtung Christian Hospital's project of nurturing medical talents in Malawi. Before the outbreak of the COVID-19, Pingtung Christian Hospital arranged for medical staff or managers of Malawi hospitals and government officials to travel to Taiwan for medical training or visits. However, because Malawi has diplomatic relations with the PRC, the cooperation projects between Pingtung Christian Hospital and Malawi will not receive much publicity. Bjorgaas stated that if NGOs focused solely on political goals, their local area activities will be hindered.

For TRMPC, difficulties have always existed, but in different forms. TRMPC has experience and know-how to solve the operational difficulties in local target areas. In general, host country governments were pleased that TRMPC came to set up free clinics. In contrast to Bjorgaas's experience, cultural differences are not a problem for TRMPC. They believe that if they treat each patient with due respect, and patient will respect them in turn as well.

Sources of Funding

The researcher classified the sources of funds into four categories based on the respondents' answers. These categories are fundraising, endowment, assistance from the government, and the government's subsidies. Fundraising refers to an NGOs actively raising funds from the public through advertisements, speeches, exhibitions, and other activities. An endowment is a donation of funds made to the NGO from the public or a corporation. Receiving government assistance refers to an NGO project that is completely or in part funded by the government. Government subsidies involve financial support provided to maintain the NGO's operational activities and are not targeted at specific projects.

Table 4 Sources of Funding

Sources of funding	TRMPC	Bjorgaas

Fundraising		V
Endowment	V	V
Government assistance	V	V
Government's subsidies	V	

The Bjorgaas' fund is raised largely from fundraising. In 2020, they generated 4.5 million New Taiwan Dollars (NTD) in funding which went towards funding projects in. In 2019, Bjorgaas applied for Government assistance through a plan with the Department of NGO International Affairs and received approximately 700,000 NTD. Bjorgaas occasionally receives endowments from Taiwanese corporations; however, these corporations prefer that Bjorgaas uses their endowments within Taiwan. Bjorgaas reports not receiving any government subsidies to support its operations.

TRMPC receives endowments annually from corporations as well as help from individual donors. In addition, the Taiwanese government has, in the past, contributed funding to assist TRMPC in setting up a clinic providing free healthcare in Kenya. Moreover, the MOFA provides subsidizes to NGOs once a year and TRMPC has benefited from this. For example, TRMPC received one million NTD per year in the first ten years, and then received about one hundred thousand in the following five years. However, in recent years, TRMPC has taken into consideration Taiwan's worsening economic situation and therefore have chosen to rejected government subsidies. TRMPC does not receive any funding thorough campaigns or efforts directed at the public.

Interaction with other governments

Both Bjorgaas and TRMPC have interactions with the local governments. The range and depth of those interactions differs based on the nature of the project and the needs of the organizations. In some cases, interactions include requests for information, data, and reports, while in other cases the interactions involve expedited processing and inspection of incoming resources as well as permits to operate legally within the country.

Some projects of Bjorgaas do involve cooperation with the local government. For instance, one of the health sector projects is to determine which schools need to build toilets. Therefore, Bjorgaas and LIN Malawi had to contact the education bureau and the local staff to evaluate the schools.

Malawi Ministry of Health and Welfare cooperates with Pingtung Christian Hospital to install the mobile PACS medical information system, which is a computer software used by healthcare workers for better access to medical information. In addition to Mzuzu and the northern part of Malawi, all hospitals in the country have to adopt this system. In doing so, Pingtung Christian Hospital has formed a close cooperative relationship with the with the Malawi government. In addition, a director of Bjorgaas who also serves as the chairman of Pingtung Christian Hospital is involved in involved in disease management of the mobile population in eleven countries in southern Africa. He has many opportunities to interact with government officials. Furthermore, when LIN Malawi commemorated its ten-year anniversary of operations in 2019, the local Minister of Health and Welfare, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Labor congratulated the organization on its decade of assistance efforts. The local officials recognized that Malawi continued to receive Taiwanese assistance in the absence of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, making the Malawi government feel very moved.

