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LEGON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY

(LECIAD)

AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA - THE CASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTERS GHANA

BY

DELIGHT ENYONAM SEWORNU

(CANDIDATE ID 11008014)

THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY LEGON

MARCH, 2025

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of an original research conducted by me under the supervision of Dr. Frederick Boamah and that no part has been submitted anywhere else for any purpose except for the quoted references and acknowledged sources.

DELIGHT ENYONAM SEWORNU

(STUDENT)

DATE: 11TH DECEMBER 2025

DR FREDERICK BOAMAH

(SUPERVISOR)

DATE: 15/12/2025

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mum, whose unwavering support and sacrifices have been the cornerstone of this journey. Your strength and love have been my greatest source of inspiration.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I give thanks to God Almighty for His boundless grace, wisdom, and strength that have sustained me throughout this journey. Without His guidance, this achievement would not have been possible.

I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Frederick Boamah, for his invaluable guidance, insightful feedback, and unwavering support. Your mentorship has been instrumental in shaping this work, and I feel privileged to have learned from your expertise and dedication.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the respondents from Human Rights Reporters Ghana, Media General, Marie Stopes, Channel 1 TV, Citi FM, Justking & Associates, ST Legal Bureau, Sightsavers, and R.A.Y Foundation. Your willingness to share your insights, experiences, and knowledge was critical in enriching the depth and relevance of this study.

Finally, I express my profound gratitude to my family, friends, and colleagues for their unwavering support and encouragement. To everyone who contributed to this work in any way, I am sincerely thankful.

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ABSTRACT

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a vital role in promoting human rights, particularly in regions where systemic inequalities, political repression, and governance failures persist. This study examines the role of NGOs in human rights advocacy in Africa, using Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) as a case study. The research investigates HRRG's contributions, challenges, and strategies for sustainability in advancing human rights in Ghana. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study draws on semi-structured interviews with HRRG stakeholders, including executives, volunteers, and partner organizations. The findings reveal that HRRG plays a significant role in advocacy and awareness creation, legal assistance, research documentation, coalition-building, and the empowerment of marginalized groups. However, the organization faces critical challenges such as financial constraints, political resistance, cultural opposition, and human resource limitations, which hinder its operational effectiveness. To enhance its sustainability, HRRG employs strategies including diversified funding, capacity-building, community engagement, adaptation to the socio-political environment, and the use of technology and social media. The study highlights the implications of these findings within the broader discourse on human rights advocacy and grassroots NGO sustainability in Africa. It underscores the importance of collaboration between NGOs, policymakers, and international actors in strengthening human rights initiatives. The study contributes to the literature on grassroots human rights activism by providing insights into the operational dynamics of HRRG and offering recommendations such as the organization putting in efforts to strengthen its network to enhance the effectiveness and longevity of similar organizations across Africa.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are among the most prominent features of contemporary international life, playing a significant role in the development apparatus of many nations, particularly developing ones (Bari & Dey, 2019; Davies, 2019). While the term "NGO" has a relatively recent origin, these organizations have a long history. Before World War II, they were known as "private international associations" and were influential in world politics, much as they are today. Contrary to popular belief, the significant role of NGOs is not merely a by-product of US hegemony post-World War II; they have been pivotal in transforming world order since the industrial revolution, evolving across all continents in complex ways (Davies, 2018).

Research surrounding NGOs has expanded significantly as these organizations continue to grow in importance (Lewis, Kanji, & Themudo, 2020). The evolving nature of international aid has reshaped how NGOs operate globally, particularly following the Global Financial Crisis, which led many national governments to reconsider their aid distribution strategies (Kuruppu & Lodhia, 2019). Early literature on NGOs depicted them as fundamental components of global civil society, representing a historical "power shift" (Mathew, 1997) and even as potential "solutions to war" (Kaldor, 2003) or "sources of global democracy" (Scholte, 2004). Research has investigated various aspects of NGOs' roles in global politics, such as their collaboration with intergovernmental organizations (Willets, 1996; Martens, 2005), contributions to international conventions (Glasius, 2006), and involvement in "politics beyond the state" (Wapner, 1995). NGOs address diverse global issues, including environmental protection (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni &

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Phelps Bondaroff, 2014), peacebuilding (Richmond & Carey, 2005), humanitarianism (Barnett & Weiss, 2008), gender equality (True & Mintrom, 2001), and human rights advocacy (Korey, 2001; Bob, 2009).

It must, however, be noted that, despite the widespread use of the term "NGO," there is little consensus on its exact definition. Dwight Morrow (1991) first used the term to distinguish international organizations not set up by states from those that were. The term gained widespread usage in reference to Article 71 of the United Nations Charter. Initially, it referred primarily to international organizations, but it now encompasses any non-state, non-profit, and non-criminal organization, regardless of size or field of work (Davies, 2014, 2019). This broad definition includes business associations like the International Chamber of Commerce, advocacy groups like Greenpeace, development aid organizations like Oxfam, and fertility advocacy groups like Marie Stopes (Ahmed & Potter, 2006). Defining NGOs remains challenging, with different organizations using varied definitions. For instance, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is termed a nongovernmental humanitarian "agency," while in the United States, the term "private voluntary organization" (PVO) is often synonymous with NGO. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are independent entities that operate outside government control, primarily focusing on humanitarian, social, and developmental causes. Various institutions and scholars have provided definitions that capture the diverse roles and functions of NGOs. The United Nations (2003) defines NGOs as "any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group organized on a local, national, or international level to address issues in support of the public good." This definition is widely accepted because it emphasizes key characteristics such as independence, non-profit orientation, and voluntary participation.

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Similarly, the World Bank (1995) describes 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." This perspective highlights the humanitarian and development roles of NGOs, particularly in poverty alleviation and social justice. Scholars like Salamon and Anheier (1992) further define NGOs as "organized, private, self-governing, and voluntary organizations that operate for non-profit purposes, aiming to serve a public good." Their emphasis on governance structure and legal autonomy reinforces the idea that NGOs function independently while addressing societal challenges. Although definitions vary, the United Nations' definition remains the most widely accepted, as it encapsulates the core principles common to NGOs worldwide. It acknowledges their autonomy, non-profit nature, voluntary foundations, and broad scope of operations across different sectors. This definition serves as a foundational reference for policymakers, scholars, and international organizations in understanding the essential role NGOs play in advocacy, service delivery, and global development.

The role of NGOs in international discourse remains unchanged despite definitional ambiguities. They act as agents of change (Klugman, 2000), contribute to capacity development (Ulleberg, 2009), support development cooperation (Banks, 2021), aid in poverty reduction (Banks & Hulme, 2012), and promote human security (Michael, 2002) and social welfare (Jianxiu, 2006). NGOs engage in diverse domestic and global endeavours, increasingly incorporating civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights, which are seen as comprehensive human rights (Nelson, 2015). Their primary responsibilities include upholding norms, recording violations, advocating for change, and taking legal action when necessary. NGOs also promote international human rights laws (Leyh, 2017; Freeman, 2017), significantly contributing to reporting, fact-finding, standard-setting, and the implementation and maintenance of human rights standards. They are active in

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various fields, such as international development, humanitarian aid, environmental conservation, human rights advocacy, and conflict resolution (Steiner et al., 2007). NGOs monitor global events and hold corporations, governments, and international organizations accountable for human rights violations (Polizzi & Murdie, 2019).

Further, NGOs play an increasingly prominent role in international environmental institutions, participating in negotiations, monitoring, and implementation activities traditionally reserved for states. Their participation enhances treaty processes, provides policy advice, monitors commitments, and facilitates communication between governments and constituents (Raustiala, 1997). This increased prominence is widely acknowledged by observers of international affairs (Willets, 1982; Grubb et al., 1993; Hagerhall, 1993). NGOs have become integral to the negotiation process and have significantly influenced international environmental law (Tolbert, 1992). Although their activities were once limited, NGOs now regularly participate in international environmental cooperation. Their relationship with states, though sometimes depicted as oppositional, can be mutually beneficial when they cooperate in international forums (Gourevitch, 1987; Evans, Jacobson, & Putnam, 1993; Risse-Kappen, 1995). Despite their achievements, NGOs face challenges, including criticisms regarding their accountability, which have led donors to demand greater effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency (Lewis et al., 2022).

On the African continent and over the past 25 years, there has seen substantial growth in the number and influence of NGOs, particularly African NGOs (Hearn, 2007). The growth of a public sphere in sub-Saharan Africa can often be traced back to the modern, postcolonial state, with Western-inspired associations and NGOs contributing to its development (Weiss, 2020). Whitfield's analysis highlights the role of 'civil society' as a collective process where donor agencies, international NGOs, governments, and social organizations actively engage in the public

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sphere to validate their actions. This growth reflects optimism regarding NGOs' potential to address pressing issues, facilitate development, and reach vulnerable populations. Although initially focused on charity work and disaster relief during colonial times, African NGOs began shifting their focus toward social and economic development after independence. In sub-Saharan Africa, these organizations play a central role in addressing issues ranging from healthcare to education (Holmén, 2010). The concept of "African philanthropy," as Fowler (2016) articulates, emphasizes self-sufficiency by applying resources generated within Africa to foster local development (Kumi, 2019).

Similarly, in Ghana, early NGOs emerged from long-standing traditions of philanthropy and self-help in the 1900s, acting as a bridge between citizens' needs and existing services (Banks & Hulme, 2012). Informal giving, or horizontal philanthropy, has been historically embedded in Ghanaian traditional and religious contexts, where communities support the underprivileged. In Ghana's traditional societies, horizontal philanthropy serves as a vital poverty alleviation tool, rooted in the cultural value of mutual support (Aidoo, 2012). Since the 1970s, the growth of both indigenous and international NGOs has increased, driven by the country's social, economic, and political challenges (Tetteh, 2017). For example, NGOs working in healthcare have contributed significantly to improving public health services, especially during colonial periods when diseases and fatalities surged across the Gold Coast (Gyamfi et al., 2019). Since the 1970s and 1980s, the country has experienced a rapid proliferation of both indigenous and international NGOs in response to social, economic, and political challenges (Tetteh, 2017). In the health sector, the increasing number of deaths and diseases in the Gold Coast prompted efforts from the British colonial administration and NGOs, which significantly contributed to the health and well-being of the people (Gyamfi et al., 2019).

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The Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, along with the subsequent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, has significantly highlighted the critical role of private finance, including philanthropy, in achieving global development objectives (Mediavilla & Garcia-Arias, 2019; OECD, 2018). Within this framework, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) plays a pivotal role by assisting countries in mobilizing financial resources and aligning their development strategies with the SDGs. Central to these efforts is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948, which establishes fundamental rights that every individual is entitled to and emphasizes the necessity of promoting human dignity and equality (UN General Assembly, 1948). Furthermore, the UN underscored in 1993 that states have a responsibility to uphold the rights outlined in the UDHR, reinforcing the connection between sustainable development and human rights. The UDHR has inspired the ratification of over seventy human rights treaties, many of which are actively enforced on both regional and global scales. NGOs play a vital role in this ecosystem, advocating for human rights, monitoring progress, and implementing development initiatives that align with the SDGs. Their grassroots engagement ensures that the principles enshrined in the UDHR guide local and international efforts aimed at enhancing human rights and well-being, highlighting the interdependence between sustainable development and the respect for human rights.

