THE STRATEGIES OF PORTUGUESE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FIELD OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

"The strategies of civil society organizations in the field of the environment" is the result of research conducted as part of the Project "strategies of international players in the area of the environment" carried out at OBSERVARE, the Observatory for External Relations of Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa. The objective of the study was to understand and characterize the involvement of Portuguese NGOs, or of those based in Portugal, in the field of the environment, identifying and evaluating the relationships they have established with external partners, namely with regard to the following: privileged countries; types of partners; intervention areas; methodologies and tools. The study was based on the concepts of development cooperation, including players and tools, partnership in international relations, and social and environmental sustainability, taking also into account the Millennium Development Goals, in particular as regards the Seventh Target: Guaranteeing Environmental Sustainability.

Given the broad scope of the study, a short questionnaire was built following the principle of guaranteed anonymity and made available online. After making a list of NGOs (ENGOs and DNGOs), the questionnaire was sent to many of these organizations, requesting them to respond to the questionnaire (N=43). From the data analysis and by confronting it with the concepts previously explored, it emerged that the majority undertake joint activity in Portugal and in partner countries, mostly with other similar organizations after the establishment of partnerships. The activity focuses on social and environmental projects of local relevance, with mixed funding that is mostly international in nature, and has clear objectives for promoting development.

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1. Introductory aspects

The text "The strategies of civil society organizations in the field of the environment"[1] is the result of research (study) conducted by the Observatory for Foreign Relations (OBSERVARE) of Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa (UAL) on the international activity of Civil Society Organizations (NGOs) in the field of the environment. This topic has been given particular attention under the project "strategies of international players in the area of the environment", which is part of the Research Strand "Trends in International Current Affairs". The overall objective of the study was to understand the involvement of Portuguese NGOs, or those operating in Portugal, in the area of the environment. The specific objectives centred on:

a) Identifying the areas of intervention of the NGOs, considering a wide range of possibilities, but taking as a reference and common factor their concern to create a balanced relationship between human communities, environmental areas, and natural resources;

b) Charactering the main and subsidiary activities of NGOS with regard to social and economic dynamics;

c) Defining the relationships established with other international organizations, perceived as facilitators of further action and of implementation of planned projects.

In general, both in the academic and scientific community and in terms of intervention, there is agreement as to the various difficulties[2] that civil society and the organizations that emerge within it have faced regarding the continuity of their action. In order to minimize the constraints that limit their intervention, often threatening the continuity of projects, NGOs are inclined to consider the possibility of opening external links that end to position them either as beneficiaries or as promoters and supporters, or, even more frequently, as partners.

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[1] The results of the research were presented at the First International Conference of OBSERVARE, held on 17 November 2011, in the section "Economy and Ecology", which took place at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon. The Conference was organized by the Observatory for Foreign Relations (OBSERVARE) of *Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa* and focused on the topic "International Trends and Portugal's position ".

[2] Around the world, particularly in countries with poor economies but also in Portugal, it is common to find references to Non-Governmental Organizations faced with restricted activity as a result of reduced budget capacity, lack of funding, scarce specialized scientific and technical knowledge of particular sectors of activity, and shortage of human resources, among other factors.

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In this sense, the study was conducted from the perspective of internationalization of partnerships, seeking to identify:

a) the key geographical areas that have caught the attention of Portuguese NGOs, or those operating in Portugal;

b) countries with which partnerships have been established;

c) the main funders of projects and programmes, including international organizations;

d) standard international partners;

e) preferred sectors of intervention;

f) methodologies followed and tools that have acted as the basis for intervention in relation to previously outlined objectives.

2. Some considerations on the methodology

Bearing in mind the objectives set (see. 1. Introductory aspects), and the concern to complement conceptual analysis with the interpretation of reality to avoid analytical dispersion and overly theoretical discussions, we sought to follow a methodology that was as close as possible to the activities carried out by the NGOs involved in the study. As the research proceeded, some difficulties[3] related to pursuing a proximity approach and intervening on the ground[4] to better understand the organizational models and practices of NGOs came to the fore. Thus, a combined methodology was adopted, starting by enquiring Portuguese NGOs or those with activity conducted in Portugal, without completely ruling out the assumptions of the case study.

As the name of the methodology suggests, ever since the merit and scientific significance of these approaches have been acknowledged, there has been a tendency to focus studies on clearly pre-identified situations, the aforesaid "case studies". A cross-reading of the different methodological methods would characterize the case study as one that tends to be qualitative, given that most research that has adopted these practices as a means to reflect on reality lies within the Social Sciences and works on the ground, resorting to direct observation and subsequent evaluation. In this context[5], the use of case studies for conducting research that imply field work is very common, for which reason they are associated with predominantly qualitative approaches.

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[3] The initial decision to use the case study model was a result of the prior knowledge that the author of this study had of the organizational model of Portuguese NGOs, as well as of the their approaches and ways of operating, international fund raising, and establishment of partnerships. However, as the research progressed, it was decided to expand the scope of the study in order not to restrict interpretation by favouring a particular civil society organization in detriment of others.

[4] Adopting the case study methodology in this type of research is not consensual, although it can be justified according to the criteria described in this text.

[5] Since case study-based methodology became accepted from a scientific viewpoint, it has been particularly used in analysis within the scientific areas of sociology, anthropology and psychology. Recently, new concepts that enable interconnecting quantitative and qualitative techniques, or give priority to one of them according to the characteristics of the object of study have emerged. This factor does not remove importance to the way it is approached nor does it take away its scientific merit.

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A thorough review of the literature indicates that currently there are no limits to the use of this methodology, nor a mandatory binding to merely qualitative procedures. Initial conventional approaches resorting to case studies focused analysis on qualitative techniques, namely by using interview techniques and direct observation to build a research diary or field journal. Our understanding of this methodology has evolved towards greater flexibility in the selection of data collecting and processing techniques, precisely because field work and on-site observation is not always feasible.

In more recent research[6] where the methodology adopted was the case study, the possibility of resorting to quantitative techniques with regard to data collection and processing has been demonstrated, as showed through the use of questionnaires. This is a methodological option that depends on the study that is being carried out, on the object of analysis and on the scope of the universe, and there may be a need for a sample basis, due to the inability to consider the entire situation[7].

In the present study, a combination of procedures has been consciously adopted with regard to the risk of a less consensual interpretation, but also as a contribution to the promotion of future discussion. Although the adaptability of this methodology is not consensual and may generate discussion as to the relevance and appropriateness of the analyses with a tendency for quantification, it is important to clarify that, over time, the relevance of this methodology and its adaptability to distinct types of research have been subject to both conceptual and procedural review, opening different possibilities as regards the selection of the instruments used during the research. Giving a revisionist direction to more conventional methodological approaches, some authors[8] refer to "case studies" or even to "multiple case studies", thus enabling the use of a very wide range of data collecting and processing, including statistical sources and questionnaires.

According to Robert Yin (1994; 2001) and Judith Bell (1997), this methodology is particularly used whenever one wants to understand and describe the assumptions of a complex problem and identify the interactions between the parts that form it. Thus, this can be considered a methodology suitable for both exploratory studies, enabling the presentation of leads for future reflection, and for descriptive studies which seek to present a picture as detailed as possible of the reality under study. When resorting to this methodology, Bell (1997) proposes using different data collecting techniques – qualitative and quantitative – and presents an analogy between case studies and an umbrella that allows using several techniques that can be brought together depending on the variety of facts in question.

Three distinct but interrelated key moments are considered in the planning of actions to be undertaken (Yin, 2001), namely: 1) defining the theoretical framework and selecting the cases to analyse; 2) collecting data based on previously constructed data collection instruments; 3) relating the data analysis to the theoretical questions previously

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6   Despite the fact that initially social sciences resorted to these methodological procedures, with time some studies within exact science, such as mathematics and its suitability for accounting, have opted to use case studies and mainly quantitative techniques. For further information on this topic, see, for example, Ponte, João Pedro (2006). *Estudos de caso em educação matemática*. Bolema, Boletim de Educação Matemática, 25.

7   In these cases, the objective is not to make inferences and generalizations from a pre-defined representative sample and following statistical criteria; rather, it is to identify trends that facilitate knowledge about a given topic.

8   On this topic, see authors such as K. Eisenhardt, Lisa Ellram, Flávio Bressan, Robert Yin, and Judith Bell, among others.