The local government helped at the executive level for TRMPC. These interaction included inspection of incoming medical equipment and medicines, as well as allowing TRMPC to set up a free clinic legally. In addition, TRMPC negotiated with the local government and discussed medical training contracts for exchange programs with Kenya and Somaliland; however, ultimately, Somaliland only dispatched the Minister of Health to visit Taiwan and did not sign a medical training contract.

Interaction with the Taiwanese government

In the absence of diplomatic relations, it is difficult for the Taiwanese government to help Bjorgaas when Bjorgaas encounters difficulties in Malawi. However, Bjorgaas has found a way to seek help, such as contacting and working through Taiwanese businesspeople or the Taiwan representative office in South Africa. In this way, Bjorgaas has established its own network of support to ensure its operations run smoothly regardless of the lack of formal relations between the local government and the Taiwanese government. In general, TRMPC set up free clinics overseas independently as well.

The Taiwanese Overseas Community Affairs Council (OCAC) has organized some NGO forums to exchange the information and share experience to understand NGOs or enterprises' local work experiences and local conditions in Africa. The government is looking for ways to reach Taiwanese businesspersons and NGOs in African countries to establish an informal support network of contacts in various sectors to serve in de facto diplomatic roles. In addition, the Taiwanese government established the Taiwan Aid organization to support NGOs' oversea activities on international development. Although Bjorgas is a member of the Taiwan Aid, they do not comfortable with the concept of "aid". As the results, Bjorgas rarely participate in the Taiwan Aid's activities.

Chapter 5

Analysis

In this chapter, the researcher analyzes the findings described in Chapter 4. The researcher sorted out three external relations between formal (Taiwanese technical assistance teams) and informal (NGOs) networks, namely efficiency, effectiveness and results, and objectives. In the second section, the researcher elaborates the network of Taiwanese technical assistance teams. The third section is about the role of NGOs in diplomacy and their contribution to reinforcing and growing diplomatic relations.

5.1 Comparison of international development activities of governmental organizations and NGOs

5.1.1 Efficiency

efficiency refers to whether the team is satisfied with the time and energy spent planning and executing the project. This category is somewhat related to the results of projects. The two members from the agricultural and education teams highlighted that they felt the limiting effects of excessive red tape when interacting with the governments from other countries and were restricted by the local government in planning and implementing the cooperative projects. Bjorgaas and TRMPC did not encounter inefficiency when implementing the project.

The project manager from the educational team said:

“Burkina Faso's current administrative system still pays attention to class. The small official documents have to ask the minister for instructions, which is very time-consuming. Moreover, it is very different from Taiwan's administrative system. Therefore, time is spent on the institutional and administrative processes, not on the project itself” (A2, 03 November 2020).

Similarly, the expert from the agricultural team commented:

“Efficiency is extremely low. In the first year of the implementation of the project, we held a conference. All the representatives of the seven countries went to Honduras to attend the conference. In the first year, the execution rate was almost zero. The discussion was the only thing we did in the first year” (A1, 01 November 2020).

Furthermore, the expert from the agricultural team also highlighted the effect on projects by internal affairs:

“The local government parties obviously would not give resources to the opposite party. When encountering power transition, we have to be very careful. For example, in the general election in Honduras three or four years ago, that president who had better relations with Taiwan was almost overthrown” (A1, 01 November 2020).

In contrast, Bjorgaas and TRMPC did not encounter inefficiency when implementing their projects. Regarding satisfaction with the time and energy spent on projects, Bjorgaas stated,

“We received a letter from a senior student from Mzuzu University. In the letter, she told us that the educational scholarship changed her life and allowed her to concentrate on her school-work. She also promised that she would devote herself to society and help other Malawi people live a better life after graduation. In addition, Mzuzu coffee operated by us has also been

certified by Fairtrade International and has become a member of promoting ethical consumption” (C2, 20 November 2020).

5.1.2 Effectiveness and results

effectiveness and results refer to whether the project can be sustainable after completing the plan and achieving local needs. This category is judged based on the interviewees’ follow-up visits and assessments.