By the mid-to-late 1990s, the international human rights norm had become widely accepted, driven by the rise in the number of liberal democratic states following the fall of communism and democratic transitions in Latin America and Asia (Forsythe, 2006; Weiss, 2007). In liberal democratic states, individual rights are inherently protected, with significant legal safeguards against executive overreach (Weiss, 2007). Growing compliance by non-liberal states with the

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human rights regime was another significant factor. The 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights and China's 1998 signing of the ICCPR marked the standard's indisputable status (Freeman, 2002). These milestones illustrate states gradually integrating into a framework that exposes their internal workings to international scrutiny, a process constructivist scholar in international relations describe as a "norm cascade" (Wheeler, 2001).

Despite opposition to human rights regimes by leading liberal nation's post-9/11, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, NGOs remain crucial in promoting and defending human rights in developing countries (Dupré, 2013). NGOs, many emerging from grassroots organizations, play a vital role in drafting laws, advocating for policy changes, investigating human rights abuses, and inspiring individuals to work for the welfare of others (Cole & Ramirez, 2013; Edwards, 2013; Nimu, 2015). Their work is essential in advancing, maintaining, and defending human rights standards globally, making those indispensable actors in international relations and development.

Human Rights Reporters Ghana emerged from a collective desire to address human rights abuses and promote awareness and advocacy at the grassroots level (HRRG, 2023). Founded in response to the increasing need for dedicated human rights activism, the organization focuses on documenting and reporting human rights violations, educating the public on their rights, and advocating for policy changes (HRRG, 2023). Key actors in the organization include journalists, legal experts, and activists dedicated to the cause of human rights. Despite their significant efforts, Human Rights Reporters Ghana faces numerous challenges, including limited funding, political pressure, and the inherent risks associated with human rights advocacy (HRRG, 2023). These obstacles hinder their ability to operate effectively and expand their reach.

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The aim of this study is to explore the role of Human Rights Reporters Ghana in promoting human rights within the context of Ghana's socio-political environment. By examining their strategies, challenges, and successes, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how grassroots NGOs can influence human rights practices and policies in developing countries. This study will also provide insights into the broader implications of NGO activities in Africa, highlighting the potential and limitations of these organizations in fostering sustainable human rights improvements.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Human rights challenges in Africa are pervasive and multifaceted, affecting various demographics across the continent (Ibhawoh, 2018; Tucker, 2020). Political repression is a significant issue, with governments often enacting policies to stifle criticism and opposition (Feldstein, 2021; Sika, 2024). This includes the use of violence, harassment, and arrests against activists and civil society organizations, severely limiting their ability to operate effectively (Chaudhry & Heiss, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2020). Such repression undermines democratic principles and restricts the fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly, and association. Economic and social rights are also heavily compromised in many African countries. High levels of poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and clean water persist, exacerbating inequalities (Perold et al., 2013; Van Niekerk, 2020). These socioeconomic disparities are often compounded by corruption and poor governance (Matallah, 2020; Waziri, 2014), which divert resources away from critical public services and infringe on the rights of the most vulnerable populations (Agbenyoh, 2022; Atuguba, 2020). Furthermore, discrimination and violence against marginalized groups, including women, children, and ethnic minorities remain prevalent. For instance, gender-based violence and child abuse are widespread, with insufficient legal protections

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and enforcement mechanisms to safeguard victims (Amnesty International, 2022). Additionally, ethnic and racial discrimination, reflects broader patterns of exclusion and marginalization across the continent (Human Rights Watch, 2023). Human trafficking and forced labour are other critical human rights issues.

In response to these issues, civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been noted to play a key role in advocating for the human rights of these victims across the world. However, over the past few decades, governments worldwide have increasingly cracked down on non-governmental organizations, a trend commonly known as the closing or shrinking of civic space (Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014; Chaudhry, 2016; Dupuy & Prakash, 2018; Dupuy et al., 2016). Since 2013, more than 100 countries have proposed or enacted 244 measures that restrict, repress, or shut down civil society (International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, 2021). By the end of 2020, only 21% of countries had open and unrestricted civic space (Chaudhry & Heiss, 2021; CIVICUS, 2021). Through the passage of anti-NGO laws barriers to NGO advocacy, entry, and funding have been restricted (Chaudhry, 2022). These legal tools force NGOs to adapt their practices to remain within the bounds of permitted activities and operations (Heiss, 2019). This often leads to the depoliticization and avoidance of direct political activism by NGOs (Bloodgood & Tremblay-Boire, 2017). Government attempts to repress NGOs through the use of law as a signal the beginning of a deteriorating human rights situation. Such repression reflects the government's willingness and capability to use measures that can make it avoid accountability. Once a state targets NGOs, over time it may grow less hesitant to apply violent repression more widely and more severely, thus leading to broader contractions of civil and human rights throughout the country. This raises a critical question: What does state targeting

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of NGOs reveal about a state's broader respect for civil society and the overall level of human rights repression?

Academic interest have examined various facets of human rights. At the global level, Donnelly (2013) provides a foundational analysis of the theoretical underpinnings of universal human rights, exploring the tensions between universal norms and cultural relativism and examining how these rights can be implemented and protected in practice. This theoretical framework is crucial for understanding the role of NGOs in advocating for human rights, as it sets the stage for global standards that these organizations aim to uphold. Similarly, the Human Rights Watch World Report (2023) and Amnesty International (2022) offer comprehensive overviews of human rights practices and violations worldwide, highlighting issues such as state repression, freedom of expression, and the treatment of marginalized communities. These reports provide detailed case studies and statistics that illustrate the extent of violations and the areas where NGOs can intervene. Rehman (2022) delves into international human rights law, discussing the frameworks for protecting rights and the role of international institutions, which is essential for NGOs working in human rights as it guides their advocacy and legal strategies. Moyn (2010) and Sikkink (2011) further explore the evolution of human rights as a central aspect of international relations and the impact of human rights prosecutions on global justice norms, respectively. Goodhart (2016) addresses the various actors in the human rights movement and the political and practical aspects of human rights protection, providing a comprehensive overview that includes the role of NGOs.

At the continental level, particularly in Africa, Human Rights Watch (2020, 2019, 2022, 2023) and Amnesty International (2020, 2021, 2022) provide detailed reports on various human rights issues such as democratic deterioration, police brutality, and repression of marginalized groups across different countries. These reports highlight the systemic governance issues and political repression

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prevalent in the region, offering a contextual background for examining the role of NGOs. Akokpari (2004) explores the role of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in promoting good governance, further situating the work of NGOs within a broader institutional framework. These works (Akokpari, 2004; Amnesty International, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2023) of literature collectively inform the examination of NGOs' role in promoting human rights in Africa.

Also, numerous studies have extensively addressed the challenges faced by victims of human rights abuses in Ghana — such as child labor, violence, and women's rights (Agbenyoh, 2022; Owu-Ewie, 2017; Atiemo, 2013; Darkwa & Attuquayefio, 2012) — and examined the political and civil society organizations' (CSOs) efforts to address these issues (Frimpong, 2017; Asomah, 2015), as well as the role played by grassroots NGOs in addressing these issues (e.g., Uddin, 2023; Hiremath, 2021; Noh, 2017; O'Leary, 2017; Banks, & Hulme, 2012; Patel, & Mitlin, 2009). Nonetheless, in Ghana there is a dearth of research regarding the role of Human Rights Reporters (HRR) in promoting human rights; although anecdotal evidence shows how pervasive their activities are in Ghana as far as human right advocacy is concerned. In view of this, scholars such as Mlenga (2023) and Pöyhtäri and Ojala (2018) highlighted the scantiness of scholarly work with regard to grassroots NGOs such as human right reporters and the substantive role of journalists in advocating for human right in developing countries, hence, proposed a further study in such area to address that.

The limited availability of peer-reviewed studies specifically focused on human rights reporters, as evidenced by Andreopoulos' (2018) study, underscores the necessity of the current research. While Andreopoulos provides a critical examination of the interplay between news media and human rights, his work primarily focuses on media freedom, journalistic responsibilities, and the

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gaps in normative human rights frameworks. Although this offers valuable insights into the challenges of human rights reporting, it does not comprehensively explore the role of grassroots human rights reporters, particularly in Africa, nor does it investigate their direct contributions to human rights advocacy, policy influence, or community empowerment. The present study is necessary because it shifts the focus from the broader theoretical discussions of media and human rights law to an in-depth, empirical analysis of how grassroots human rights reporters, particularly Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG), function within restrictive civic spaces. It examines their roles in advocacy, legal assistance, community mobilization, and research documentation—areas that are largely absent in existing literature. Furthermore, while Andreopoulos (2018) acknowledges the challenges faced by journalists in engaging with human rights reporting, he does not address the operational, financial, and political constraints that grassroots human rights reporters navigate daily, especially in regions where civic space is shrinking due to governmental restrictions.

By examining the implications, challenges, and successes of HRRG as well as the sustainability strategy, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how grassroots NGOs can influence human rights practices and policies in developing countries. This study will also provide insights into the broader implications of NGO activities in Africa, highlighting the potential and limitations of these organizations in fostering sustainable human rights improvements.

1.3 Research Questions

(i) What are the key contributions and roles played by Grassroots NGOs such as Human Right Reporter Ghana to promote human rights in Ghana?

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(ii) What are major implications of the role of, and challenges faced by Grassroots NGOs such as Human Right Reporters Ghana in their operations in Ghana?

(iii) What are strategies to ensuring Sustainability of the role and contributions of Grassroots NGOs such as Human Rights Reports Ghana's in improving human rights practices in Ghana?

1.4 Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to investigate the of role non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in promoting human rights in Africa by using Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) as case study. However, the study sought to address the following specific objectives:

(i) To identify the key contributions and roles played by Human Right Reporters Ghana to promote human rights in Ghana.

(ii) To examine the major implications of the role of and challenges faced by Human Right Reporters Ghana in their operations in Ghana.

(iii) To evaluate the strategies to ensuring Sustainability of the role and contributions of Human Rights Reports Ghana's in improving human rights practices in Ghana.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

The study addresses a significant gap in the existing body of research on the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in promoting human rights, with a specific focus on Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG). Although numerous studies have examined the challenges faced by victims of human rights abuses in Ghana, such as child labor, violence, and women's rights

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(Agbenyoh, 2022; Atiemo, 2013; Darkwa & Attuquayefio, 2012; Owu-Ewie, 2017), and the efforts of political and civil society organizations (CSOs) to address these issues (Frimpong, 2017; Asomah, 2015), there is a notable lack of research focusing on the role of HRRG.

Previous literature has highlighted the pervasive and multifaceted nature of human rights challenges in Africa, encompassing political repression, socioeconomic disparities, and discrimination against marginalized groups (Ibhawoh, 2018; Tucker, 2020; Feldstein, 2021; Sika, 2024). While global and continental reports provide a broad overview of human rights practices and violations (Human Rights Watch, 2020, 2022, 2023; Amnesty International, 2020, 2021, 2022) as noted above and the role NGOs and civil society organization play in advocating for such victims whilst addressing such violations, they often do not delve deeply into the specific roles, contributions, implications and challenges of HRRG.