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submitted. According to this explanation, the decision to adopt the case study method seeks to present facts, rather than offer a discussion of concepts or theoretical approaches, thus enabling a better understanding of the subject of study and a description, as detailed as possible, of real situations which promote the advancement of knowledge about a particular situation. João Pedro Ponte defines this methodology as:

> *"a research that is particular to a specific situation and deliberately addresses a particular case perceived as unique or special, at least in some aspects, and attempts to discover what its most essential and characteristics features are, and thus contribute to the overall understanding of a particular interesting phenomenon"* (Ponte, 2006: 2).

With regard to this specific study, I have attempted to follow the criteria presented by the authors referred to concerning the revisionist approach to case study methodology, framing the activities of NGOs in the field of the environment and taking as a guideline their relationship with international counterparts. Accordingly, the decision to use the study case methodology was anchored on the following presuppositions:

1) It was not possible to see the work in the field of the civil society organizations that participated in this study. As they provided the main source of information, the use of mostly qualitative techniques was frustrated at the outset, for which reason it became necessary to choose other quantitative techniques to conduct the survey;

2) Both the pre-identified universe (N=75) and the number of NGOs involved in the study (N=43) was not broad enough to justify the use of other quantitative models with sequent statistical analysis that include validation tests;

3) The objectives of the analysis were complex and assumed, on the one hand, a descriptive interpretation of the available information, and, on the other, the intersection of data collected with the conceptual criteria previously defined and presented;

4) The environment and development NGOs involved in the study have been identified, and some of them were willing to be formally referenced in the texts to be produced in future and in pubic presentations on the results of the study, such as the First OBSERVARE Conference.

In accordance with the three moments defined by Yin (2001), in the beginning the conceptual and theoretical framework was explained, in addition to building the data collection instrument (see Appendix). This was followed by consultation with civil society organizations[9] working in the field of the environment. Accordingly, a list of

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[9] Among the 43 Civil Society Organizations (NGOs) that cooperated and enabled this study the following agreed to be identified: WW*F – World Wildlife Foundation Portugal-Mediterranean Programme Office* (Ângela Morgado); *ASPEA – Associação Portuguesa de Educação Ambiental* (Fátima Matos Almeida); *NEREA-Investiga – Associação Internacional de Investigadores em Educação Ambiental* (Joaquim Ramos

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Portuguese or acting in Portugal Non-Governmental Organizations for the Environment (ENGOs) was drawn up, including those operating in the mainland and in the autonomous regions of Madeira and of the Azores. This was followed by a supplementary list of Non-Governmental Organizations for Development (DNGOs) whose main activity was not the environment but which carry out projects within an environmental context or which have environmental impact.

To facilitate the collection of data, a short questionnaire following the principle of anonymity was built (see Annex) and made available online[10] for a predetermined period of time. The entities had the option to identify themselves should they wish to do so. The request for cooperation was done by email to all ENGOS and DNGOs on the list previously drawn up. Accordingly, it can be stated that it was the consultation process to civil society organizations directly and indirectly involved in the field of the environment that enabled defining the cases under study (N=43)[11].

The questionnaire (see Annex) was mainly composed of close-ended questions, including, in some cases, the possibility of multiple choices, and, in some fields, open answers. This arose from the conviction that, in some situations, open answers offer qualitative information that complements quantitative data. In these situations, the information was subsequently classified in groups according to types, contributing to better understanding and interpretation. The consultation thus reconciled two complementary ways of collecting data which, for practical purposes, were done at the same consultation moment: closed-ended questions, for a quantitative based analysis, and questions allowing open answers, to enable qualitative analysis.

After the data was collected, it was analyzed according to the criteria described earlier with a view to drawing valid conclusions regarding the research objectives initially set.

3. Some concepts under analysis

3.1. Brief reference to the importance of environmental issues

Despite the trend towards a gradual appreciation of environmental issues worldwide, this awareness has not been regular nor continuous, having often been sidelined in relation to other issues considered to be priorities, such as the emerging economic crisis, socio-political instability, violation of human rights, or the outbreak of conflicts or wars that frequently involve international intervention, both armed and through diplomatic channels to ensure stability and the maintenance of peace. This fact has meant that the impacts of the conceptual, theoretical and methodological discussion have been faint and not consistent in strategic terms, not leading to the adoption of effective broad measures enabling a balanced socio-environmental relationship.

Pinto); *SETA – Sociedade Portuguesa para o Desenvolvimento da Educação e Turismo Ambientais* (Fernando Louro Alves); *OIKOS – Cooperação e Desenvolvimento* (José Luís Monteiro); *TESE - Associação para o Desenvolvimento* (Henrique Gomes); *Escola de Mar* (Cristina Brito); *Centro de Energia das Ondas* (Teresa Simas); *Associação dos Amigos do Parque Ecológico do Funchal* (Raimundo Quintal); *Amigos dos Açores – Associação Ecológica* (Diogo Caetano); *Onda Verde, Associação Juvenil de Ambiente e Aventura* (Serafim Silva); *AESDA – Associação de Estudos Subterrâneos e Defesa do Ambiente* (Frederico Regala).

[10] The questionnaire was built using the SurveyMonkey platform, and was temporarily accessible at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7YDC55M (between 30 March and 30 April 2011). It was subsequently closed down for data processing.

[11] At an early exploratory stage 75 requests for collaboration were sent to DNGOs and ENGOs. Forty three returned complete questionnaires, yielding 43 complete responses (57.3%), which formed the sample basis.

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Over time and since the emergence of environmental concerns, the topic has been part of international agendas predominantly in connection with other areas usually classified as critical, and been portrayed as an additional factor for a better understanding of the causes and impacts of problems. Awareness that the environment is an area for intervention as important as others, in that it puts them into context and justifies them, while being the receptacle of impacts, is recent and, despite efforts, not yet consensual. This idea is confirmed by identifying some moments in history that nowadays are seen as points of reference following the emergence of ecological thinking and which show a growing international awareness, albeit lacking continuity[12]:

a) the Zero Growth Issue, widely presented and discussed in the Reports of the Club of Rome[13], which confirmed the direct interconnection of the cause-effect relationship between scarcity and the possible exhaustibility of particularly profitable natural resources, such as petrol, and the likely inability to continue the models favouring economic growth implemented in the Western world. This concern with the environment, based purely in utilitarian motives, presents development from an economic perspective, playing down the importance given to natural resources in a systemic and integrated approach. In the 1960s, the understanding that Nature contained an intrinsic value was still far from widespread, and, above all, there was a triple perception with regard to environmental issues:

- First, awareness of the limits on economic growth heavily dependent on the availability of natural resources as a result of the finite nature of the environment;

- Secondly, the idea of the imbalance in the equation geographic space-availability of resources, i.e. the unequal distribution worldwide;

- Thirdly, the perception that the productive activities that foster economic circuits worldwide depend on the whole on the available quantity and accessibility of natural resources;

b) the formulation of the concept of *sustainable development* inspired by the earlier conceptualization of *eco development*[14]*,* widely disseminated from 1987 onwards through the well-known Brundtland Report, "Our common future[15]. Knowing that the proposal of the World Commission on Environment and Development focused on the

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12 It must be pointed out that the moments described here are just a few examples and that there is no intention to provide an exhaustive description of all the stages that have marked the history of environmental thought.

13 The Reports of the Club of Rome that show the Problem of Zero Growth are "The limits to growth", dated 1972, prepared by a team from he MIT and coordinated by Donella Meadows; "Mankind at the turning point, from 1974, coordinated by Mihajlo Mizarovic; " Reshaping the International Order (1976), coordinated by Jan Tinbergen.

14 The concept of *Eco development arose following the UN Conference on Environment* (1972), commonly known as the Stockholm Conference on the initiative of Maurice Strong. It brought together the principles of economics and ecology in a unique way, seeking to minimize the differences between those who advocated development at any cost and supporters of environmentalism. At the time, the concept was considered to be innovative and was later adopted by Ignacy Sachs, who saw other implications in it, such as social, cultural implications, and ethics. For additional information, see Sachs, Ignacy (1986). *Ecodesenvolvimento: crescer sem destruir*. São Paulo: Vértice.

15 The original document of the report "Our Common Future can be found in http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm (acceded on 28 November 2011).

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preparation of a diagnosis of the socio-environmental situation worldwide, identifying common problems and shared solutions, the concept is defined as the process that:

> *"seeks to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, which means enabling people, now and in the future, to reach a satisfactory level of social and economic development and of human and cultural fulfilment and, at the same time, make reasonable use of the Earth resources preserving endangered species and natural habitats"* (Brundtland Commission, 1987).