The expert from the agricultural team said,

“I think the projects are not 100% match the local needs. Although the technical team had made the projects perfect, the resources were in the hands of two to three per cent of the elite. Besides, we often failed to implement the projects in certain areas because of conflicts with vested interests.” (A1, 01 November 2020).

However, the project manager from the educational team had a different opinion,

“It met local needs, and the concept of cooperation projects was based on local conditions, because the project was proposed by the president of Burkina Faso” (A2, 03 November 2020).

Although the technical teams tried to develop sustainable projects, these projects did not necessarily make money locally. Sadly, once the project transferred to the local government, it became obsolete within a few years. The expert from the agricultural team said,

"It failed after handing over to them in a few years; their Ministry of Agriculture technicians had to generate the budgets by themselves" (A1, 01 November 2020).

According to the other Taiwanese agriculture technician worked in Eswatini, she said,

“We cooperated with the local government. After our hard work, the projects transferred to the local government. Then the project failed, and a new project began. It was an endless loop” (A3, 18 November 2020).

In addition, she pointed out a similar perspective as that of the agriculture team expert with regard to the issue of budgets,

“The most important thing is to earn money. However, most of the members of the agriculture team are from technical backgrounds. It is no problem to plant crops perfectly. The problem is that the projects are not profitable right away” (A3, 18 November 2020).

One technical assistance team member said that the projects met local needs, and two said that the projects would fail after the handover. Moreover, the operation of the projects relies mostly on funds provided by the Taiwanese government. Although the project manager from the educational team believed that the local government proposed the project, it was in line with local needs. However, according to his interview record, the Vocational Training Technical Assistance Project did not create a job market, resulting in an oversupply of skilled students. This plan was not suitable for areas with slow economic growth. The primary purpose should be to help local economic development.

On the other hand, from the point of view and intent of assisting local development, the two NGOs have been doing local activities for many years, understanding the local situation and needs. The operation of projects has not been interrupted after transferring to the locals. In the process of interacting with residents, it also gave the local government a good impression. For example, Bjorgaas reported continued project success and effectiveness after handing the project over to the locals. Bjorgaas said,

“At the end of 2019, we no longer have a resident manager in Malawi. We enabled local people to independently and sustainably develop the implemented projects, from leading the project to sponsor, partners consulting, and project evaluation” (C2, 20 November 2020).

5.1.3 Objectives

Objectives refer to the mindset of implementing projects overseas and the purpose of developing cooperative projects.

The technical team's objectives are to maintain and expand Taiwan's diplomacy with other countries, and the staff are less enthusiastic to make a difference than NGOs.

The expert from the agricultural team said,

“The projects involve the interests of political stakes. The decision is made entirely by the Taiwanese embassy in the local area. We treat which group ambassador wants to help better” (A1, 01 November 2020).

The project manager from the educational team also highlighted,

“The purpose of these projects is to maintain diplomatic relations” (A2, 03 November 2020).

In contrast, the objective of Taiwanese NGOs working in other countries is more towards selfless dedication. Bjorgaas said:

“So many people helped us in the past, and now we are capable of helping others. Thus, I never think we are doing "international assistance". What we do are "international cooperation" and mutual benefit. We look at how to help this community and people from a personal perspective, not from a nation” (C2, 20 November 2020).

TRMPC echoed Bjorgaas's goodwill sentiment by commenting,

"I am pleased in providing free healthcare oversea. I am willing to spend time and thoughts on it"(B1, 18 November 2020).

Furthermore, NGOs attach importance to equal and cooperative interaction when providing humanitarian assistance or cooperating with local people. Taiwanese technical teams avoid using "assistance" but use "cooperation" as the term in any contract. However, according to Liu (2005), early Taiwanese technical teams worked in Africa with prejudice and discrimination.

This was confirmed by the project manager from the educational team who said,

“some technicians had superior mindsets when implementing the projects” (A2, 03 November 2020).