By examining the contributions, roles, implications and challenges faced by HRRG, this study aims to fill this gap and contribute to a deeper understanding of how grassroots NGOs have contributed to and influence human rights practices in Ghana whilst putting in place strategies to ensure sustainability of their practices. The insights to be gained from this research sheds light on the operational dynamics of HRRG and also provides a valuable framework for assessing the broader implications of NGO activities in Africa. This study highlights the contributions, implications and limitations of these organizations in fostering sustainable human rights improvements, offering practical recommendations for enhancing their impact whilst ensuring their sustainability.

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By exploring this under-researched area, the study aims to contribute to the academic discourse on human rights advocacy, inform policymaking, and support the development of more effective strategies for NGOs operating in similar contexts.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on examining the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in promoting human rights in Africa, with a specific emphasis on Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) as a case study. The study explores HRRG's key contributions to human rights advocacy in Ghana. Additionally, it analyzes the broader implications of HRRG's work, identifying the challenges faced by grassroots NGOs. Furthermore, the study evaluates the strategies employed by HRRG to ensure the sustainability of its advocacy.

1.6 Arrangements of Chapters

The study is organized into five main chapters. Chapter one discusses the background to the study, statement of the research problem, research objectives, research question, the study's rationale, the study's scope, and the study's organization. Chapter two gives an overview of NGO activities, the theory underpinning the study and the literatures reviews. Chapter three presents the methodology of the study which includes the research design, source of data, target and study population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data processing and analysis techniques as well the ethical considerations. Chapter four looks at data presentation, analysis, and discussions. Finally, chapter five presents the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter Two delves into the theoretical and literature review as well as an overview of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Africa with a focus on their role in promoting human rights. The chapter begins with a theoretical review, thus, liberal institutionalism. It offers an overview of the historical evolution of NGOs and the critical contributions and roles played by grassroots organizations in advancing human rights. The chapter under the literature review addressed, roles of NGos, the implications of their roles and the challenges that grassroots NGOs face in their operations. Finally, the chapter explored various strategies for sustaining NGOs.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The main theory that underpinned this study was the Liberal Institutionalism theory. This section therefore discusses the background of the theory including its proponents, the criticism of the theory and the relevance of the theory to this study.

2.2.1 Liberal Institutionalism

Liberal Institutionalism, also known as neoliberal institutionalism, emerged as a significant theoretical perspective in international relations in the late 20th century (Pan, 2022). This theory emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and institutions in promoting global stability and peace, contrasting sharply with realism's focus on power politics.

Key proponents, such as Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, argue that institutions like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization play crucial roles in facilitating dialogue and reducing

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conflict among states. A core tenet of Liberal Institutionalism is interdependence, which highlights how states are increasingly reliant on one another to address global challenges like trade, security, and climate change.

Additionally, the theory emphasizes the role of institutions in establishing rules and norms that guide state behavior, creating a framework for cooperation. Liberal Institutionalism presents a hopeful view that through collaboration and rational self-interest, states can work together to achieve shared goals and foster a more peaceful world. It represents an evolution of classical liberal thought adapted to the complexities of the modern international system. Liberal Institutionalism challenges the state-centric and power-focused assumptions of realism, proposing instead that international cooperation and institutions play a crucial role in fostering global stability, peace, and development (Machacek, 2023). The theory is rooted in the broader tradition of liberalism, which emphasizes democracy, individual rights, and free markets. In the context of international relations, liberal institutionalists argue that while states are rational actors pursuing their interests, they also recognize the benefits of cooperation and the importance of international institutions in mitigating conflict and facilitating collective action (Keohane, & Nye, 2015; Keohane, 1984).

Liberal Institutionalism argues that international institutions and cooperation are essential for advancing human rights advocacy ((Druzin, 2020; Ikenberry, 2020; Keohane, 2017; Keohane & Martin, 1995). It posits that these institutions facilitate cooperation among states, reduce transaction costs, and establish norms and rules that promote human rights protections (Keohane, 2017). By creating a structured and predictable environment, institutions like the United Nations and various human rights treaties help address global human rights challenges, mitigate the problem of anarchy, and provide mechanisms for collective action and accountability (Ikenberry, 2020). According to liberal institutionalism, in order to effectively manage and advance human

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rights beyond national boundaries, nations must cooperate and cooperate through international organizations (Druzin, 2020; Keohane & Martin, 1995). In a world where problems like violations of human rights are pervasive, no one country can solve them by itself. Rather, we require a cooperative strategy.

Countries can establish common frameworks and standards that support the protection of human rights around the world by participating in multilateral talks and utilizing institutions such as the United Nations. These organizations make sure that everyone is doing their share by setting standards and holding countries responsible when rights are infringed. (Druzin, 2020; Keohane & Martin, 1995). Liberal Institutionalism essentially serves as a reminder that nations may significantly advance human rights when they cooperate. The goal of this collaboration is to create a more just and compassionate world where each person's dignity is upheld. It is an appeal for countries to cooperate in the defense of human rights, reaffirming the notion that significant change can be accomplished by working together.

2.2.2 Criticisms of Liberal Institutionalism

Criticisms of Liberal Institutionalism underscore several significant issues. Firstly, the theory is said to overemphasize the role of international institutions in fostering cooperation. Critics, including Waltz (2014) and Mearsheimer (2017), argue that these institutions often mirror the interests of powerful states rather than acting independently, and have struggled to address major conflicts like the Rwandan Genocide or the Darfur crisis (Hutchison & Johnson, 2011; Barnett & Finnemore, 2004). Additionally, Liberal Institutionalism is criticized for underestimating the impact of power politics and state interests, with Realists asserting that states cooperate primarily when it aligns with their strategic goals, using institutions as tools for advancing their agendas

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(Glaser, 2014; Waltz, 2014). This skepticism also extends to NGOs, which may be seen as extensions of foreign policy rather than independent entities (Wright, Scott, & Bunce, 2020). Moreover, the theory is accused of neglecting structural inequalities within the international system, as institutions can reinforce economic and social disparities between the Global North and South, affecting NGOs operating in Africa and potentially leading to neo-colonialism (Wallerstein, 2004; Chimni, 1999). Lastly, the emphasis on universal human rights standards is criticized for clashing with cultural relativism, where imposing global norms without adapting to local contexts can undermine the effectiveness of human rights initiatives (Merry, 2006; Engle Merry, 2006).

2.2.3 Relevance of Liberal Institutionalism to the Study

In addressing the criticisms of Liberal Institutionalism, it is crucial to recognize how the theory's framework remains pertinent to the study of NGOs, particularly Human Rights Reporters Ghana, in promoting human rights in Africa.

Firstly, the criticism that Liberal Institutionalism overemphasizes the role of international institutions is acknowledged. Critics argue that institutions often reflect the interests of powerful states and may fail to manage severe conflicts effectively (Waltz, 2014; Barnett & Finnemore, 2004). However, in the context of NGOs, this criticism can be mitigated by highlighting how organizations like Human Rights Reporters Ghana leverage international norms to enhance their advocacy efforts. Despite institutional limitations, NGOs use frameworks like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to hold governments accountable and mobilize international support (Lake, Martin, & Risse, 2021). This practical application demonstrates the theory's relevance in providing normative support, even when institutional efficacy is questioned.

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Secondly, while Liberal Institutionalism is critiqued for underestimating power politics and state interests (Glaser, 2014; Waltz, 2014), NGOs operate within this context by navigating and addressing power dynamics. Human Rights Reporters Ghana's engagement with international bodies and donors reflects an understanding of these dynamics, using institutional backing to bolster their influence and effectiveness. By collaborating with diverse stakeholders, the NGO strategically positions itself to overcome the limitations imposed by state-centric power struggles (Keohane, 2020).

Thirdly, the theory's failure to adequately address issues of inequality and justice (Wallerstein, 2004; Chimni, 1999) is acknowledged, especially in contexts like Africa, where power imbalances are pronounced. Nevertheless, NGOs like Human Rights Reporters Ghana address these concerns by integrating local perspectives and adapting international norms to fit local contexts. This approach helps mitigate neo-colonial tendencies and supports grassroots involvement, thereby aligning with the need for a more nuanced application of human rights standards (Engle Merry, 2006). Lastly, while Liberal Institutionalism's focus on universal norms may clash with cultural relativism (Merry, 2006), NGOs strive to balance universal human rights principles with respect for local traditions. Human Rights Reporters Ghana exemplifies this by working to incorporate local cultural contexts into their advocacy, ensuring that human rights initiatives are both effective and culturally sensitive. This balance helps address resistance and enhances the sustainability of human rights efforts (Engle Merry, 2006).

2.3 Overview and Historical Background of Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have evolved significantly over the past two centuries, becoming key players in addressing a wide range of social, economic, and political issues. The

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origins of modern NGOs can be traced back to the 19th century, with organizations such as the Anti-Slavery Society, founded in 1839, which played a crucial role in the abolitionist movement (Davies, 2014, 2016). The Red Cross, established in 1863, marked another milestone, focusing on humanitarian aid and the treatment of wounded soldiers during wartime (Bernard, 2018; Gill, 2016). The early 20th century saw the proliferation of NGOs, particularly in response to the two World Wars. The creation of the United Nations in 1945 provided a significant platform for NGOs, as Article 71 of the UN Charter recognized the consultative role of NGOs in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (Hilton & Mouhot, 2013). This period also saw the establishment of influential NGOs such as Amnesty International and Oxfam, which focused on human rights and poverty alleviation, respectively (Davies, 2012; Hilton, 2012; Schimmel, 2020).

The post-World War II era witnessed a dramatic increase in the number and diversity of NGOs, driven by decolonization, the Cold War, and the rise of international development as a distinct field. NGOs began to play critical roles in delivering aid, promoting development, and advocating for social justice in newly independent states (Banks, Hulme, & Edwards, 2015). The 1980s and 1990s, often referred to as the "NGO boom," saw further expansion, with NGOs becoming central to the discourse on globalization, environmental sustainability, and human rights (Schofer & Longhofer, 2020). Globally, NGOs have become indispensable in addressing complex and multifaceted issues. In the field of humanitarian aid, NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) provide critical medical care in conflict zones and areas affected by natural disasters, often operating where governments and international organizations cannot (Davey, 2015). Environmental NGOs, such as Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), have been at the forefront of advocating for environmental protection and sustainability, influencing both public opinion and policy (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Bondaroff, 2014).

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In the realm of human rights, NGOs like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have been pivotal in documenting abuses, advocating for victims, and holding perpetrators accountable. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International's work has led to significant changes in international law and policy, including the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) (Appel, 2018; Engle, 2014). Additionally, development-focused NGOs, such as CARE and Save the Children, work to alleviate poverty, improve education, and promote health in some of the world's poorest regions, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Desai & Kharas, 2017). Thus, the historical evolution of NGOs and their broad range of activities underscore their importance in contemporary global society. From humanitarian aid and environmental advocacy to human rights and development, NGOs play a vital role in addressing the world's most pressing challenges. Their work complements the efforts of governments and international organizations, providing critical services and advocacy that contribute to a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. Therefore, the subsequent subsection will expand on the general overview of the Grassroot NGOs advocacy role and the limitations they encounter.

