



# The Economics and Politics of NGOs in Latin America

By *Carrie Meyer*

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The burgeoning sector of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Latin America?funded by Northern donors?is both catalyzing and responding to change, as states, market, and civil society realign in an age of information technology and globalization. The political economic perspective of this book clarifies the emerging role of Latin America's NGOs in the global community. After introducing the expanding role of NGOs in the international community at large, the book explores the history of NGOs in Latin America. It then uses case studies to examine the economics and politics of NGOs vis-a-vis information, partnerships, opportunism, entrepreneurship, and compromise with donors.

As producers of international public goods, NGOs are characterized as building blocks of the global community and as contributors to economic production, employment, institutional innovation, and technology transfer. This book concludes that although NGOs cannot substitute for government, they are aptly suited for complex partnerships with both domestic and international public and private sectors and are more appropriate vehicles for donor projects than Latin America's public sectors.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Although Meyer is not an historian, her account of the 50 year emergence of Latin American NGOs is a fascinating one, full of new insights. Although she is an economist, she has departed in this fine work from the "dismal" reputation of her profession and contributed to our understanding of public goods and services, on a global as well as a national level."-Julie Fisher Program Officer, Kettering Foundation

"I have benefited enormously from Dr. Carrie Meyer's earlier writings on the role of non-governmental organizations in Latin America. Now that they are available in one book, together with new experiences and insights, this will enhance Dr. Meyer's already well-established scholarly reputation, and her influence. Scholars and practitioners will be greatly enriched by this book--as I have been."-Thomas H. Fox U.S. Agency for International Development

"Carrie A. Meyer's book The Economics and Politics of NGOs in Latin America is the most complete description and analysis of NGOs which is currently available. Meyer skillfully interweaves institutional descriptions with socioeconomic analyses. Her book can be considered as a major new contribution to the development literature and especially to the deeper understanding of contemporary Latin America."-Werner Baer Professor of Economics University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign

"[Meyer's] sharp and yet sympathetic analysis unravels the complexities and conundrums in this very complicated (and highly politicized) new world, where NGOs have gained power and influence to a degree unimaginable only a short time ago. The insights contained in this refreshing book ought to help pave the way to a more realistic view of NGOs, their strengths and limits, and their potential as building blocks for a global civil society."-Deborah Brautigam School of International Service American University

"Illustrated by numerous case studies, the author analyzes how the international aid system is--for good and ill--supporting and shaping Latin America's contribution to and place in a global civil society. In this process, she usefully identifies the conflicts, dilemmas, and compromises that are tied to establishing mutually beneficial relations between foreign aid agencies and non-state actors. As a result, this book is an important resource for those interested in understanding and tracking the civic dimensions of global change which development finance can bring about."-Alan Fowler Co-Founder, International NGO Training and Research Center

#### About the Author

CARRIE A. MEYER is Associate Professor of Economics at George Mason University./e She has also worked as a consultant to the World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

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