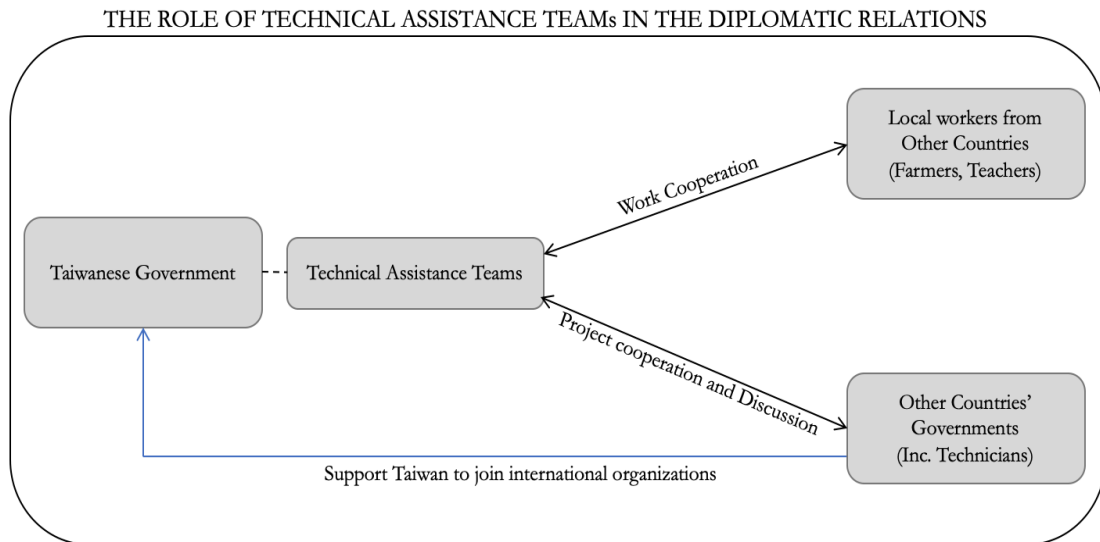
He also said,

“what Taiwanese technical teams do in other countries is assistance, however, we tried to make it look like cooperation as using technical partner and financial partner in the contracts” (A2, 03 November 2020).

5.2 Interactive Network of Governmental Organizations Analysis (Formal Network)

Technical assistance teams are a means for Taiwan to strengthen diplomacy with other countries. Thus, the researcher has compiled the technical team's interactive network in other countries, as shown in the figure below (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Formal Network



Source: Author

In the formal network interaction, there are three links represented by black and blue lines. The dotted line indicates that the technical group represents the Taiwanese government. The first formal link is the interaction with the local people in the host country, mainly achieved through work cooperation. The second link is between the technical team and the government of other countries. The local technicians with whom the technical assistance teams have interactions are also included in this link. In this link, the interaction between the two sides is mainly in the discussion of the plan. The level of interaction with local people is not connected to the local government. The third link expresses the diplomatic assistance provided by host country governments to Taiwan, and it is also the driving purpose and goal of the Taiwanese government. The Taiwanese government dispatches technical teams and provides technology and funds. Through this connection, Taiwan obtains the support of diplomatic countries internationally in the hope that they can then gain support to join international organizations.

The advantage of formal diplomacy is that Taiwan can obtain direct international support from allies through diplomatic relations. For example, Burkina Faso, Dominica, the Gambia, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Nicaragua, Senegal, Solomon Islands, and Swaziland requested Taiwan be permitted to return to the UN in the United Nations General Assembly in 1997 (UN, 1997). However, such a network is unstable and based on giving constant financial support to a country in order to maintain or grow tenuous diplomatic relations. This is compounded by the fact that Taiwan's diplomatic obstacles are due to the PRC's hegemony in the international area. Therefore, a financial aid competition with PRC is unwise for Taiwan.

In addition, Taiwanese technical assistance teams are further confounded by regular staff turnover as well as reluctance to be sent to lesser developed aid recipient countries. Regarding the Taiwanese diplomatic assignment system⁴, TRMPC shared his opinion that

“working in other countries require experience and skills, but the rotation training from the MOFA limits Taiwanese diplomats. In the beginning, the diplomats are laymen in the local area, after they become familiar with the locals, they are transferred to other regions again” (B1, 18 November 2020).

Additionally, the agricultural team expert commented with regard to the diplomats he knew before that

"there are factional issues in Taiwan's MOFA. Many diplomats are eager to be distributed to Europe and America; therefore, they will butter up the superior" (A1, 01 November 2020).