2.3.1 Non-Governmental Organizations in Africa

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an indispensable role in promoting human rights across Africa, addressing systemic inequalities, and advocating for justice on a continent often marked by socio-economic challenges and governance issues. Operating in environments where state mechanisms fall short, NGOs fill critical gaps by providing a voice for marginalized communities and advocating for the protection of fundamental rights. The historical and socio-political context of Africa underscores the urgency of their work, as they navigate complex challenges to ensure justice and equity.

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Africa's post-colonial era has been shaped by a turbulent history of political instability, socio-economic disparities, and widespread human rights violations. From the atrocities of apartheid in South Africa and the Rwandan genocide to the ongoing suppression of democratic movements in Zimbabwe and Sudan, the continent has experienced profound struggles for justice and equality (Ibhawoh, 2018). These challenges have created an urgent need for NGOs to advocate for fundamental rights such as freedom of expression, equality, and access to basic services. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, established in 1981, provides a legal framework for human rights protection across the continent (Umozurike, 2023). However, the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms has left significant gaps in accountability, which NGOs strive to address (Chidi, 2014).

One of the key roles of NGOs in Africa is the monitoring and documentation of human rights violations (Ssenyonjo, 2018). Acting as watchdogs, organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch collaborate with local NGOs to expose abuses and provide critical evidence for advocacy and litigation (Birchall, 2020; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Sharman, 2022). For example, the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) in Nigeria actively documents cases of police brutality, offering data to support judicial interventions (Alozieuwa, 2020). Such efforts ensure that abuses are recorded, raising awareness and laying the groundwork for accountability. In addition to documentation, NGOs provide legal assistance and advocacy to victims of human rights violations (Schimmel, 2020). They often bridge gaps in judicial systems that are either inaccessible or corrupt, ensuring marginalized communities have access to justice. For instance, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ Kenya) champions judicial reforms while offering pro bono legal services (Dobson, 2023), while South Africa's Legal Resources Centre advocates for land rights and equality under the law (Langford et al., 2020). These initiatives not only deliver

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immediate relief to victims but also strengthen the broader legal framework for protecting human rights.

NGOs also engage in community education and empowerment, raising awareness about human rights and mobilizing grassroots support. Programs such as Uganda's Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) conduct workshops and seminars that empower citizens to demand accountability and justice (Arnott et al., 2022). By fostering a culture of rights-consciousness, these efforts enable individuals to challenge systemic violations, creating a ripple effect that strengthens societal resilience against abuse. Moreover, NGOs play a pivotal role in advocacy and policy influence, working with governments and international bodies to promote human rights reforms. In Ghana, organizations like the Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC) have influenced policies on gender-based violence and child rights, demonstrating the power of lobbying and stakeholder engagement (Gore, 2024). In conflict zones, NGOs provide emergency response and humanitarian aid, offering shelter, food, and healthcare while advocating for peace and justice. For example, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) not only delivers essential aid but also documents war crimes and human rights abuses, highlighting the intersection of humanitarian and advocacy roles (Masumbuko Claude et al., 2019).

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Despite their critical contributions, NGOs in Africa face significant challenges. Political resistance and shrinking civic space remain persistent obstacles, as many governments view human rights advocacy as a threat to their authority. This often leads to repression, censorship, and restrictive laws, as seen in Ethiopia, where foreign funding restrictions have curtailed NGO activities (Dupuy et al., 2016). Another major challenge is financial constraints, with most African NGOs heavily reliant on inconsistent donor funding. The conditions attached to such funding often limit their

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autonomy and hinder the implementation of long-term programs (Arhin et al., 2018). The lack of sustainable funding mechanisms poses a constant threat to their operations and impact.

NGOs also encounter cultural and societal barriers, particularly when addressing sensitive issues such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. These deeply ingrained cultural practices often conflict with human rights norms, leading to resistance from traditional leaders and communities (Merry, 2006). Navigating these cultural complexities requires a delicate balance between advocacy and cultural sensitivity. Additionally, security risks pose a significant threat to human rights activists across the continent. In countries like Sudan and Burundi, activists have faced intimidation, violence, and even assassination for exposing state-led abuses (Human Rights Watch, 2023). These risks not only endanger individuals but also undermine the operational effectiveness of NGOs, limiting their ability to carry out their mandates.

2.3.2 Grassroot NGOs Advocacy

Grassroots NGOs are widely recognized as community-driven organizations that focus on localized advocacy, participatory development, and social change. Scholars have emphasized their bottom-up approach, which distinguishes them from larger international NGOs that often operate at broader policy levels. Edwards and Hulme (1996) define grassroots NGOs as locally based organizations that engage directly with marginalized populations, working to address specific community needs through advocacy and development initiatives. Their emphasis on participatory engagement ensures that solutions are tailored to the unique challenges of the communities they serve. Similarly, Banks, Hulme, and Edwards (2015) describe grassroots NGOs as small-scale, community-oriented organizations that mobilize local resources and foster collective action. These organizations play a crucial role in empowering communities by promoting social justice and

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human rights at the local level. By relying on local leadership and community participation, grassroots NGOs create sustainable solutions that are more resilient to external political and economic pressures. Lewis et al. (2020) further characterizes grassroots NGOs as organizations that emerge from within communities to address pressing social, economic, and political challenges. Unlike larger NGOs, which may focus on policy advocacy at national or international levels, grassroots NGOs work closely with local populations to fill governance gaps left by state institutions. Their efforts are often instrumental in delivering essential services, promoting human rights awareness, and advocating for policy changes that reflect the lived experiences of the communities they represent.

Grassroots non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a pivotal role in addressing local issues, promoting human rights, and fostering community development (Javed, 2023). Their operations have far-reaching implications that extend beyond immediate community impacts, influencing broader societal, political, and economic landscapes. One significant implication of grassroots NGOs' work is their ability to fill gaps left by governmental and international organizations (Islam, 2014; Lewis, Kanji, & Themudo, 2020). In many regions, especially in developing countries, governments may lack the resources or political will to address all local issues effectively (Glyptis et al., 2020). Grassroots NGOs often step in to provide essential services such as healthcare, education, and legal assistance, directly improving the quality of life for marginalized populations (Banks, Hulme, & Edwards, 2015). This role not only addresses immediate needs but also builds community resilience and capacity over the long term.

According to Herrold and AbouAssi, (2023), grassroots NGOs also play a crucial role in democratizing development and advocacy. By operating at the community level, these organizations ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable and marginalized are heard in policy

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discussions (Mlambo, Mpanza, & Mubecua, 2021). This participatory approach empowers communities, fostering a sense of ownership and agency in local development processes (Muhamad Khair, Lee, & Mokhtar, 2020). Consequently, grassroots NGOs help to create more inclusive and representative policy frameworks, promoting democratic governance.

Moreover, grassroots NGOs contribute to social cohesion and community solidarity (Jayakody et al., 2022). By mobilizing local resources and fostering collective action, these organizations strengthen social networks and build trust within communities (Bashri, 2021). This social capital is vital for community resilience, enabling collective responses to challenges such as natural disasters, economic crises, and social conflicts. For example, grassroots organizations in South Asia have been instrumental in community-based disaster risk management, significantly reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing preparedness (Shaw & Izumi, 2014). The advocacy and watchdog roles of grassroots NGOs also have significant implications. These organizations often hold governments and corporations accountable for their actions, advocating for transparency, justice, and human rights (Denedo, Thomson, & Yonekura, 2017). Through meticulous documentation and reporting of abuses, grassroots NGOs provide critical data that can be used in national and international human rights forums (Poblet & Kolieb, 2018). This watchdog function is essential in contexts where state institutions are weak or corrupt, as it helps to safeguard democratic principles and the rule of law.

2.3.3 Grassroots NGOs Advocacy Limitations

Grassroots NGOs face challenges that can impede their effectiveness. These challenges include financial constraints, political repression, organizational capacity issues, and external dependencies. Financial constraints are significant, as grassroots organizations often have limited

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budgets and rely heavily on local donations and small grants. This precariousness can limit their ability to implement long-term projects and respond to emerging needs (Banks, Hulme, & Edwards, 2015). Competition for funding is intense, and accessing grants can be complex, straining their capacities. Reliance on external funding also risks misalignment between donor priorities and community needs, leading to a dependency on donor-driven projects rather than sustainable initiatives (Banks & Hulme, 2012).

Grassroots NGOs often operate in politically sensitive environments, where their activities can be perceived as threats by local authorities, especially in authoritarian regimes. NGOs engaging in advocacy, human rights work, or anti-corruption efforts may face harassment, legal restrictions, and violence (Dupuy, Ron, & Prakash, 2015). In countries like Ethiopia and Russia, governments have introduced regulations to limit the activities of foreign-funded NGOs, framing them as agents of foreign influence (Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014). These hurdles can force NGOs to divert resources toward legal battles, undermining their advocacy. Limited organizational capacity is another challenge. Many grassroots NGOs are founded by passionate individuals but may lack formal training in nonprofit management and strategic planning, leading to inefficiencies (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). Staff turnover is common due to the inability to offer competitive salaries, and capacity-building initiatives can be hard to access due to financial and geographical barriers. The lack of technical skills hinders NGOs' ability to monitor and evaluate their projects effectively, reducing their ability to demonstrate impact and attract funding (Smillie, 2009).

Partnerships with larger NGOs and international organizations can provide support but also lead to dependencies that undermine grassroots autonomy (Wright & Reames, 2020). External partners may impose conditions that limit grassroots NGOs' ability to pursue locally relevant solutions

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(Sakue-Collins, 2021). Additionally, external funding can disrupt local power dynamics and create competition among community groups, undermining social cohesion (Mohan, 2002).

Grassroots NGOs often operate in challenging environments characterized by poverty, conflict, and instability. In conflict-affected areas, insecurity can restrict NGO staff movement, disrupt supply chains, and limit access to beneficiaries (Lind et al., 2022). Natural disasters and environmental degradation require constant adaptation of strategies. Cultural and social barriers, such as traditional norms conflicting with NGO objectives, require understanding local contexts and effective community dialogue (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). Maintaining accountability and transparency is essential for grassroots NGOs' credibility and effectiveness but remains a challenge (Ortega-Rodríguez, Licerán-Gutiérrez & Moreno-Albarracín, 2020). Limited resources make it difficult to establish robust governance structures and monitoring systems, leading to issues with financial mismanagement and reduced trust (Denedo, Thomson, & Yonekura, 2017). Grassroots NGOs must balance accountability with practical realities, requiring ongoing training, investment in administrative capacity, and ethical practices.

2.4 Literature Review

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This section examines the existing body of knowledge relevant to the study, focusing on three interconnected areas. First, it explores the roles and contributions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to human rights advocacy, emphasizing their significance in addressing governance gaps and promoting social justice. Next, it delves into the implications and challenges faced by grassroots NGOs, highlighting the barriers these organizations encounter in their efforts to sustain impactful operations. Finally, the review outlines strategies for ensuring the sustainability of grassroots NGOs, providing insights into innovative approaches and best practices

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to strengthen their capacity for long-term human rights advocacy. These subsections collectively offer a foundation for understanding the dynamics of grassroots human rights organizations and their critical role in fostering societal change.