At least three key ideas to remember are implicit in this definition:

1. The first idea is the systemic and integrative assumption that defines and characterizes development as a process of qualitative change in the living conditions of populations, allowing encompassing different concerns, including environmental;

2. The second idea is conveyed by the time dimension that openly and without limitations to epochs identifies two major moments – the present and the future – where the criterion of continuity is implicit;

3. The third idea is the conviction that it is possible to establish, worldwide, a global partnership for development centred on solving social and environmental problems through international cooperation mechanisms;

c) The results achieved after the Earth Summit[16] in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, as well as those of the Global Forum and in thematic parallel events organized in that context. In this high-level summit, and contrary to what was common until the early 1990s, there was a strong incentive for civil society massive participation. The importance of the proactive capacity and involvement of distinct groups and social movements in mitigating environmental problems, which in one way or another jeopardize the balance and wellbeing of human lives, was acknowledged internationally. Specifically, in the Global Forum and parallel events the civil society had its own areas for presenting concrete cases, marked by shared experiences, promoting debate with the purpose of building together a coherent and workable strategy capable of being implemented over time, the twenty first century being

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[16] This is the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in which 172 countries participated and 108 heads of state were present, mobilizing 2400 civil society organizations. It was considered to be one of the major international events in the area of the environment, and which more results has achieved to date. It had the merit of bringing together to the same event politicians, local stakeholders and activists. It is noteworthy to mention that despite distinct types of players being allowed to share their experiences and have strategic discussions, there was no direct interaction between the representatives of civil society and heads of state, with different areas being created, which resulted in the production of two documents which naturally focused on the specific concerns of each group. Also as a result of this, civil society activists were critical of the functioning of the Rio Summit, believing that the objectives had not been met. However, analyzing it now, and comparing this summit with other events in the area of the environment, allow us to recognize the merit of this summit, in such a way that Rio+20 brings hopes for new advances on this matter.

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the objective. Since 1992, scholars in social and environmental issues have gained a new resource that strongly motivates people and which over the years has been readapted according to the sectors and target groups: Agenda 21[17];

d) The progress achieved through the Kyoto Protocol[18] which, although not followed across the world, is almost consensual internationally[19]. Since the main goal is to reduce greenhouse emissions worldwide, one of the most important point of the agreement lies in the assumption of shared responsibility, albeit in different ways[20]. If, on the one hand, it proposes the co-responsibility of different states to adopt, at national level, concrete measures that have a positive impact on the environment worldwide, on the other hand, it argues for international cooperation through the exchange of experiences in order to achieve effective results.

Despite various nternational meetings held following the events described above, the truth is that results seem to be either thematic or sectorial, or specific and without continuity[21], demonstrating a lack of global and systemic strategy with integrated mobilizing capacity worldwide. This is sometimes justified on political grounds, other times in the alternation in setting priorities, and also for budgetary reasons, which means that environmental issues continue to have a reduced importance compared to real needs.

3.2. The Environment in the context of International Relations

Despite being a relatively recent issue in the context of International Relations, there is room for a brief examination of the main theoretical orientations that more or less directly support this area of knowledge. International Relations theories address environmental issues in a broad, global and systemic way, balancing the need for distinct players to cooperate with the objective of creating conditions that foster the maintenance of the environment worldwide. In addition, the analysis focuses on the complex issues of sovereignty versus state intervention which, in this case, is directed towards the regulation of environmental issues (Colombo, 2007). Referring to the

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[17] The Agenda 21 is currently seen as one of the strategic papers which, to date, has attained most results in promoting behavioural changes all over the world in the search for a balanced relationship between people and nature. This text was at the origin of what is known as Environmental Education with practical application and international recognition. The original document was organized around four major topics: a) social and economic dimensions; b) preserving and managing resources for development; c) reinforcing the role of the key groups; d) means of implementation.

[18] According to the Protocol, the main areas in which there should be a global intervention are: 1) reform of the energy and transportation sectors; 2) promotion of renewable energies; 3) elimination of inappropriate financial and market mechanisms; 4) reducing methane emissions; 5) protection of forests.

[19] During the negotiation of the Protocol in 1997, and subsequent ratification in 1999, the signatory countries recognized there was a more or less direct relation between the emission of greenhouse gases and climate change, and that it was urgent to adopt regulatory measures at both industrial and business levels, and individually, which led to the creation of a global citizenship supporting social and environmental well-being worldwide.

[20] In this context, the principle of proportionality was adopted, which means that, although all member states have to adopt measures to attain the objectives that were set, the largest polluters are the ones that have to reduce emissions more. For additional information, see the text of the Protocol at http://mudancasclimaticas.cptec.inpe.br/~rmclima/pdfs/Protocolo_Quioto.pdf (accessed on 28 November de 2011).

[21] Examples of this perplexity are: first, the Earth Summit held in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, following the Rio Summit in 1992, as well as Rio+20, which will take place in June 2012, once again in Rio de Janeiro; on the other hand, the Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change (2005) was expected to give continuity to the progress made with the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the Durban Summit (2011).

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debate on the concept of sovereignty, there are concerns around the notion of territoriality and, consequently, with the forms of using and managing resources and areas. In this sense, by addressing environmental issues and taking into account the notion of sovereignty, some questions are posed about the interconnection between the intra and inter-state dimensions[22]. As mentioned above, although often the appreciation of environmental issues does not have the necessary continuity, the growing recognition of its importance in events such as intergovernmental summits[23] attests its rising importance in the international context. In parallel, the emergence of new contemporary problems with particular emphasis on environmental issues, which, to some extent, stem from the unregulated and unbalanced relationship, often aggressive, that human communities maintain with nature, have alerted the academic and scientific communities to the urgency of including these topics in the discussion. On the other hand, there is rising global awareness that the environment is not a closed and sealed reality, or simply regulated (and capable of being regulated) by border divisions[24]. Environmental issues have come to require a systemic and inclusive approach since, in what concerns environmental resources and areas, it becomes essential to have an approach that is consistent with all the problems.

Analyses conducted within the scientific field of international relations have acquired a rising importance in this area, since the global dimension of causes and impacts of environmental issues has been acknowledged, which presents the opportunity for an international approach. In fact, in the presence of problems that cross different countries and regions in the world, the need to redefine strategies, often classified as alternative, based on joint reflection and shared by different players seems obvious[25]. Worldwide, various events allow exemplifying these problems, including: threats to biodiversity and the possible exhaustibility of natural resources, both living ones (fauna and flora) and inert; the transformation of ecosystems with habitat loss; accentuated deforestation; degradation of marine environment; greenhouse emissions; increasingly frequent environmental disasters with more pronounced social and environmental effects (tsunamis, high impact earthquakes, intense floods, and prolonged droughts); loss of soil productivity; the management of finite resources, among others.

The approach to these issues has naturally been oriented according to the stakeholders: states; international organizations; civil society organizations; companies. This stance has enabled addressing issues around international environmental policies from a tripartite perspective of the relationship with the environment (Barros-Platiau, 2004), namely: 1) local, national and international or global; 2) transborder, global public good and common heritage of mankind; 3) nature, demography and technology.

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[22] Luigi Ferrajoli (*apud* Colombo, 2007) considers that, viewed in the international context, sovereignty has limits, and cannot be conceived in absolute terms. In this sense, it is important to clarify that the state is defined as a major player in international relations, but that the latter are equally regulated by broader power relations which often go beyond inter-state understanding.

[23] This importance is attested by the signing of agreements of understanding and strategic protocols with regard to the environment which, over time, have resulted mostly in inoperative declarations of intent rather than in models to be implemented.

[24] The idea that the environment is a global inclusive issue enables the creation of an image of an interconnected world attentive to identifying the problems that directly and indirectly affect all states, focused on solving the negative impacts and on predicting the occurrence of undesirable situations with a view to correcting them.

[25] In this context, the contributions made by representatives of states, public and private entities, more or less formal civil society organizations, and international organizations are considered.