When they leave, their experience and connection leave with them.

5.3 Interactive Network of NGOs (Informal Network)

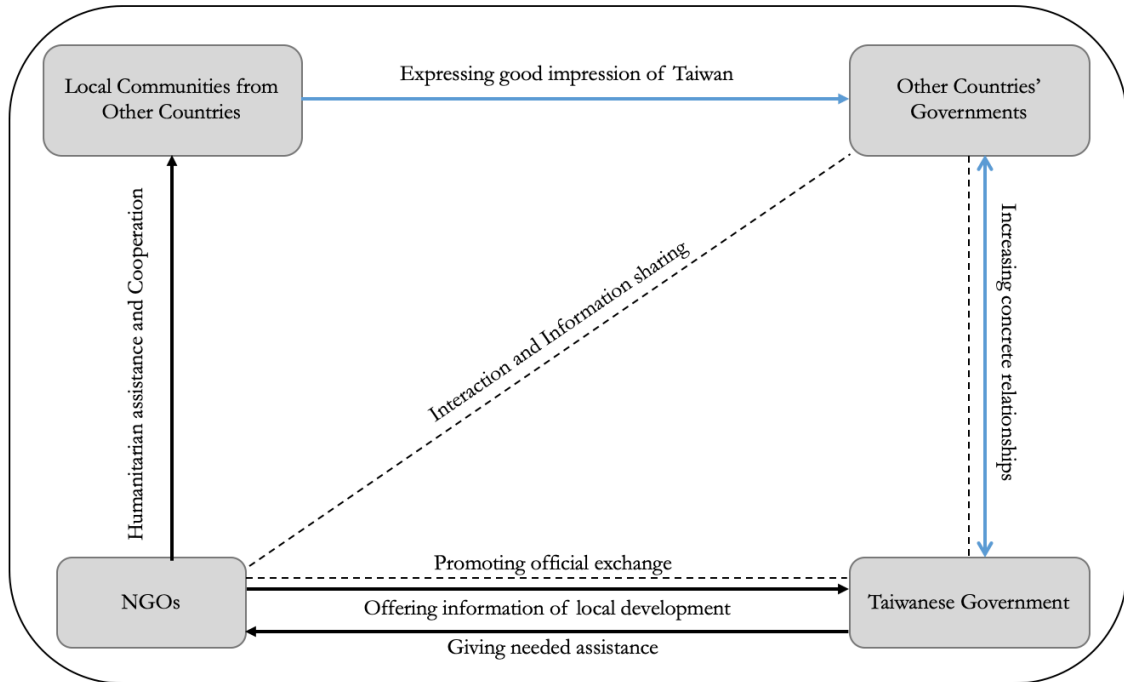
The researcher has compiled a network of three different interaction levels between the NGOs Bjogaas and TRMPC representing this research, as shown in the figure below (Figure 2). The three levels are local communities from host countries, governments of host countries, and the Taiwanese governments. With the inclusion of the NGOs themselves, there are four levels. These four levels fall in line with the combination of vertical (international-national-local) and horizontal (government and non-government) spectra (Usui, 2003), which aligns with the concept of global governance.

Three different lines are used in Figure 2, namely black, blue, and dotted lines. Black and dotted lines indicate different linkages, while blue emphasizes the diplomatic value achieved by interaction process across the four levels.

⁴ Taiwan's MOFA has established the internal and external rotation of personnel. Diplomatic and consular staff need to be transferred to overseas units after three years of service in the ministry, and they will be transferred back to the ministry under regulations after serving in foreign missions for about six years (a total of six years in different regions).

Figure 2 Informal Network

THE ROLE OF NGOs IN REINFORCING THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS



Source: Author

The researcher compiled this informal network based on the interactions between the two NGOs Bjorgaas and TRMPC with local communities and governments. Firstly, NGOs cooperate with or assist the local communities thereby making the local people have a good impression of the Taiwanese. As a result, governments of other countries also perceive a good impression of Taiwan from their people.