2.4.1 Roles and Contribution of Non-governmental Organizations to Human Rights

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a critical role in advancing human rights on the international stage. These organizations, particularly International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), engage in advocacy, monitoring, and shaming tactics to influence state behavior and promote accountability. By disseminating information, mobilizing resources, and forming strategic alliances, INGOs significantly raise awareness of human rights abuses and shape public opinion. The following review examines several scholarly articles exploring the diverse strategies and impact of NGOs on human rights advocacy, highlighting their methodologies and findings at the global and national level.

At the global level, Davis, Murdie, and Garnett Steinmetz (2012) investigated whether human rights INGOs influence public opinion in repressive regimes. Using a quantitative approach, they combined data on shaming activities by over 400 INGOs with the World Values Survey to assess public perceptions of government respect for human rights. Their findings reveal that INGOs serve as powerful conduits for information dissemination; when INGOs engage in shaming, they significantly impact public opinion, reducing trust in governments accused of human rights abuses. This study underscores the critical role of INGOs in shaping public awareness and holding states accountable. Similarly, Dietrich and Murdie (2017) examined how INGO shaming influences foreign aid delivery decisions by OECD countries. Utilizing compositional data analysis, the study

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explored the relationship between shaming events and bilateral aid allocation from 2004 to 2010. The findings indicate that when INGOs shame recipient governments, donor countries—particularly minor powers—are more likely to bypass those governments in favor of delivering aid through non-state channels such as local NGOs. This highlights INGOs' influence on international aid policies, especially in politically sensitive contexts where direct government engagement may not be feasible. Further expanding on the role of INGOs, Velasco (2018) studied the diffusion of LGBT rights policies facilitated by human rights INGOs and specialized LGBT INGOs. Using pooled cross-sectional time-series analysis, Velasco examined policy adoption in 156 countries between 1991 and 2015. The results indicate that targeted advocacy by specialized INGOs is more effective in promoting specific rights, such as those related to LGBT communities. This suggests that INGOs may need to adopt more specialized approaches to achieve tangible policy outcomes, emphasizing the importance of tailored advocacy.

In conflict settings, Swed (2018) explored the mitigating effects of INGOs on human rights violations during armed conflicts. Analyzing data from countries involved in conflicts between 1977 and 2003, Swed's study shows that the presence of INGOs correlates with improved human rights conditions even under adverse circumstances. This finding supports the notion that INGOs can uphold international human rights norms through monitoring and advocacy, even in challenging environments, thereby playing a stabilizing role during conflicts. On a different note, Kiyani and Murdie (2020) examined how the presence of women's rights INGOs impacts civil society restrictions in politically and economically vulnerable states. Covering data from 1975 to 2013, they found that while women's INGOs generally support civil society, they can also lead to increased restrictions as governments may scapegoat these organizations to maintain control. This

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highlights a paradox in human rights advocacy where INGOs, while empowering civil society, can simultaneously provoke backlash that restricts civic space.

At the continental level, thus, Africa, Haikin and Flatters (2017) explored the role of international NGOs (INGOs) like Oxfam in leveraging digital technology for development, particularly in the Horn, East, and Central Africa regions. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining interviews, workshops, and an online survey with 284 participants. Findings highlight that INGOs play a vital role in integrating Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into development programs to enhance their reach and efficiency. However, the study also identified barriers such as limited connectivity and inadequate local capacity. The emphasis on digital development in this study highlights the potential of technology to improve the effectiveness of human rights advocacy, suggesting that NGOs in Africa could benefit from adopting digital tools to enhance their outreach and advocacy efforts. In a related study, Yan, Lin, and Clarke (2018) examined the roles of NGOs in cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs) aimed at addressing social issues. Using qualitative interviews with 16 participants involved in a partnership in Ontario, the study identified NGOs as playing key roles such as consultants, capacity builders, and advocates. These roles are essential in facilitating collaboration and achieving shared goals within partnerships. The study's emphasis on NGOs' enabling and coordinating roles aligns with the findings of Haikin and Flatters (2017) on the importance of capacity building and collaboration for effective human rights advocacy. Both studies highlight the need for NGOs to engage in partnerships to leverage resources and expertise.

Ngido (2023) conducted a convergent mixed-methods study to assess the impact of NGOs on sustainable agricultural practices in Tanzania. By interviewing 40 participants, including farmers and NGO officers, the research found that NGOs are pivotal in providing resources and training

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to enhance sustainable agriculture. This study demonstrates the broader impact of NGOs on sustainable development beyond human rights, showing how capacity building and market linkages can empower local communities. The findings align with Haikin and Flatters' (2017) emphasis on the importance of local capacity building, suggesting that such strategies can be applied to human rights advocacy to strengthen grassroots initiatives. Ssenyonjo (2018) focused on the African Commission and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, assessing their roles in upholding human rights over the past three decades. The study adopted a doctrinal approach, analyzing legal documents and case reports to evaluate the effectiveness of these regional bodies. Ssenyonjo's research reveals that while these institutions have made significant strides in protecting human rights, challenges such as lack of enforcement and limited political will remain. The study underscores the critical role that regional bodies play in complementing the work of NGOs by providing legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms. This supports the argument that NGOs can leverage regional institutions to enhance their advocacy efforts, particularly in contexts where state compliance is limited.

Similarly, Nampewo, Mike, and Wolff (2022) examined the enforcement of the human right to health in Africa through a doctrinal analysis of legal frameworks. The study highlights the challenges in assigning duties to state and non-state actors, noting disparities in the implementation of health rights across different jurisdictions. The findings suggest that NGOs play a crucial role in bridging gaps in state-provided services, particularly in areas where legal obligations are unclear or inadequately enforced. This aligns with Ssenyonjo's (2018) findings on the need for NGOs to engage with regional institutions to ensure that human rights are respected. Yates and Harris (2018) explored the intersection of neoliberal policies and the human right to water in South Africa and Ghana. The study used a mixed-methods approach to analyze policy documents and conduct

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interviews, finding that NGOs are instrumental in advocating for equitable access to water despite the challenges posed by neoliberal policies. The research highlights the role of NGOs in influencing policy reforms and addressing social inequities. This is consistent with the findings of Haikin and Flatters (2017), which emphasize the importance of NGOs in advocating for policy changes to improve access to essential services.

More so, at the national level, Agbenyoh (2022) conducted a qualitative case study exploring slum governance in Accra, focusing on how both government and non-governmental actors, including NGOs, are involved in managing slum communities like Old Fadama and Glefe. Using secondary data from policy documents, scholarly articles, and media reports, the study reveals that the current slum governance strategies—mainly eviction and decongestion—are ineffective and violate residents' human rights. The findings highlight the need for more inclusive approaches that involve slum dwellers in decision-making processes. This aligns with the broader responsibilities of NGOs to advocate for marginalized groups and promote inclusive governance. Agbenyoh's research suggests that NGOs could play a crucial role in advocating for slum upgrading rather than eviction, which would contribute to sustainable urban development in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11. Similarly, Forkuor and Agyemang (2018) examined the role of urban NGOs in fighting poverty in Kumasi using a mixed-methods approach, including both qualitative and quantitative data from 105 respondents. The study found that NGOs provide critical social intervention programs targeting women and youth, yet these efforts often have short-term impacts due to limited beneficiary involvement in the planning and implementation stages. The lack of sustainable collaboration between NGOs and the government further limits the effectiveness of poverty reduction initiatives. The study reinforces Agbenyoh's (2022) findings by emphasizing

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the need for greater stakeholder participation and sustainable strategies in NGO operations to achieve long-term impact.

In the context of child rights, Adonteng-Kissi (2018) conducted a qualitative study exploring parental perceptions of child labor in rural and urban Ghana. Using semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observations across different regions, the research finds that child labor is often culturally accepted as a form of socialization. However, the study also shows that increased awareness of human rights can shift parental attitudes towards better child protection. This highlights the role of NGOs in educating communities about human rights to challenge harmful cultural practices. The findings complement those of Forkuor and Agyemang (2018), who also noted the importance of NGOs in raising awareness and empowering marginalized groups. Forkuor and Korah (2023) focused on the contributions of NGOs to sustainable rural development in the Upper West Region of Ghana. This study, using a mixed-methods approach with data collected from 194 respondents, found that NGOs have made significant strides in improving health, education, and economic conditions in rural areas. However, the study also revealed that many NGO interventions lack sustainability after project funding ends, primarily due to cultural barriers, inadequate funding, and logistical constraints. This finding aligns with the conclusions drawn by Forkuor and Agyemang (2018), who also identified sustainability challenges in urban poverty interventions. Both studies suggest the need for NGOs to adopt long-term strategies and build stronger community partnerships to sustain their impact.

These studies collectively highlight the multifaceted roles that international and grassroots NGOs play in promoting human rights, addressing social inequalities, and fostering sustainable development. Scholars such as Davis et al. (2012) and Dietrich & Murdie (2017) emphasize the influence of international NGOs (INGOs) on shaping public opinion, foreign aid policies, and

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mitigating human rights abuses. However, these studies often focus on INGOs' broader international impact, overlooking localized challenges faced by grassroots organizations like Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG).

The current research on HRRG, employing a qualitative approach through interviews, delves into the distinct obstacles these local NGOs face, such as political resistance, financial constraints, and cultural opposition, which are not extensively covered in the existing literature on INGOs. This qualitative focus provides deeper insights into the on-the-ground realities that quantitative studies may not fully capture, emphasizing the importance of exploring the nuanced strategies and challenges of grassroots organizations. Furthermore, while previous studies largely concentrate on the roles of INGOs and regional bodies in advocating for human rights, gaps remain in understanding how these strategies can be adapted to the specific contexts of grassroots NGOs.

The reviewed studies, often using qualitative or mixed methods approaches, underline the need for more targeted research on how localized NGOs can sustain their impact amidst resource limitations and political challenges. By combining qualitative insights with quantitative approaches, future research can offer a more comprehensive view of how both international and grassroots NGOs can collaborate to overcome challenges and advance human rights more effectively across diverse contexts. Addressing these gaps could enhance our understanding of how grassroots NGOs like HRRG can develop long-term strategies for sustainable advocacy, ensuring that their interventions have a lasting impact on human rights and social development in Ghana and beyond.

The previous studies reviewed collectively highlight the multifaceted roles that both international and grassroots NGOs play in promoting human rights, addressing social inequalities, and fostering sustainable development. Scholars like Davis et al. (2012) and Dietrich & Murdie (2017)

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emphasize the influence of international NGOs (INGOs) in shaping public opinion, foreign aid policies, and mitigating human rights abuses. However, these studies often focus on INGOs' broader international impact, overlooking the localized challenges faced by smaller organizations like Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG). In contrast, the current study on HRRG employs a qualitative approach to explore the distinct obstacles encountered by grassroots NGOs, such as political resistance, financial constraints, and cultural opposition. This qualitative lens provides deeper insights into on-the-ground realities that quantitative studies may not fully capture, underscoring the importance of exploring the nuanced strategies and challenges of community-driven organizations.