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Part of the theoretical approaches of International Relations focuses the analysis of environmental issues on the role of the states[26], reviving the concept of Nation–State and the importance of sovereignty as a regulatory mechanism legitimated by territorial borders[27] (Barros-Platiau, 2004; Colombo, 2007), among other factors. In the international context, the concept of sovereignty refers to the established idea of independence and subsequent recognition by other states. With regard to global issues, as is the case with all matters pertaining to the environment and which somehow are perceived as being transnational, the domestic competences traditionally assigned to individual states become limited because they exceed the limits of their sovereignty. Since environmental risks and impacts have acquired a global dimension, the regulation of activities has also been viewed from an international stance. Risks became defined as being common to all and impacts are now felt at an increasing global level. In the context of international relations, states are not the only players which, to some extent, require us to review the theoretical assumptions that underpinned the analysis of the state's regulatory ability through the exercise of power. Over time, awareness of the emergence of global environmental problems with transnational impact extends beyond the action of states and the exercise of sovereignty.

Another player that has been gaining importance due to growing internationalization are international organizations, including United Nations agencies[28] and the World Bank[29], which have made a decisive contribution to highlighting the problem, denoting new conceptual associations with reference to poverty and socio-environmental sustainability, and going beyond interpretations merely focusing on conservation. In this context, international organizations have expressed concern that extends beyond raising the awareness of the different players involved. It is important to note that, despite efforts, results have been short of the objectives previously outlined, particularly with regard to action taken by states[30]. Environment and natural resources began to be perceived as a fundamental right (Colombo, 2007), which means looking at nature both in the present, safeguarding the welfare of populations around the world, and in the future, from the viewpoint of sustainability.

The third player is Civil Society Organizations, which emerge and are structured around specific objectives (see. 3.3. Civil Society Organizations: activity implementation) and, in the case of environmental issues, have a targeted intervention based on practical problems which, in most cases, national states have not resolved. The mobilization of civil society comes as an alternative without, nevertheless, a corresponding shift of

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[26] Silvana Colombo (2007) analyses the importance of the role of the modern state based on the Treaty of Westphalia, developing the concept of sovereignty based on the approach made by Jean Bodin with regard to the legitimate use of power. Subsequently, the issue around authority of the state is analyzed based on the theoretical contributions of Raymond Aron (1986).

[27] In this context, the concept of territoriality is of great relevance, given that, according to this view, areas, ecosystems and living and inert resources are included.

[28] At this level the international awareness work conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP stands out .

[29] The World Bank's Environment Strategy - "Making sustainable commitments. An environment strategy for the World Bank" (2011). Washington D.C.: The World Bank stands out. Accessed online:http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ENVIRONMENT/Resources/244380-1250028593656/6382907-1252510780845/6428643-1255012678534/WBG-Environment-Strategy-2001-Full.pdf (accessed on 12 March 2012).

[30] On this matter, Michel Bachelet (1997) and Silvana Colombo (2007) refer to the right of environmental interference, the latter writing that "interference is a right provided that, in the presence of omission on the part of one state, the other can resort to it; it is a right because the responsibility for protecting the environment is shared" (Colombo, 2007).

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responsibility, as they create their own internationalization mechanisms anchored on partnerships and networking.

Companies[31] are a player which, in the context of international relations, have seen their role increase from the viewpoint of theoretical analysis. They have drawn attention due to their actions and to the ability to create multiple international synergies, relating with states, interacting with international organizations and conditioning civil society. The internationalization strategies of companies have also been studied in this field of knowledge, due to the fact that they result in environmental impacts that in general require global regulation[32].

According to the presuppositions of realist theory, it is possible to foresee the need to create conditions to regulate international socio-environmental relationships, since balance is characteristically called into question by human activity[33], with a negative impact worldwide. Since Realism sees international relations as being based on the use and exercise of power (Mallmann, 2005), often leading to conflicts, the active role of the states is important. Thus, it is up to the state, as a player that guides its action rationally and objectively, to promote the national interest and this implies, among other factors, the management of natural resources and spaces. In this sense, the intervention of states appears to be particularly evidenced by participation in intergovernmental summits with their subsequent commitment expressed in the signing of declarations, protocols and even treaties.

Theoretical approaches to the scientific area of international relations that focus on environmental issues do not fully agree with Realism. According to the view proposed by Ana Barros-Platiau (*et al*, 2004), the most common theoretical perspectives for the analysis of (global) collective management of the environment focus on organizational approaches, international regimes and on global governance[34], denoting, on the whole, international cooperation practices to minimize environmental problems. To a large extent, environmental issues are explained from the concept of risk in global relations because they lead to a complex process involving different players, multiple interacting dimensions and the intersection of different generations at different times in an historical continuum.

The idea of risk in global relations with regard to environmental issues, seen from the perspective of the trans-nationalization of the impacts, calls for awareness of the emergence of global problems that are the result of local actions (Vieira, 2008). This understanding gives rise to new thoughts in international relations, enabling a close relationship between different territorial levels and the possibility for interaction among various players.

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[31] Although not within the scope of this study, it is important to note that issues around the trade of resources and species with great environmental impact also fits the context of the internationalization of companies.

[32] In addition to the notion of social responsibility, companies have been adopting an attitude of environmental responsibility that is transposed into the international context due to its inherent global implications.

[33] Deriving from conceptual analyses such as that of Thomas Hobbes and the Theory of the State of Nature (Mallmann, 2005), Realism in International Relations has an interpretation of social life with influence at various levels, including the environment. As happens in all forms of international relations, power is particularly referred to as a regulatory mechanism.

[34] The presuppositions of global governance are further stressed by James Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel (2000).

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3.3. Civil Society Organizations: activity implementation

During the evolutionary process that has characterized ecological thinking, the role of social movements and of more or less official civil society organizations has benefitted from progressive appreciation, though not yet consensual at global level. To some extent, this recognition resulted from the direct intervention on the ground of groups that were either formally constituted, or characterized by the informality of their action with regard to the environment and, more broadly, to development. Social movements also started to be seen as special vehicles for public participation, sometimes spontaneous, other times organized, in various areas, including the political sphere, on the part of individuals and groups not formally recognized as having the dual capacity for mobilization and intervention.

The appreciation of civil society as a development player stemmed from a process that was often marked by contradiction and "which mixed old and new structures, institutions and political projects" (Ferreira, 2004: 5) to the form it has today. Recognition of its importance was largely due to the so-called "New Social Movements"[35] that particularly focused on a set of emerging situations[36], guided by collective objectives and interests, of which Environment Protection Associations stand out (Rodrigues, 1995).

Civil society organizations defined as privileged actors of development[37] are characterized by their heterogeneity which, in part, is the result of the dispersion of sectors in which they intervene; in part, it stems from a certain irregularity in their action or failure to follow up projects that have been initiated; and in part it is the result of the lack of consensus with regard to terminology[38]. However, the reference literature presents a set of characteristics that helps us understand better the organizational model that distinguishes them from other organizations (Ferreira, 2004; Salamon, 2005; Franco, 2004; The Johns Hopkins Comparative Non Profit Project). Accordingly, these organizations can be defined as follows:

1. as non-governmental, that is, not dependent on states or governments, which confers them a private attribute in the form of organization and management, fundraising, obtaining materials, and even human resources;

2. their objects are not-for-profit, which means that despite their non-public operations (see previous point) and the need for funding sources that ensure

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[35] The New Social Movements are usually defined as a product of contemporary western societies that experienced the overvaluation of the welfare state concept (Rodrigues, 1995), where the assistance presuppositions of an active, attentive, intervening, and protecting state which history has proved ineffective, were showcased to the limit.

[36] Eugénia Rodrigues (1995) gives examples of these situations, such as the 1970 crisis, the nuclear threat and corresponding international stigma, gender discrimination, and the awareness of the existence of environmental problems at global level. These issues led to the emergence of peace, feminist and environmental movements guided by active citizenship principles which often gained political interpretations.

[37] In this context, development is seen as a process of change that can have multiple dimensions and which ideally is viewed from a systemic, global and inclusive form.

[38] In the context of civil society organizations, it is common to find references to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) which can focus on Development (DNGOs) or on the Environment (ENGOs), Non-Profit Organizations and Tertiary Organizations, for example. Their names vary a lot and appear to be defined by the specificities of the work conducted with regard to methodologies, target groups and even topics.