This is captured by a comment from Bjorgaas said,

“The local government was very moved that Taiwanese still help their people like this without diplomacy with Taiwan” (C2, 20 November 2020).

The government of Taiwan also recognizes the value of NGOs in fomenting positive relations with other countries that might, as the result, translate into full diplomatic relations. The MOFA of Taiwan once stated that establishing diplomatic relations between Taiwan and Somaliland was due to the bridge built by TRMPC. In this relation to this, TRMPC said,

“Because of providing free healthcare, the local people have a good impression of us. When the Taiwanese government contacted the Somaliland government, based on the affirmation of TRMPC, Somaliland talked well with our government” (B1, 18 November 2020).

Because of direct and in-depth interaction with residents, NGOs understand local living conditions. Both Bjorgaas and TRMPC stated that they have participated in NGO forums organized by the Taiwanese government to share their local experience with the Taiwanese government and other NGOs. For TRMPC, setting up free clinics in different countries is also means to conduct valuable medical studies. If the government is willing to help, it can bring the smears back to Taiwan for academic research, contributing to the medical community in Taiwan.

Taiwan’s MOFA provides financial assistance to NGOs through the Department of NGO International Affairs. Both Bjorgaas and TRMPC have received financial assistance (including subsidies) from the Taiwanese government in different forms. Despite this, the

NGOs are able to work as apolitical organizations free from the mantle of official government associations.

The duties of the Department of NGO International Affairs are to: (a.) Assist in promoting the connection and relationship between domestic agencies and international NGOs, and assist in solving problems; (b.) Evaluate the effectiveness of domestic NGOs participating in international organizations and activities; (c.) Review the subsidies or coach domestic NGOs to participate in international organizations and activities; (d.) Strengthen the cooperation between the Committee and domestic NGOs to develop relations with international NGOs.

The researcher did not have the opportunity to interview the personnel of the MOFA or the Department of NGO International Affairs, so it is a limitation to confirm with certainty whether they follow the goals. However, according to interviews between Bjorgaas and TRMPC, apart from receiving funding, most other jobs are independent of Taiwan's MOFA.

According to the comments of Bjorgaas and TRMPC, both somewhat interact with the local government of other countries. When Bjorgaas implements the projects, it needs the assistance of the local host government. TRMPC provides medical training, negotiates with the local government, and facilitates government officials to visit Taiwan. Therefore, the dotted line forms a triangle of interaction between NGOs and the other countries' government and the Taiwanese government.

Furthermore, TRMPC shared that it had negotiated and cooperated with the Japanese medical academy for four years, which led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MOFA of Japan and Taiwan. The MOU stipulates that if TRMPC doctors cooperate with Japanese doctors, they can legally conduct free clinics in Taiwan and Japan during natural disasters (B1, 18 November 2020). The doctors of TRMPC include doctors from Taiwan. This interaction falls in line with the triangular connection in the dotted line.

Informal networks cannot fully reinforce diplomacy between Taiwan and African countries, and diplomatic relations facilitated by NGOs are also a few exceptions. However, informal networks can increase Taiwan's good image in the other country. From the humanitarian perspective, NGOs can penetrate local communities and provide practical assistance to local people. Compared with the Taiwanese technical assistance team, where if Taiwan breaks ties with the country, the technology and projects will be terminated immediately, the projects implemented by NGOs are more sustainable than Taiwanese technical assistance teams'.

From a diplomatic perspective, Taiwanese NGOs cooperate and provide humanitarian assistance in countries with no diplomatic relations. Due to the NGOs' soft power, other countries develop a good impression of Taiwan and the countries' international reputation will also increase. NGOs in other countries recommended TRMPC to participate in CONGO and pointed out that TRMPC's performance in providing free healthcare has been recognized and applauded. It also provides opportunities for Taiwanese groups to participate in international organizations.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This research paper argues that NGO assistance in African countries is an important research direction for Taiwanese government to find out the possibilities to maintain and build the relationships within the African continent through NGO.