2.4.2 Implications and Challenges faced by Grassroot Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a pivotal role in addressing socio-economic disparities, promoting human rights, and filling gaps left by state and private sector interventions, particularly in developing regions like Africa. However, their efforts are often impeded by complex challenges, ranging from political resistance and financial constraints to issues of accountability and collaboration with state actors. The studies reviewed highlight how these challenges manifest at different levels—globally, continentally, and within specific national contexts, such as Ghana. At the global level, NGOs face barriers like communication gaps and partner selection difficulties, which affect their capacity to form effective alliances (Hakkarainen, 2020), while in authoritarian settings, restrictive political environments further limit their effectiveness (Hsu et al., 2017). Regionally, NGOs in Africa encounter difficulties in balancing donor expectations with grassroots needs, as seen in studies from Zimbabwe and Malawi (Chakawarika, 2017; Kermani & Reandi, 2023). Within Ghana, localized challenges include donor dependency, limited income diversification, and cumbersome legal frameworks that restrict

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operational efficiency (Arhin, 2016; Sarpong, 2022). This overview underscores the need for a deeper exploration of how NGOs can overcome these barriers to enhance their impact, particularly at the grassroots level, where the integration of sustainable strategies is crucial for long-term effectiveness. The articles reviewed collectively examine the challenges and implications faced by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating at the global, continental and national level. These studies use diverse methods and focus on different contexts, offering critical insights into the complex landscape of NGO operations and their impacts.

In view of the challenges faced by NGOs at the global, Hakkarainen (2020) uses qualitative interviews with 30 Finnish NGOs to explore internal challenges related to private sector collaboration. The study reveals barriers like communication gaps, partner selection difficulties, and internal resistance that impede NGOs' ability to form effective business partnerships. These challenges highlight the difficulty of aligning NGO missions with private sector priorities, which often leads to operational silos and risk aversion. This study reinforces the importance of fostering better communication and collaboration between NGOs and private sector entities to maximize impact, a finding echoed by Hsu, Hsu, and Hasmath (2017). Hsu, Hsu, and Hasmath (2017) conducted both interviews and surveys with 116 NGOs in China, focusing on how NGOs navigate authoritarian contexts. Their findings reveal that donor-dependent practices often limit broader citizen engagement, as these practices reinforce social hierarchies where only elites participate actively. On the other hand, NGOs relying on volunteer-driven models are better able to engage citizens meaningfully, thus fostering active citizenship. This study emphasizes that the source of funding can shape NGO operations and influence how effectively they can promote social participation. The findings suggest that NGOs must balance donor expectations with grassroots engagement, particularly in restrictive political environments. Reimann (2017) examines the

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criticisms directed toward NGOs, particularly in the areas of effectiveness, accountability, and autonomy. The study highlights that while advocacy NGOs often face scrutiny for perceived inefficiencies and political biases, those involved in service delivery face similar criticisms. The criticisms stem from NGOs' struggles to balance their mission-driven work with external expectations from donors and the public. The critique of NGOs' effectiveness, especially in advocacy, aligns with the challenges highlighted by Hakkarainen (2020), where internal organizational issues limit their ability to deliver on their mandate. Alston (2017) discusses the challenges faced by human rights organizations in the context of rising populism and anti-human rights rhetoric. This article emphasizes the need for human rights NGOs to rethink strategies, expand outreach, and strengthen collaborations with local movements to counter the populist backlash. The findings indicate that NGOs must adapt by integrating social and economic rights into their advocacy agendas, moving beyond traditional human rights frameworks to address broader societal issues. Alston's call for a reevaluation of strategies reinforces the need for NGOs to be flexible and responsive, especially in the face of changing political climates. A study on the management of Syrian refugees' resettlement through interviews with staff from both international and local NGOs in Turkey reveals significant coordination issues between the Turkish government and NGOs. The research identifies barriers like inadequate integration policies, registration challenges, and access to public services. These findings highlight the critical role NGOs play in providing essential services in crisis contexts but also reveal gaps in cooperation with local governments, which limits their effectiveness. This resonates with the findings of Hakkarainen (2020) and Hsu, Hsu, and Hasmath (2017), where collaboration issues and restrictive environments hinder NGO operations.

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At a continental level, Atia and Herrold (2018) investigate how foreign aid and government funding transform NGOs into instruments of governance in Palestine and Morocco. Utilizing qualitative research, they argue that patronage funding leads to bureaucratization and depoliticization of NGOs, reducing their effectiveness as agents of change within civil society. This aligns with the findings of Nega and Schneider (2014), who critically examine how neoliberal policies have led to the rise of NGOs as substitutes for the state in Africa. Their study highlights the inherent weaknesses of non-state actors in sustaining development, suggesting a need for the state to reassert its role in partnership with NGOs to achieve sustainable outcomes. Similarly, Chakawarika (2017) explores the operational challenges of NGOs in Zimbabwe's harsh political environment. Through a comparative analysis of four NGOs, the study highlights issues such as political interference, arbitrary arrests, and bureaucratic red tape, which impede the sustainability of human rights advocacy. This aligns with the observations made by Kermani and Reandi (2023), who focus on funding challenges in rural Malawi. Their qualitative case study reveals that stringent donor criteria and declining financial support limit the ability of small NGOs to sustain essential health services. Both studies underscore the vulnerability of NGOs to external pressures, whether political or financial, which compromises their capacity to fulfill their missions.

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In the context of Ghana, several studies provide a more localized exploration of these challenges. For example, Arhin (2016) examines the impact of shifting donor priorities on the ability of NGOs in Ghana to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study, which uses in-depth qualitative interviews, identifies funding uncertainty, operational capacity issues, and unstable organizational identities as key factors affecting NGO effectiveness. Similarly, Kwao and Amoak (2022) explore the challenges of concentrated donor interventions in Northern Ghana, noting a lack of coordination among NGOs, government agencies, and local communities, which results in

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project duplication and inefficient resource use. Ebenezer, Musah, and Ahmed (2020) address the financial sustainability of NGOs in Ghana, utilizing quantitative data to highlight the over-dependence on donor funding and limited income diversification among NGOs. Their study suggests that without sound financial management and income-generating activities, NGOs in Ghana will continue to struggle with sustainability. These findings are echoed by Sarpong (2022), who examines the legal challenges faced by NGOs in Ghana, particularly the bureaucratic obstacles related to registration and compliance. This study, based on qualitative interviews, demonstrates how complex legal frameworks hinder the operational efficiency of NGOs in the Greater Accra region, thereby limiting their capacity to deliver on their mandates.

While the existing literature offers significant insights into the global challenges faced by NGOs, it primarily addresses macro-level concerns like policy influence, funding, and collaboration with governments. Studies by Chakawarika (2017) and Nega & Schneider (2014) highlight barriers related to donor expectations, political interference, and complex legal frameworks. However, these studies often overlook the specific struggles faced by grassroots NGOs operating in politically sensitive environments. In contrast, HRRG's experiences demonstrate how smaller, localized organizations navigate direct political opposition and limited resources to sustain their advocacy. The study highlights that these grassroots efforts are critical in advancing human rights, especially in contexts where international NGOs may not have the same level of engagement. Moreover, regional studies, such as those by Arhin (2016) and Ebenezer et al. (2020), emphasize the crucial roles that NGOs play in socio-economic development and human rights advocacy across Africa, particularly in Ghana. However, these studies also reveal significant challenges, such as inadequate coordination, financial sustainability issues, and restrictive regulatory environments. While these challenges are broadly recognized, the specific adaptive strategies that

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grassroots organizations like HRRG employ to remain resilient amidst such obstacles remain underexplored in the literature. This research addresses that gap by focusing on how grassroots NGOs sustain their operations and advocacy efforts despite systemic barriers.

2.4.3 Strategies to Ensuring Sustainability of Grassroots NGOs

The sustainability of NGOs, particularly in regions where traditional aid sources are diminishing, remains a critical concern for their continued impact. As funding landscapes shift, both international and grassroots organizations must adapt to ensure long-term effectiveness in their advocacy and developmental roles. The reviewed literature explores various strategies that NGOs employ to address these challenges, with a focus on building resilience through diversified funding, strategic partnerships, and capacity-building. These studies provide valuable insights into how organizations like Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) can sustain their operations and maintain their mission in the face of evolving external pressures.

The empirical studies reviewed collectively highlight the diverse strategies NGOs adopt to achieve sustainability, especially in contexts where traditional aid sources are becoming less reliable. Arhin, Kumi, and Adam (2018) identify six key strategies, such as diversified funding (termed "eggs-in-multiple-baskets") and collaborations ("strength-in-numbers"), used by NGOs in Ghana to navigate the changing aid landscape. These strategies align with HRRG's efforts to secure multiple funding streams and establish strategic partnerships, underscoring the importance of diversifying resources and leveraging collaboration to enhance sustainability. The emphasis on credibility-building and visibility-enhancing strategies is reflected in HRRG's focus on community engagement and awareness campaigns to sustain its advocacy efforts.

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Adding further depth, Kumi (2019) examines the challenges NGOs face when attempting to mobilize alternative funding through philanthropic institutions. He highlights the limitations of domestic philanthropy in Ghana, where individual and religious giving is often directed towards families rather than formal organizations. This finding underscores the need for NGOs like HRRG to build local trust and partnerships, while also seeking international grants to diversify their funding sources effectively. Appe and Schnable (2021) shift attention to the role of support organizations in building the capacity of NGOs. Their study highlights the benefits of peer learning and online platforms as tools for overcoming the geographic dispersion of NGOs, which resonates with HRRG's strategy of leveraging digital technology for advocacy and collaboration. The focus on managerial and administrative capacity-building aligns with HRRG's investments in staff training to improve operational efficiency and sustainability. Khieng and Dahles (2015) provide a comparative perspective from Cambodian NGOs, illustrating that reliance on foreign aid can lead to unpredictable funding, goal displacement, and reduced autonomy. However, their findings also suggest that engaging in commercial activities can provide more stable income and promote bottom-up accountability, despite the risk of mission drift. This insight is particularly relevant to HRRG as it explores diversified revenue streams, such as crowdfunding and partnerships with local enterprises, while maintaining its core mission.

Collectively, these studies emphasize the need for a multifaceted approach to NGO sustainability that includes diversified funding, capacity-building, strategic partnerships, and local community engagement. While Arhin et al. (2018) and Kumi (2019) focus on the Ghanaian context, highlighting the importance of financial and operational adaptability, Khieng and Dahles (2015) provide a broader perspective by showcasing how NGOs in Cambodia navigate the challenges of donor dependency. Additionally, the focus on capacity-building by Appe and Schnable (2021)

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underscores the significance of investing in internal organizational development, which HRRG is already prioritizing through training and digital initiatives. By synthesizing these insights, HRRG can refine its strategies to ensure its continued contribution to human rights advocacy in Ghana, effectively navigating the complexities of financial sustainability and operational challenges while remaining committed to its mission. Future research should consider combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how grassroots NGOs can achieve long-term sustainability in dynamic socio-political environments.

In examining the interplay between international and grassroots NGOs, this study reveals that localized strategies are essential for the sustainability of human rights work in regions like Ghana. By combining qualitative insights from interviews with an analysis of existing literature, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how grassroots NGOs can align their strategies with both local needs and international human rights frameworks. Future research should expand on these findings, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore how localized NGOs can sustain their impact in complex socio-political environments. Addressing these gaps would not only enrich the discourse on NGO sustainability but also provide practical strategies for grassroots organizations to enhance their advocacy and long-term effectiveness.