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internal management and the pursuit of planned activities, organizations arising out of civil society are not driven by concerns about profitability or enrichment;

3. they tend to have an economic framework centred on the presuppositions of the solidarity economy, which on the one hand suggests the limited pursuit of goods production, distribution and consumption activities and, on the other hand, a high risk associated to intervention;

4. they give priority to sector areas and/or to specific target groups previously selected according to the needs and whose situation points to the urgency for direct and close intervention enabling the resolution of problems identified previously. As a result, they are defined as organizations whose action is motivated by service to the community;

5. they defend and follow methodologies targeted for intervention in specific situations, on a case by case basis, by first analysing and diagnosing the situation, followed by monitoring and evaluation of the impacts, whether positive or negative. In this sense, they see intervention as a learning process and as a means of improving practice and, whenever possible, of sharing experiences as examples to be disseminated;

6. they show a particular aptitude for mobilizing supporters and involving them to carry out concrete actions, often based on a volunteer-based principle and taking into account the objectives set previously, valuing and acknowledging the capabilities of all, including minority groups;

7. they promote the dissemination and adoption of values guiding individual action that legitimize community action, such as social solidarity, respect for difference, accountability for action, and ethics.

As regards socio-environmental issues, and in accordance with the principles that characterize their action, Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOs)[39], as a model of organization of civil society, have been seen as the ones that have adopted an intervention in close proximity methodology. As has been happening in other areas of the world - Portugal being no exception -, the diversity of situations has been a fact in the course of civil society organizations, calling for the case by case action methodology. This methodological presupposition implies prior identification of problems, characterization and subsequent solutions adapted to distinct contexts. Naturally, this type of intervention progressively moves away from the action that is characteristic of states, thus requiring a different and differentiated look at situations. The relationship between human communities and the environment has received increased attention from the ENGOs which, over time, have been complementing the purely environmental approach, which aims at preserving areas and species, with a socio-cultural and economic approach, thus giving rise to a socio-environmental interpretation. Indeed, there has been an increasingly differentiated understanding of the environmental situation and now it is believed that often human communities tend to influence the state of the environment through their actions, sometimes spoiling it,

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[39] In Portugal, recognition of Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations was late coming, dating from 1998, when the ENGO Law no 35/98 of 18 July was published. For further information, see the website of the Portuguese Environment Agency at http://www.apambiente.pt (accessed on 10 February 2012).

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other times protecting it. This action appears to be clearly dominated by socio-cultural representation of spaces, resources, and species, but equally by socio-economic activities which, in specific contexts, depend directly from nature, and also by rooted traditional cultural practices that generate habits and behaviours that promote imbalances. In this regard, the literature points to two specific typical situations: a) behaviours guided by irresponsibility and disrespect, based on markedly utilitarian concerns, resulting in predatory actions; b) attitudes and practices that favour a change that is accountable and that calls for accountability concerned with the establishment of a sustainable relationship with nature. Regardless of the priority areas of intervention of civil society organizations, and despite the motivation for action with the goal of solving concrete problems, hence increasingly focusing on the local dimension, we have realized that these organizations have shown some inability in complying with all the proposed actions in an individual and autonomous manner.

Given the evolution of international contexts, which allow us to view various crises with different impacts, it is indisputable that the new development players have emerged with specific objectives without attempting to replace the role conventionally attributed to the state, intervening directly in the identification of problems and priorities, as well as in the possible alternatives to solve them.

It is in this context that civil society organizations, often called non-governmental organizations, are formed or reinforced, precisely due to their extra-governmental nature[40], shown in their constitution, acting profile, and in how they attract and manage financial, human and material resources. As has been happening almost in all areas and activity sectors, these organizations face constraints with regard to availability of funds, technical and scientific knowledge, and human resources, and ultimately find ways of finding alternative forms to promote the institutional effort. The most frequent way to do so is to resort to international cooperation by establishing partnerships[41].

Civil society organizations can also be classified as national or international in nature. According to Kathleen Staudt (1991), for a long time these organizations focused their attention on international cooperation mechanisms, ensuring the funding of projects based on private financial support or from other international institutions. However, as the operational costs proved to be too high without immediate or direct returns in terms of efficacy, the trend was to establish partnerships and to conduct joint actions with local partners.

Initially, a significant part of NGO activities has proved problematic because they operate in an unknown geographic, natural, social, cultural, economic, and political environment where experience and familiarity for purposes of identifying problems and solutions are perceived to be inclusive mechanisms. On the other hand, the management and implementation of projects has in many cases been done at a distance without an overall perception of reality, which means a relative lack of

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[40] The connection between NGOs and developmental issues has gained particular importance after the recognition that management by the states was ineffective regarding solving concrete issues, which basically had to do with the lives of people, particularly in poorer countries, where dependence on the environment is a fact.

[41] The idea of Development Partnerships (DP), particularly in international terms, is quite recent and has not been immediately accepted and implemented by civil society organizations, which ended up being perceived as an operational methodology for targeted action and as a guarantee to achieve the outlined objectives.

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connection with regard to problems, needs, constraints, and people. As those involved became aware of the frailties of the model, the cooperation methodology resorting to civil society underwent changes which led to the partnership model, which has proved more beneficial and effective, enabling a regular and continuous intervention with no peaks or stops.

According to the seven characterization factors described earlier, one can say that NGOs focus their attention on fostering change, defined as associations (Alves, 1996) that start, reinvent and implement international cooperation projects with the purpose of attaining development. They are not bound to public power and the necessary funding to enable them to carry out their activities is provided by national or international private entities.

Whereas initially NGOs were mainly focused on humanitarian aid, implementing projects aimed at food security, mitigation of hunger, poverty reduction, and assistance to war refugees, it was only later that they shifted their activity to other issues related to development. Naturally, given the scope of the afore-mentioned socio-economic problems, concerns over the environment came second because, to a large extent, they were believed to be part of the ethos of the projects, making no sense separating them and treating them as a separate issue. Regardless of the sector area, the main goal became having a long-term positive impact, once again rediscovering the principles of sustainability.

It is customary to think that NGOs support concrete specific tasks according to pre-identified needs, mostly technical in nature, in distinct sector areas, such as: project management; credit to small-scale initiatives (microcredit) including agricultural, commercial, and handcraft projects; education; health; environmental preservation, and the conservation of species. Accordingly, the intervention methodology focuses on the work carried out with local entities following the Development Partnership (DP) principle. This involves NGOs, non-formal associations and working groups, in addition to traditional authorities and representatives of local government, in order to encourage the principles of participation and involvement (Staudt, 1991).

The reference literature suggests that civil society organizations act to seek consensus with the target groups, given that the intervention is perceived as an inclusive instrument and an enabler of the cultural references that tend to promote and motivate community action by strengthening identity. Anyway, despite that being the engine for their work, these organizations do not play down the importance of economic growth, as it is perceived as one of the dimensions of sustainability[42], particularly after the conceptual review presented by the United Nations Development Programme /UNDP), which gave rise to a global, systemic, and inclusive perspective of Sustainable Human Development (see Fig. 1), centred on the principle of equity.
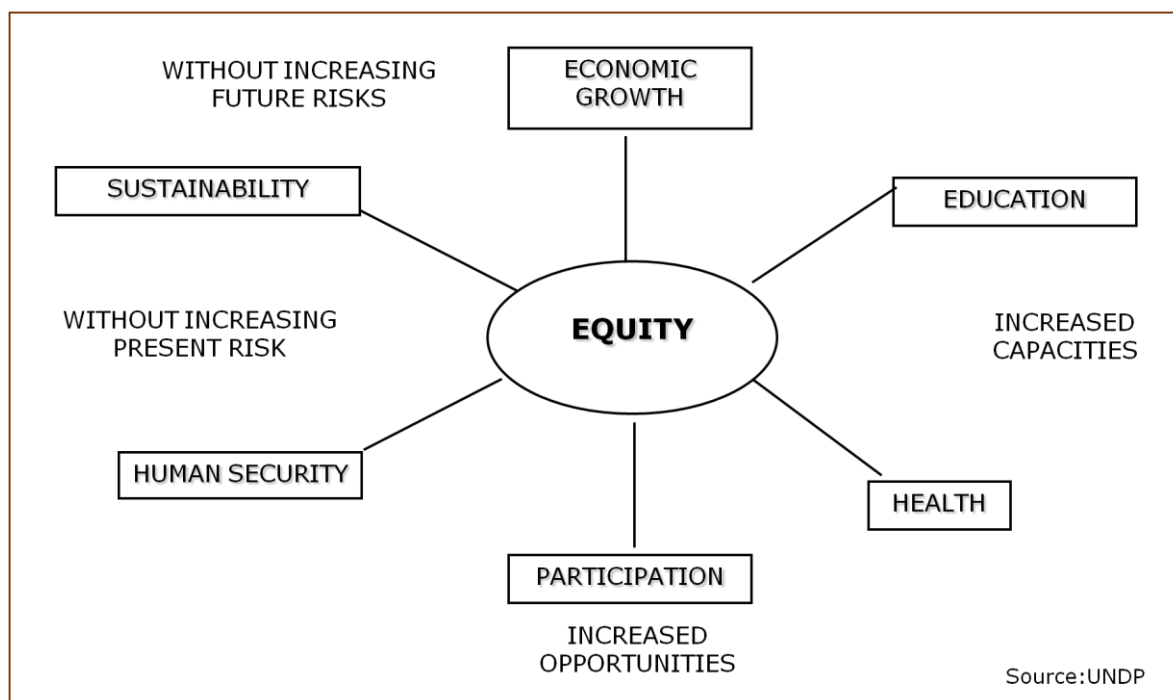
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[42] This principle is largely supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the concept of Sustainable Human Development.