This research paper summarize the activities of Taiwanese technical assistance teams and two Taiwanese NGOs, Bjorgaas and TRMPC have done in Africa, including the challenges they faced. Moreover, this research paper uses the concept of soft power and global governance to compile the results and achievement of the projects of Taiwanese technical assistance teams and Taiwanese NGOs to the formal and informal network. This study compares two networks and explores the impact of their projects on Taiwan's international profile and diplomatic recognition.

Through the analysis, the research shows that the formal network has a relatively significant impact on Taiwan's international status, but that is no conducive to maintain diplomacy. Informal networks through the good interactions between NGOs and the host country's people and governments promote development cooperation. It also virtually increases Taiwan's foreign relations.

Further research can focus on the Taiwanese internal policy and foreign policy about NGOs, to analyze more in-depth and provide a practical government and non-government partnership regulation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Taiwan's diplomatic relations with Africa

Year (Number of Countries with diplomatic relations with Taiwan)	Establish diplomatic relations	Sever diplomatic relations
1960 (54)	Fédération du Mali(don't have this country now)	République du Mali
	Repoblikan'i Madagasikara	
	République démocratique du Congo	
	République du Congo	
	La République du Sénégal	
	République Islamique de Mauritanie	
	République gabonaise	
1961 (55)	Haute-Volta (Burkina Faso)	
1962 (60)	Tchad	
	République centrafricaine	
	Republic of Rwanda	
	République du Dahomey (Republic of Benin)	
1963 (64)	République de Côte d'Ivoire	
	République du Niger	
	Republic of Sierra Leone	
1964 (60)		République du Congo
		République centrafricaine
		La République du Sénégal
		République du Dahomey (Re- public of Benin)
1965 (59)		République Islamique de Mauri- tanie
1966 (64)	Republic of Malawi	
	Kingdom of Lesotho	
	Republic of Botswana	
	République du Dahomey (Republic of Benin)	
1967 (66)		
1968 (69)	République centrafricaine	
	Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland)	
	Republic of the Gambia	
1969 (70)	La République du Sénégal	
1971 (56)		Republic of Cameroon

		Republic of Sierra Leone
1972 (43)		La République du Sénégal
		Republic of Rwanda
		République Togolaise
		République de Madagascar
		Tchad
1973 (39)		Republic of Zaire (République démocratique du Congo)
		Haute-Volta (Burkina Faso)
		République du Dahomey (Republic of Benin)
1974 (32)		République gabonaise
		Republic of Botswana
		République du Niger
		Republic of the Gambia
1976 (26)	Republic of South Africa	République centrafricaine
1960 (54)	Fédération du Mali(don't have this country now)	République du Mali
	Republikan'i Madagasikara	
	République démocratique du Congo	
	République du Congo	
	La République du Sénégal	
	République Islamique de Mauritanie	
	République gabonaise	
1961 (55)	Haute-Volta (Burkina Faso)	
1962 (60)	Tchad	
	République centrafricaine	
	Republic of Rwanda	
	Répub Year (Number of Countries with diplomatic relations with Taiwan) The relationships Built The relationships broke lique du Dahomey (Republic of Benin)	
1963 (64)	République de Côte d'Ivoire	
	République du Niger	

	Republic of Sierra Leone	
1964 (60)		République du Congo
		République centrafricaine
		La République du Sénégal
		République du Dahomey (Republic of Benin)
1965 (59)		République Islamique de Mauritanie
1966 (64)	Republic of Malawi	
	Kingdom of Lesotho	
	Republic of Botswana	
	République du Dahomey (Repub- lic of Benin)	
1967 (66)		
1968 (69)	République centrafricaine	
	Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland)	
	Republic of the Gambia	
1969 (70)	La République du Sénégal	
1971 (56)		Republic of Cameroon
		Republic of Sierra Leone
1972 (43)		La République du Sénégal
		Republic of Rwanda
		République Togolaise
		République de Madagascar
		Tchad
1973 (39)		Republic of Zaire (Ré- publique démocratique du Congo)
		Haute-Volta (Burkina Faso)
		République du Dahomey (Republic of Benin)
1974 (32)		République gabonaise
		Republic of Botswana
		République du Niger
		Republic of the Gambia
1976 (26)	Republic of South Africa	République centrafricaine
1977 (23)		Republic of Liberia
1978 (22)		State of Libya
1983 (24)		République de Côte d'Ivoire