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The reviewed literature strongly relates to the work on *Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG)* by emphasizing the dual importance of international and grassroots NGOs in human rights advocacy. While studies like those by Davis et al. (2012) and Dietrich & Murdie (2017) focus on the global impact of international NGOs (INGOs), HRRG's localized efforts align with findings by Arhin (2016) and Ebenezer et al. (2020) on the critical role of grassroots NGOs in addressing community-specific challenges.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Three outlined the research methodology employed in this study, detailing the chosen research design and its suitability for achieving the study's objectives. It covered the sources of data, and describes the population, sampling method, and sample size. The chapter also discussed data collection instruments and procedures, as well as the processing and analysis techniques used. It further discussed the reliability and validity of the method. Also, ethical considerations were addressed to ensure adherence to ethical standards.

3.2 Research design

Due to the research focus on examining the roles, challenges, and sustainability strategies of grassroots NGOs in human rights advocacy, as well as the study's objectives, the qualitative research method was selected. Also, the study adopts a qualitative case study design. This design is appropriate because it allows for a focused and in-depth examination of how Human Rights Reporters Ghana promotes human rights within the Ghanaian context. It also provides room to capture detailed experiences, perspectives and activities of the organization, which would not be easily obtained through quantitative approaches. In addition, qualitative research method approach allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perspectives, and contextual realities, which are critical in understanding the complexities of human rights work. In selecting a research design, qualitative methodologies offer a robust framework for exploring the nuanced and complex nature of human experiences and social phenomena. Qualitative research is particularly well-suited for studies aiming to understand the underlying motivations, perceptions, and contexts

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that shape behaviors and interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This approach provides rich, detailed insights that quantitative methods may not capture, making it ideal for investigating phenomena such as the roles and impacts of NGOs in human rights advocacy.

One of the primary justifications for employing qualitative research design is its capacity to delve deeply into the subjective experiences of participants (Maxwell, 2021; Tonon, 2015). Unlike quantitative research, which often relies on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research focuses on the meanings individuals attach to their experiences and the ways in which these meanings shape their actions (Creswell, 2013). In the case of this current study which is geared towards studying the role of NGOs in promoting human rights, qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observations allow researchers to gather firsthand accounts from NGO staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders. These methods provide a comprehensive understanding of how NGOs operate, the challenges they face, and the strategies they employ to effect change.

Furthermore, qualitative research design is particularly effective in exploring the context and dynamics of social phenomena (Maxwell, 2018). It enables researchers to capture the complexity of interactions and relationships within and between organizations, such as how NGOs navigate partnerships with other entities and adapt to changing political and social landscapes (Charmaz, 2014). Through qualitative interviews with NGO leaders and staff, researchers can uncover insights into the strategic decisions made by these organizations and the impact of external factors such as donor requirements and government regulations on their operations.

Qualitative research is particularly valuable for exploring complex and dynamic issues like the role of NGOs in promoting human rights in Ghana, especially in the context of an organization

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such as Human Rights Reporters Ghana. This approach supports an iterative and flexible methodology, allowing researchers to adapt their methods as new insights emerge during the study (Maxwell, 2021). Such flexibility is crucial in human rights advocacy, where the context and the perspectives of stakeholders—ranging from activists and community members to government officials—can shift over time (Gerring, 2017; Maxwell, 2021). By utilizing qualitative methods, the study captured the complexity of how NGOs like Human Rights Reporters Ghana promote human rights. This approach not only enriches the findings but also ensures that the voices of all relevant stakeholders are included. Ultimately, this flexibility allows for a deeper dialogue around the challenges and successes in human rights advocacy, helping to inform more effective strategies for promoting and protecting these rights in the Ghanaian context.

3.3 Population

In research terminology, the population refers to the complete set of individuals or items that share common characteristics and are the focus of a particular study (Creswell et al., 2014). Therefore, the population for this study include actors within HRRG employees, journalists, and volunteers as well as stakeholders, such as partner organizations, local community leaders, beneficiaries of HRRG's initiatives, and representatives from collaborating NGOs. These individuals and groups collectively contribute to and interact with the ecosystem of grassroots human rights advocacy, enriching the findings with varied perspectives and experiences.

This diverse group is crucial for understanding the dynamics of HRRG's operations, as it includes individuals with varying roles and responsibilities, each contributing unique perspectives to the advocacy process. Employees typically manage the organization's strategic initiatives and day-to-day operations, while journalists play a vital role in documenting and reporting human rights

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issues. Volunteers, often driven by passion and commitment, support HRRG's initiatives at the grassroots level and help bridge the gap between the organization and the communities it serves.

By studying this entire population, the research aims to capture a holistic view of HRRG's impact on human rights advocacy in Ghana, highlighting the interplay between different roles within the organization and their collective efforts to promote awareness and drive change. This comprehensive approach was not only enrich the findings but also provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of NGO strategies in the realm of human rights.

3.4 Sampling Method

In this study, the convenience sampling technique was employed to select participants from the population of Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG). Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where participants are selected based on their easy accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Unlike probability sampling methods, which involve random selection and provide each member of the population with an equal chance of being included, non-probability sampling methods do not guarantee this level of representativeness. Convenience sampling was chosen for this study due to its practicality and efficiency in accessing the specific population of interest (Jager et al., 2017) — HRRG employees, journalists, and volunteers as well as stakeholders, such as partner organizations, local community leaders, beneficiaries of HRRG's initiatives, and representatives from collaborating NGOs.

Given that the target population have busy schedules and often undertake their activities from varying locations, convenience sampling was found to be appropriate since it allowed for the collection of data from the entire population or a readily available subset, making it a suitable choice for studies with limited resources or time constraints (Sedgwick, 2013). This method is

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particularly advantageous when aiming to gather preliminary insights and when other sampling methods are not feasible (Sullivan, 2012). The reason for using convenience sampling in this context is rooted in the need to obtain in-depth, accessible data from those who are directly involved in the organization's human rights work. Since the study focuses on understanding the internal dynamics and experiences of HRRG's workforce and volunteers, convenience sampling provides a pragmatic approach to collecting relevant and meaningful data from readily available participants (Fink, 2017). Although this method may introduce some biases and limit generalizability, it is well-suited for the exploratory nature of the research and the specific objectives of evaluating HRRG's impact and operations.

3.5 Sample Size

Sample size in qualitative research refers to the number of participants chosen to provide in-depth and rich data on the research topic. Creswell and Poth (2016) recommend a range of 5 to 30 participants for qualitative studies, emphasizing that a smaller sample allows for comprehensive exploration of individual experiences. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) suggest that a sample size of 12 to 15 participants is often sufficient to reach data saturation, where no new information emerges. Similarly, Mason (2010) advocates for 15 to 30 participants to balance depth and breadth of data. For this study, 20 participants were selected, aligning with these recommendations and ensuring an adequate representation of the Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) staff, associate journalists and volunteers to achieve a thorough understanding of their roles, motivations, and challenges.

3.6 Sources of Data

This study is anchored in a robust data collection framework that allows the researcher to collect data primary sources, providing a comprehensive understanding of the role of NGOs in promoting

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human rights in Ghana, with a particular focus on Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG). The primary data for this study was sourced from key stakeholders, executives and volunteers involved with HRRG, ensuring a rich and nuanced perspective on the organization's activities. First, interviews with key advocates at HRRG offered valuable insights into their roles and responsibilities, strategies for sustainability, and the challenges faced in promoting human rights within Ghana's socio-political context. These advocates possess in-depth knowledge of the inner workings of HRRG, making their perspectives critical for understanding the organization's effectiveness.

Additionally, journalists who were stakeholders who assist HRRG and were human right activitis were interviewed to collect data on their perspectives on the roles of HRRG (such as media engagement and advocacy efforts), strategies and challenges faced by the facet. Their experiences were to serve as a reinforcement to the data provided by HRRG officials/executives. By understanding how HRRG collaborates with journalists, the study explored the intersection of media and human rights advocacy in Ghana. Moreover, the voices of volunteers at HRRG were included to contribute firsthand accounts of operational challenges and grassroots involvement. These volunteers represent the organization's front line; hence, they shared their narratives about the day-to-day realities of advocacy work. Their insights helped illustrate the impact of HRRG's initiatives on local communities and highlight the operational challenges faced in the field. Primary data serves as the foundation of this research, defined as original data collected directly from firsthand sources rather than being compiled from existing sources (Kumar, 2014). This perspective ensures a holistic analysis of the dynamics affecting human rights work in Ghana.

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3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide. A semi-structured interview guide is a qualitative research tool that combines structured questions with the flexibility for open-ended responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This approach allows researchers to explore specific themes while also enabling participants to provide detailed and nuanced responses about their experiences and perspectives. The semi-structured format is particularly effective for understanding complex issues, such as the roles and challenges faced by Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) staff and volunteers. It provides a framework to ensure that all key topics are addressed while allowing for natural conversation flow and additional probing based on participants' responses (Rubin, 2012). By using this instrument, the study was able to gather comprehensive and in-depth insights into the participants' roles, experiences, and perceptions, which are crucial for understanding the dynamics of HRRG's operations and impact.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure was carefully designed to ensure both ethical standards and practical feasibility. Owing that fact that the study adopted the convenience sampling technique, the process began with an initial unscheduled meeting to inform potential participants about the study's purpose and scope. This preliminary engagement helped to build rapport and set the stage for more formal interactions. Following this, an official letter from the Legon Center for International Affairs and Diplomacy was secured to authenticate the research and affirm its academic intent. This formal validation was crucial for gaining participants' trust and cooperation (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Subsequent meetings were organized to schedule the interviews, which were conducted using both phone calls and face-to-face interactions. The choice of conducting interviews via

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phone and in person was made to accommodate participants' preferences and availability, thus, at the convenience of the interviewee, thereby maximizing their participation and ensuring that the data collected was as rich and comprehensive as possible. Face-to-face interviews allowed for more personal interaction and immediate follow-up questions, while phone interviews provided flexibility for participants who could not be physically present. This mixed approach facilitated a more inclusive and effective data collection process, aligning with best practices in qualitative research (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014).

3.9 Data Analysis

For the data analysis in this study, manual transcription, and Nvivo was utilized along with thematic data analysis. Nvivo is a powerful qualitative data analysis tool designed to assist researchers in organizing, coding, and analyzing large volumes of text-based data (Bazeley, 2019). The manual transcription of interview data was conducted by preparing of essential tools, including audio recordings, playback software, headphones, and a word processor. Short segments of the recordings were played, and the content was transcribed verbatim, with timestamps added to mark unclear sections or key moments. Interviewee labels were included to differentiate participants. The draft was then reviewed against the recordings for accuracy, errors were corrected, and the transcript was formatted with clear interviewee labels and paragraph breaks. Finally, the completed transcripts were saved in an organized folder with consistent file naming for easy access during analysis. It allows for the systematic examination of qualitative data by facilitating the coding of themes and categories, which is essential for identifying patterns and deriving meaningful insights from the data collected.