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Fig. 1. – Dimensions of Sustainable Human Development presented by the UNDP


As mentioned earlier, given the inherent constraints of limited budgets that these organizations typically have, the methodology adopted tends to focus on the location; projects in specific areas and well-identified sectors are preferred, to ensure that set objectives are achieved. This methodological option does not mean they do not follow a systemic and interdisciplinary approach. Indeed, this seems to be a constant reference in the literature when addressing the issue of involvement of civil society organizations, since the impacts they wish to create tend to be mixed and interrelated.

The field of action of ENGOs and DNGOs fits within the large umbrella of Cooperation for Development alternative practices, since by acting externally, these organizations foster the establishment of partnerships and the creation of networks and platforms (see Fig. 2) based on common guidelines and synergies. Besides concern about strengthening civil society, the idea that the closer these organizations are the greater their strength to act in the mitigation of problems and in promoting development is also implicit. Thus, within the context of civil society, different types of players are valued (Non-Governmental Organizations for Development and for the Environment, informal and pressure groups, non-formal local associations, occasional social movements, among others) and clearly stand out from conventional players (traditionally identified with the state or entities decentralized from the state, and, more recently, companies). The role of these new development players that turn to international cooperation is recognized, the same applying to their accountability in action.

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Fig. 2. – Schematic Representation of the Work of Civil Society Organizations
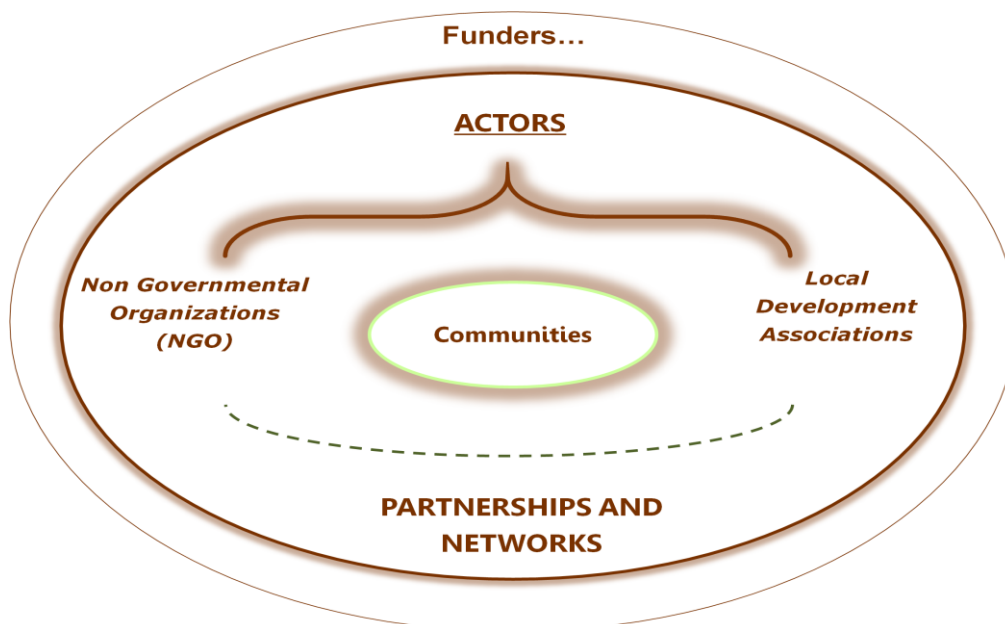
The scope of NGOs' activities thus focuses on the location, given that concrete actions involving the communities regardless of gender, age or socio-professional group, are planned, promoted, and implemented. As regards the necessary financing, to a large extent they resort to external sources, namely funds made available by various international organizations.

4. Civil Society Strategies in the field of the environment

As part of the study "Strategies of Civil Society Organizations in the field of the environment", Portuguese NGOs or with a presence in Portugal were consulted. As explained in the objectives of the study (see 1. Introductory Aspects and 2. Some References on the Methodology), the contact sought to understand[43] the scope of the intervention of Portuguese civil society organizations, or those acting in Portugal, in the area of the environment, particularly whenever this involves external relations.

The sample that acted as a basis for the study comprised 43 civil society organizations, including those directly aimed at addressing environmental issues, and those working on development issues cutting across the environment[44] or living and inert natural resources, denoting specific concern with the conservation of endangered species or deemed to be at risk[45]. Despite the fact that it did not match the number of NGOs in Portugal, nor account for the experience of the total number of entities contacted, the

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[43] It is true that the aim was also to gauge the level of participation of these organizations in research projects carried out by academics. The turnout was positive, as of the 75 organizations contacted, 43 agreed to participate in the study.

[44] The environment category includes protected areas, livestock and agricultural zones, forests, oceans, coastlines, rivers, landscapes, and beaches.

[45] Natural resources are living resources such as land flora (trees, shrubs, flowers), land, sea, and river fauna, and inert resources (sand, coral, etc.).

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number of responses obtained was considered significant, reflecting a positive participation in this type of analysis. Thus, the analysis presented below refers to the interpretation based on data provided by the organizations that participated in the study (N=43), and the results cannot be extrapolated to all Portuguese or operating in Portugal civil society organizations.

On average, civil society organizations have been operating for over 10 years (69.8% was formed and began activity until 2000 and 46.5% prior to 1990) and may be considered stable organizations with consolidated operations and knowledge of methodologies of direct intervention on the ground.

According to the information shown in chart 1, most civil society organizations work with their own funds (24%), also using private donations (22%) or international funds, especially European Union funds (22%) or those made available by other international organizations (14%). Less relevant, but nevertheless significant, is the financial support of public and private companies[46] (14%) for implementing and developing projects and concrete activity and for one-off projects. It is interesting to note that public institutional support through governmental channels responsible for the environment is clearly unexpressive (only 4% of funds are granted by the Ministry of the Environment), which strengthens the idea presented earlier that there is no competition between civil society and the state. Indeed, the two sectors work in parallel with little cross over.

Chart 1 – Identification of NGOs funding sources

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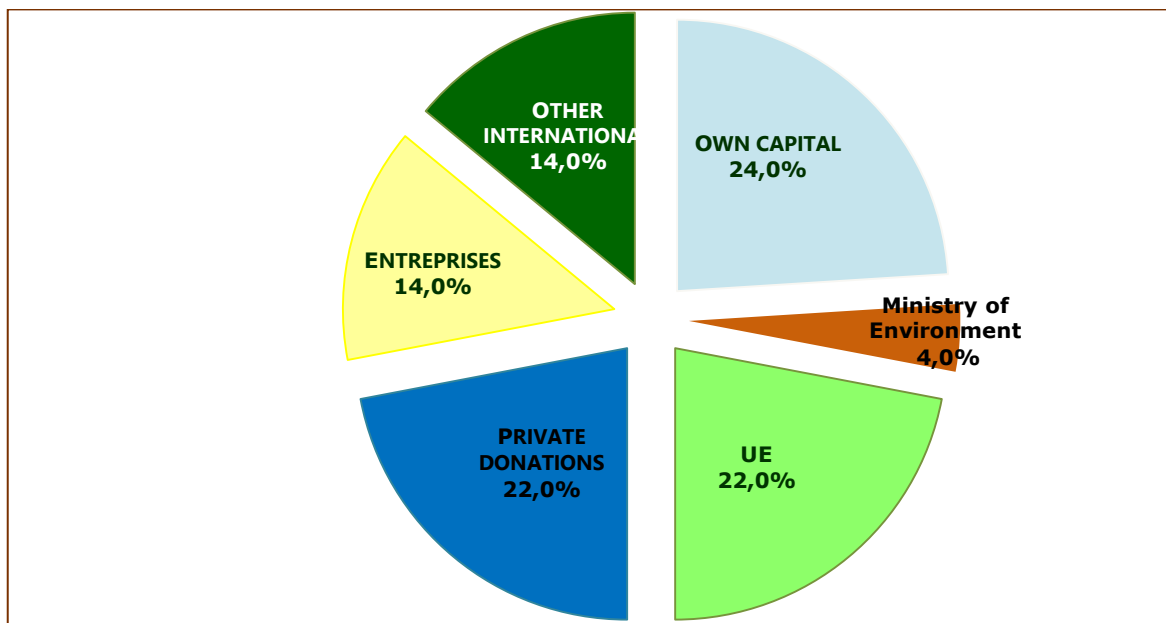
[46] The relationship between businesses and NGO's intervention area has not been considered in the present study, but it seems to make sense for future studies. Indeed, for more than one occasion, this relationship was mentioned by representatives of the civil society organizations contacted, confirming some points raised by the reference bibliography and which pave the way for new possibilities in addition to those already tested. However, given the goals of the research, this issue was not addressed in depth for which reason no conclusion can be drawn.