		Kingdom of Lesotho
1989 (26)	Republic of Liberia	
1990 (28)	Kingdom of Lesotho	
	República da Guiné-Bissau	
1991 (29)	République centrafricaine	
1992 (30)	République du Niger	
1994 (29)	Burkina Faso	Kingdom of Lesotho
1995 (30)	Republic of the Gambia	
1996 (30)	La République du Sénégal	République du Niger
1997 (30)	Tchad	
1998 (27)		Republic of South Africa
		République centrafricaine
		República da Guiné-Bissau
2003 (27)		Republic of Liberia
2005 (25)		La République du Sénégal
2006 (24)		Tchad
2008 (23)		Republic of Malawi
2013 (22)		Republic of the Gambia
2018 (17)		Burkina Faso
2020 (15)	Republic of Somaliland	

Appendix 2 Bilateral Projects of ICDF

- 2011, Libya, Provision of Chicken Feed to ensure Food Security in Libya, TaiwanICDF, Mercy Corps
- 2011-2012, Kenya, Drought Relief in North Eastern Kenya - Phase 1 & phase 2, TaiwanICDF, Mercy Corps
- 2011-2012, South Sudan, Support to IDPs, Returnees and Host Communities in South Sudan, TaiwanICDF, Mercy Corps, UNHCR
- 2012-2014, Malawi, Healthcare Personnel Training Program
- 2013-2014, South Sudan, Food Security Assistance for IDPs, Returnees and Host Communities in Abyei Area, Mercy Corps, Abyei Secretariat for Agriculture, Animal Resources and Fisheries (SAARF)
- 2014-2016, Malawi, Strengthening the Management of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Hypertension among Mobile Populations in Southern Africa Project, Ministry of Foreign Affairs/TaiwanICDF/Other sources of funding collated by Luke International/Pingtung Christian Hospital
- 2014-2016, South Africa, Strengthening the Management of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Hypertension among Mobile Populations in Southern Africa Project, Ministry of Foreign Affairs/TaiwanICDF/Other sources of funding collated by Luke
- 2014, Tunisia, EBRD Financial Intermediary Investment Special Fund—Small Business Account—Phase III—Subproject 6: Tunisie Leasing S.A. MSME project, EBRD
- 2015, Nigeria, Healthcare Personnel Training Program
- 2016, Nigeria, Healthcare Personnel Training Program
- 2020, Uganda, TaiwanICDF Overseas Volunteers Program, TaiwanICDF

Appendix 3 NGO Map

Category	NGO
Humanitarian Aid & Charity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation(emergency relief/ Charity relief) 2. Taiwan Fund for Children and Families (child) 3. Providence University Center for Service Learning Development (summer volunteer) 4. Puhsein Foundation(education) 5. The Garden of Hope Foundation (Rice aid) 6. Chaoyang University of Technology Extra-curricular Activity Section(summer volunteer)
Agriculture & Environmental Protection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taiwan Green Technology Industry Alliance (Africa energy Indaba)
Healthcare	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dimanson Medical Foundation Chia-Yi Christian Hospital (Maternal and infant health care improvement) 2. Taipei Municipal Wanfang Hospital (Managed by Teipei Medical University) (Enhancement project for early diagnosis, care and treatment of cancer in Eswatini) 3. Taiwan Africa International Services Association (Mobile health checkup) 4. National Cheng Kung University(Health and Medical cooperation) 5. Taiwan Root Medical Corps
Social Welfare	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fubon Culture & Educational Foundation (Livelihood development (Malawi)/ water resources(Mozambique)) 2. Bjorgaas Social Welfare Foundation(education and community development: health protection/ education support/ economic empowerment) (Malawi) 3. Taiwan Africa International Services Association(Computer, ICT) 4. Taiwan Africa International Services Association(Hygiene education) 5. Good Shepheed Social Welfare Foundation(Women and Children) 6. And Me Taiwan(Child)(Women empowerment) 7. Maria Social Welfare Foundation(women empowerment)

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