



# **New Rights Advocacy: Changing Strategies of Development and Human Rights NGOs**

## **(Advancing Human Rights series)**

*Paul J. Nelson*

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After World War II dozens of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) emerged on the global scene, committed to improving the lives of the world's most vulnerable people. Some focused on protecting human rights; some were dedicated to development, aimed at satisfying basic economic needs. Both approaches had distinctive methods, missions, and emphases. In the 1980s and 90s, however, the dividing line began to blur.

In the first book to track the growing intersection and even overlap of human rights and development NGOs, Paul Nelson and Ellen Dorsey introduce a concept they call "new rights advocacy." New rights advocacy has at its core three main trends: the embrace of human rights-based approaches by influential development NGOs, the adoption of active economic and social rights agendas by major international human rights NGOs, and the surge of work on economic and social policy through a human rights lens by specialized human rights NGOs and social movement campaigns.

Nelson and Dorsey draw on rich case studies of internationally well-known individual NGOs such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Oxfam, CARE, ActionAid, and Save the Children, and employ perspectives from fields of human rights, international relations, the sociology of social movements and of complex organizations, and development theory, in order to better understand the changes occurring within NGOs.

In questioning current trends using new theoretical frameworks, this book breaks new ground in the evolution of human rights-development interaction. The way in which NGOs are reinventing themselves has great potential for success?or possibly failure?and profound implications for a world in which the enormous gap between the wealthiest and poorest poses a persistent challenge to both development and human rights.

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