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Of all civil society organizations that participated in the study, 76.7% (N=33) work in partnership with other foreign counterparts, and most carry out projects in Portuguese-speaking African countries (49%) or in EU countries (35.2%). With regards to Portuguese-speaking African countries, there is some dispersion evidenced by their spreading over five countries, with greater emphases on Cape Verde (25.6%), followed by Guinea-Bissau (20.9%), Angola and Mozambique (18.6% each) and, finally, São Tomé and Príncipe (16.3%). This ordering may seem obvious in the African context, since Cape Verde is the country which, due to its geographical proximity to Europe, political stability, favourable economic orientation, and fragile ecosystems has, over time, been the country that has enjoyed enhanced international attention. Instead, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to be an example of a peripheral country, typically insular, marked by strategic uncertainty from an economic perspective, with a slight political or governing instability but with diversity and environmental richness. This Small Island State (SIS), as opposed to Cape Verde, has been side-lined in terms of establishing international partnerships, which can be explained by the fact that it only started paying attention to environmental issues quite late[47]. Angola and Mozambique are two countries that have been getting increased attention, albeit not yet predominant, because they are becoming more important from a geo-strategic viewpoint. Guinea-Bissau comes second in attracting the attentions of Portuguese NGOs due to a long-term traditional collaboration largely encouraged by the EU in-country delegation that promotes bids for development partnerships[48].

Table 1 – Countries and regions with which Portuguese NGOs have partnerships

REGION / COUNTRY	%
EUROPEAN UNION	35.2
Spain	38.7
France	9.7
United Kingdom	9.7
Ireland	3.2
Italy	6.5
Greece	9.7
Malta	6.5
Czech Republic	3.2
Romania	3.2
Slovakia	3.2
Poland	3.2
Hungary	3.2
PORTUGUGUESE SPEAKING AFRICA	49.0
Angola	18.6
Cape Verde	25.6
Guinea-Bissau	20.9
Mozambique	18.6
São Tomé and Príncipe	16.3
Brazil	7.9
Other	7.9

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[47] This information arises from the in-depth knowledge that the researcher of this study has of Small Insular Developing States in Africa, both in terms of change processes and of the practice of development cooperation.

[48] This information arises from the in-depth knowledge that the researcher of this study has of Small Insular Developing States in Africa, both in terms of change processes and of the practice of development cooperation.

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As regards Europe, Spain (38.7%) is the country with which Portuguese NGOs work the most, the remainder being spread over remaining countries. However, the relative importance of France, United Kingdom and Greece ((9.7% each) is evident. It is also interesting to note that, although not statistically representative in the global analysis, two NGOs mentioned they worked all over the world, with completed or undergoing projects in all continents.

The type of activity that has been promoted in partnership is predominantly centred on planning, implementing, developing, managing, and evaluating intervention projects (38.8%), followed by a thematic approach focusing on concrete needs identified previously. In their response to the questionnaire (see Chart 2), NGOs described their activities, projects and environmental education courses (31.2%) with regard to all other projects (see Annex).

This is an indicative aspect that is highly relevant to the analysis, as the concern with the environment and above all with the relationship established between the communities and nature is highlighted. It is at this level that NGOs interact more directly with people, helping to raise new awareness and a sense of greater concern and responsibility for preserving areas and species, often identifying together alternative socio-professional activities that ensure socio-environmental balance, and, in parallel, minimizing the socio-economic constraints related to the acquisition of income.

Chart 2 – Identification of NGO intervention areas
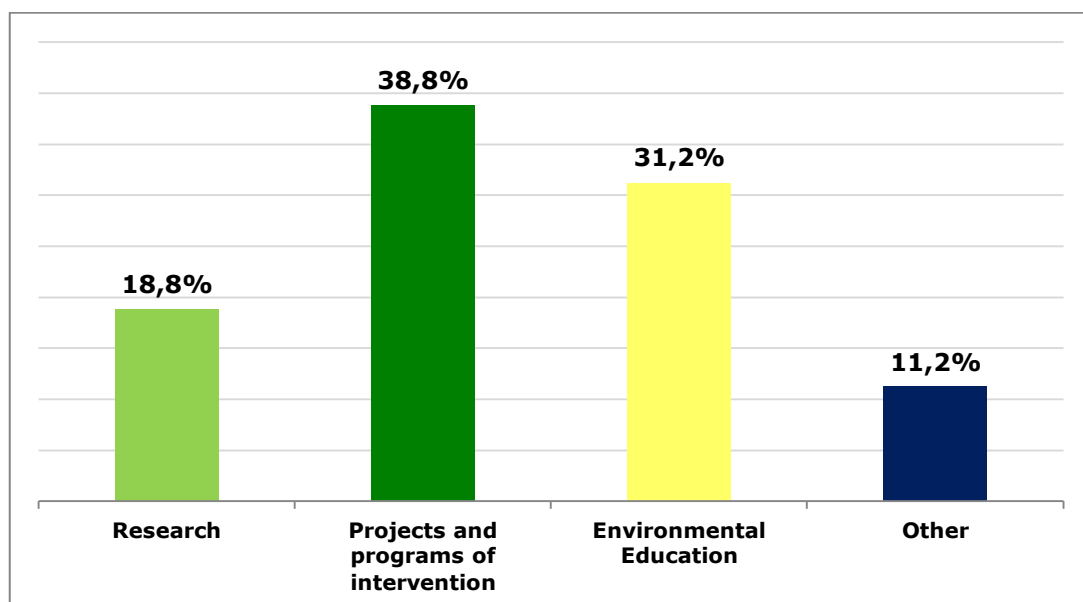
Less important than the projects mentioned above, but nevertheless relevant in this analysis, are the scientific research activities (18.8%) which often underlie environmental activities. Other activities with less weight (11.2%) have been identified, such as citizenship education, management of resources, protection of heritage, and

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political intervention through activism attributed to the New Social Movements they belong to.

As regards activity areas, environmental education (26.1%) is once again referred to with great emphasis compared to other possibilities, followed by:

a) Forestry work (17.1%), including reforesting, opening and cleaning trails, and forest fire prevention, among others;

b) Conservation of species (16.1%), especially sea species and birds, including marine and migratory;

c) Promotion of nature tourism (10.9%), including programming and developing activities to observe species and landscape, whether in forests or coastal and marine environments.

The following activities are less important but still have some weight:

- water resources conservation (6.6%), including the capture of groundwater (aquifers), and making freshwater available to the population and water management;

- food safety projects (5.2%), which requires the management of space (with or without deforestation and reforestation) and the regulation of local natural resources;

- waste collection (5.2%), including solid waste recycling and awareness-raising measures for reuse of materials, in the countryside and in the cities;

- cleaning of beaches (4.7%);
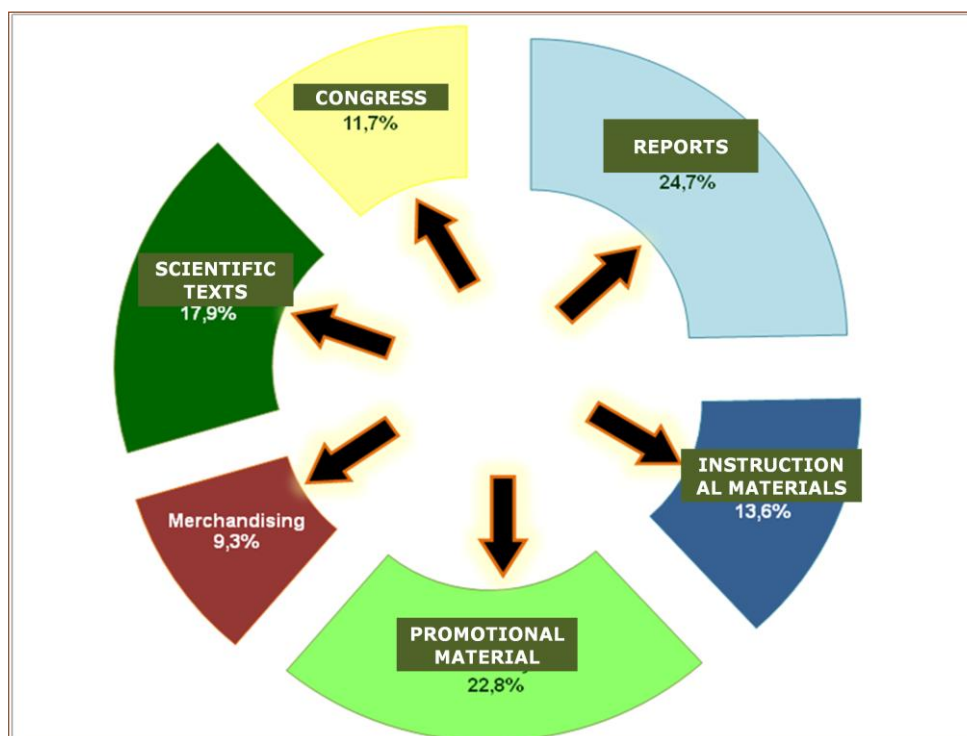
- sanitation campaigns and activities (2.8%).

It should also be noted that 5.2% of responses fall into other areas of intervention[49] which, despite their importance, are not significant for the analysis, for which reason they were not considered.

The activity of civil society organizations leads to the realization of a wide range of products that either focus on the systematization of functional performance that facilitates evaluation and which is usually a requirement imposed by donors, or are involved in the creation of educational and scientific instruments (see Chart 3).

Thus, annual and activity reports are the most frequently mentioned product (24.7%), followed by: dissemination materials (22.8%), including posters, leaflets and brochures; scientific texts (17.9%) and participation in conferences and similar events involving presentations (11.7%), which together make up 29.6%; educational handbooks (13.6%); and, finally, merchandising (9.3%).

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49 Such as developing action and management plans, maintenance and restoration of houses and boats, Millennium Development Goals, Disaster Preparedness, offshore energy, corporate sustainability, Climate International Policy and wider campaigns, such as the Earth Hour.

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Chart 3 – Identification of the main products

The analysis of the products enables us to understand that, strategically, the activities of civil society organizations do not invest on trade in a decisive manner, which could be attained by raising funds through merchandising. They are more concerned with direct intervention on the ground following previously established goals. The work of NGOs is mostly portrayed via inclusion in scientific channels, since, in their structures, they rely on the collaboration of technicians and experts in specific distinct scientific areas.

By way of conclusion

The study "Strategies of civil society organizations in the field of the environment" aimed to contribute towards a better understanding of the activities of NGOs specializing in environmental or development areas. The work does not offer an exhaustive or final interpretation on the topic; rather, the intention was to present an overview that may lead to future analyses. NGOs, like other players on the ground, are constantly evolving, following local, national and international changes. This is because, to a large extent and according to the data presented in the study, they depend on the context in which their activity is conducted.

It can be said with some certainty that Portuguese NGOs or those operating in Portugal act in interdependence with their counterparts. There is more an idea of effective partnership rather than a more conventional perspective that some are donors while the others are beneficiaries of such actions.

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The ground where civil society intervenes is open, and quite permeable to all areas concerning the environment, as long as they are regarded as a priority at a particular time and social context, and flexible regarding the approaches, requiring, above all, joint action.

This study allowed us to identify possible paths to be further explored, of which two main areas stand out:

1) The role of NGOs as an international player for cooperation;

2) The environmental and social impacts of the activities conducted by civil society, identifying the changes.

Finally, I could not fail to thank the 43 ENGOs and DNGOs that cooperated in the study and made the information available. Of them all, I highlight those that expressed their interest in being mentioned in this text: *Associação Portuguesa de Educação Ambiental* (ASPEA); *Associação Internacional de Investigadores em Educação Ambiental* (NEREA-Investiga); *World Wildlife Foundation Portugal- Mediterranean Programme Office* (WWF); *Sociedade Portuguesa para o Desenvolvimento da Educação e Turismo Ambientais* (SETA); *OIKOS – Cooperação e Desenvolvimento*; *TESE - Associação para o Desenvolvimento*; *Escola de Mar*; *Amigos dos Açores – Associação Ecológica*; *Associação dos Amigos do Parque Ecológico do Funchal*; *Centro de Energia das Ondas; Associação de Estudos Subterrâneos e Defesa do Ambiente* (AESDA); *Onda Verde, Associação Juvenil de Ambiente e Aventura.*

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ANNEX

SURVEY TO NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING IN THE FIELD OF THE ENVIRONMENT

As part of the project "Strategies of international players in the field of the environment", which is included in the research strand "Current International Trends" of the Observatory for External Relations (OBSERVARE), a study on the activities of civil society organizations (NGOs) is currently underway.

The study seeks to enable a better understanding and characterizations of the activities carried out by Portuguese NGOs, or those operating in Portugal in this area, and to evaluate their relationships with the outside world, perceived as a strategic methodology to attain their prosed objectives.

Given the broad scope of the research, we designed a small questionnaire, with guaranteed anonymity, which we would like you to respond to and thus collaborate with our study. If you wish that the participation of your NGO is made public, after completing the questionnaire please send an email to brigidabrito@netcabo.pt so that we can mention your collaboration.

The research results will be presented at the Section Economy and Ecology of the First International Conference of OBSERVARE under the topic "International trends and Portugal's position" (http://observare.ual.pt/conference), which will be held at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation on 16-18 November 2011, and published in the Conference Proceedings. The short questionnaire does not take long to complete and can be accessed at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7YDC55M

I thank you for your collaboration and take the opportunity to invite your organization to be present in the public presentation of the results. All data collected and the analysis will be made available for future use.

Q1 –In what year was the NGO set up?

☐ Before 1980

☐ Between 1981 and 1990

☐ Between 1991 and 2000

☐ After 2001

Q2 – What are the main areas of activity of the NGO?

☐ Research

☐ Intervention Programmes and Projects

☐ Environmental Education

☐ Other (please specify)

_____

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Q3 – Which geographic areas have been given priority in the last 5 years?

☐ Mainland Portugal

☐ Autonomous Region of Madeira

☐ Azores

☐ Africa

☐ South America

☐ Asia

☐ Other European countries

☐ North America

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

Q4 – Does you NGO have partnerships with foreign NGOs?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q5 – If yes, which countries?

[   ]

Q6 – What are the main sources of funding of projects in the area of the environment?

☐ European Union

☐ Other International Institutions

☐ Ministry of the Environment

☐ Consortia

☐ Private companies

☐ Donations from individuals

☐ Own funds

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

Q7 – In which sector areas has your NGO carried out projects in the last 5 years?

- ☐ Clearing forest areas
- ☐ Forest fire prevention
- ☐ Reforesting
- ☐ Cleaning beaches
- ☐ Conservation of water resources
- ☐ Tourism (Nature, Ecological, Environmental...)
- ☐ Listing of species
- ☐ Food safety
- ☐ Conservation of endangered species
- ☐ Sanitation
- ☐ Collecting and/or recycling solid waste
- ☐ Community awareness-raising
- ☐ Environmental education programmes
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q8 – What main products have resulted from the work?

- ☐ Reports
- ☐ Educational handbooks
- ☐ Leaflets, flyers, brochures
- ☐ Merchandising
- ☐ Thematic and analytical books
- ☐ Scientific articles
- ☐ Participation in scientific meetings
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Thank you very much for your collaboration