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The study employed thematic analysis, which was appropriate because it allowed for the systematic identification of recurring patterns related to how Human Rights Reporters Ghana promotes human rights. The analysis was conducted inductively, meaning that themes were developed from the data itself without imposing preset categories. This approach helped capture the authentic perspectives and experiences of respondents within the Ghanaian human rights context. Thematic data analysis, as employed in this study, involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this context, NVivo enabled the efficient coding of specific themes relevant to HRRG's human rights advocacy efforts, such as media engagement, community impact, and advocacy challenges. This was evident in my work as NVivo facilitated the systematic categorization of interview responses from HRRG staff, uncovering insights into the impact of media coverage on public perceptions of human rights issues and the challenges encountered by the organization. By emphasizing these themes, NVivo offered a structured method for analyzing complex qualitative data, enhancing my understanding of the strategies HRRG employs to advance its mission of promoting human rights in Ghana. This approach provides a flexible and detailed method for examining qualitative data, enabling the researcher to uncover and interpret various themes related to the roles, experiences, and challenges faced by Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG). Thematic analysis involves several key steps: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By using NVivo in conjunction with thematic analysis, the study was able to systematically manage and analyze the data, ensuring that all relevant themes and patterns were identified and accurately represented. NVivo's capabilities facilitated the organization and retrieval of data based on thematic codes, while thematic analysis provided a structured approach to interpret the qualitative findings

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comprehensively (Bazeley, 2019). This combined approach ensured a robust and in-depth analysis of the data, aligning with best practices in qualitative research.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are paramount in research involving human participants, particularly in sensitive contexts such as the study of NGOs and their operations. In this study, several ethical principles were adhered to in order to respect the privacy and confidentiality of participants from Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG). Due to the sensitive nature of their work and the potential risks associated with their roles, participants have expressed a preference for anonymity. Consequently, the study has honored this request by ensuring that no personal details are divulged. This approach aligns with the principle of confidentiality, which is crucial in protecting the identities and sensitive information of participants. Anonymity is particularly important in research involving advocacy organizations, as it helps mitigate any potential risks to participants' safety or professional standing (Carter et al., 2022). Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection commenced. This process involved clearly explaining the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without consequence (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). The study also ensured that all data collected was securely stored and only accessible to authorized researchers, in compliance with ethical research standards and data protection regulations (Gibbs, 2007). By prioritizing these ethical considerations, the study maintained high standards of integrity and respect for participants, ensuring that their contributions were handled with the utmost care and confidentiality.

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3.11 Reliability and Validity

This study ensured validity and reliability by following rigorous qualitative research practices. According to Noble and Smith (2015), Validity in a qualitative context, refers to how accurately the findings represent the experiences and perspectives of participants from grassroots NGOs like Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG). To enhance content validity, the interview guide was carefully developed based on a thorough literature review and consultation with human rights experts, ensuring that interview questions effectively captured the roles, challenges, and strategies of grassroots NGOs. Triangulation was employed as a key methodological approach to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. Data from interviews with HRRG executives, volunteers, and beneficiaries were cross-checked to identify common themes and discrepancies. Thus, insights from executives about organizational challenges, such as funding constraints, were compared with the perspectives of volunteers who experience these challenges firsthand in the field. Additionally, feedback from beneficiaries was analyzed to validate the reported impact of HRRG's initiatives, providing a grassroots perspective on the organization's effectiveness.

By cross-referencing these diverse viewpoints, a more nuanced and balanced understanding of HRRG's operations was achieved. This approach not only strengthened the credibility of the findings but also ensured that the study captured the complexities and interconnections within HRRG's human rights advocacy efforts. Reliability in qualitative research emphasizes the consistency and dependability of the study findings (Cypress, 2017). Standardized interview procedures were applied to ensure consistency in data collection, and the interview guide helped maintain focus on key topics while allowing flexibility for deeper exploration. In addition, careful documentation and transcription of interviews were carried out to preserve the authenticity of participant responses. Together, these practices enhanced the study's validity and reliability,

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producing credible insights into the role and sustainability of grassroots NGOs in human rights advocate.

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CHAPTER FOUR

ROLES, CHALLENGES, AND STRATEGIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTERS GHANA IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the strategies employed by HRRG to support their role and that of other grassroots NGOs in advancing human rights in Ghana and beyond. It explores HRRG's key contributions, capacity limitations, and gaps in fulfilling their mandate, as well as the implications of these challenges. The discussion focuses on how HRRG can enhance its efforts to promote human rights while addressing its capacity constraints and their broader impact on human rights advocacy in Ghana and Africa.

4.1 Key Contributions and Roles of HRRG in promoting human rights in Ghana

The role of grassroots NGOs in promoting human rights in Ghana remains an evolving subject of discourse within the NGO sector. To gain deeper insights into this area, a semi-structured interview was conducted with employees and stakeholders of Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG), providing valuable knowledge on the organization's key roles and contributions. The findings highlighted various initiatives undertaken by HRRG to advance human rights, which were analyzed within the framework of this thematic area. Consequently, the emerging themes that define HRRG's roles and contributions include advocacy and awareness, legal assistance and support, research documentation, the empowerment of marginalized groups, and coalition building through strategic partnerships.

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- **Advocacy and Awareness**

As a key theme that resonates with all the interviewees, advocacy and awareness according to Knuckey et al., (2020) are essential tools in human rights promotion, involving strategic efforts to educate, influence, and mobilize individuals and institutions to protect and uphold fundamental rights. For the Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG), these initiatives are central to their mission of safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, young girls, rural migrants among others. By leveraging media campaigns, focus group discussions, and community outreach, HRRG raises public awareness and influences policy frameworks to address human rights challenges in Ghana. Thus, HRRG approach highlights the importance of grassroots participation in addressing emerging issues. Through advocacy, HRRG amplifies the voices of marginalized populations, documents violations, and engages policymakers and community leaders to drive sustainable change. In line with the above, an informant from HRRG stated that:

> "*Human Rights Reporters has engaged in a lot of advocacy and awareness actions, especially using the media and focus group discussions with key stakeholders to influence policy frameworks regarding the protection of the rights of vulnerable citizens, especially women, young girls, and to some extent, rural migrants or people who migrate to cities and face various forms of abuse.* **(Interview with Respondent 1, 2024)**

Another informant from the HRRG echoed these sentiments, stressing the advocacy and awareness initiatives and measures implemented by the organisation. He highlighted that:

> *Over the years HRRG has supported and promoted a good cause. The organisation does its best by talking to people in power, sharing information on social media, participating in campaigns and supporting organisations working on issues we have interest in. HRRG*

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serves as a voice for something that needs attention and change, which is the human rights of individuals, especially the vulnerable" ***(Interview with HRRG Executive 2, 2024)***

According to one of the directors of HRRG:

Ghana still has a long way to go when it comes to issues on human rights, our predecessors have done a lot, but there is still more to go, and new issues keep emerging. Everyone has to come on board hence, the need for grassroot NGOs like HRRG to also rise up and participate. we as an organization raise awareness about human rights issues through campaigns, education and media outreach initiatives like the KTT project which focuses on critical issues such as Kidnapping and drug abuse. This project has successfully reached over 60,000 beneficiaries illustrating the tangible impact of these awareness initiatives. People seriously need help, and we do our bit in the smallest way we can to assist. When it comes to human rights issues, we need high reach and more engagement in the long run so I personally believe that leaving the work only for the famous organizations cuts off a certain population from the benefits, hence the awareness and advocacy initiatives should be widespread, and that is why we do what we do. **(Interview respondent 4, 2024)**

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This statement demonstrates the organization's commitment to raising awareness and promoting policies that safeguard vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, through a variety of channels, including traditional and digital media as well as community meetings. Furthermore, the organization's lobbying efforts frequently include organizing public opinion to hold officials accountable. As stated by a volunteer, HRRG runs significant campaigns aimed at:

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"Documenting violations and publishing reports that inform the public and policymakers. HRRG gathers evidence and information about human rights abuses and violations and then share this information with the public and people in power, like policymakers. Some of these policy makers are the Ghana human rights commission which is an independent body established to promote and protect human rights in Ghana or even traditional leaders and community elders who serve as influential figures in local communities. These people help raise awareness and promote change" **(Interview with HRRG Executive 15, 2024)**

- **Legal Assistance and Support**

In addition to the advocacy and awareness, legal assistance and supported also emerged as a key theme describing one of the key roles played by the HRRG. Legal assistance and support involve providing individuals, particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups, with access to legal resources, advice, and representation to address human rights violations (Rahman et al., 2021). For the Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG), this role is critical in bridging the gap between victims and justice. By offering legal aid, HRRG empowers individuals to assert their rights and seek redress for abuses, ensuring that justice is accessible to all, regardless of social or economic status. This support is vital in promoting human rights, as it not only resolves individual cases but also strengthens accountability systems, deters future violations, and fosters a culture of respect for human rights in Ghana. To emphasize on this role, a legal practitioner from HRRG stated:

"*HRRG provides legal assistance to individuals facing human rights violations, helping them understand their rights and navigate the legal system…… When people are being treated unfairly, one of the initial initiatives HRRG takes is to help the person understand what their rights are and how they are being violated. We then guide the person through*

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the complex legal process, helping them file complaints, gather evidence and attend court hearings. In some cases, HRRG provides a lawyer to represent the person in court, ensuring their rights are protected and their voice is heard…… In most cases, we offer emotional support and counselling to help the person cope with the stress and trauma of facing human rights violation." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 3, 2024)**

HRRG's project coordination specialist backed the aforementioned by providing information about the legal support project that HRRG has implemented. He states that:

"*The legal support project helps to educates people on available legal institutions that are accessible to them in case of human rights violations…… We sometimes provide free or low-cost legal advice, providing guidance on legal matters on human rights issues. In some cases, we offer lawyers or paralegals to represent clients in court or during legal proceedings…… that's not all, there is the need for legal education and training and so sometimes we conduct training sessions to educate people about their rights and the legal system. We believe that by providing legal support, these projects aim to promote justice, equality and human rights, ultimately contributing to a just society."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024)**

Other HRRG Executives also revealed a multifaceted approach to legal assistance, which includes representation, education, advocacy, collaboration, and emotional support. A volunteer noted that:

"HRRG assists victims of human rights violations by ensuring they understand the judicial process and their legal options. We help them gather evidence, provide representation, and sometimes even cover legal costs for individuals who cannot afford it. This ensures justice

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is accessible to everyone, regardless of their economic background." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 2, 2024)**

Also, an informant revealed that:

"One of our primary roles is to bridge the gap between victims of human rights violations and the justice system. Many people are unaware of their rights or how to navigate the legal process. HRRG provides workshops to educate communities about basic legal rights and the steps to take when violations occur." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

Another volunteer also showed that:

"We collaborate with legal aid organizations to extend our support network. When we can't directly represent a client, we ensure they are referred to trusted legal professionals who can provide assistance. This collaborative effort makes sure no one falls through the cracks." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 4, 2024)**

Few others also indicated that:

"HRRG focuses on not just representing clients in court but also following up on cases to ensure that justice is served. For instance, when systemic violations occur, we compile the cases and use them to advocate for policy reforms, making our legal assistance more impactful." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 9, 2024)**

"Our legal assistance programs also tackle challenges such as the intimidation of victims by perpetrators. We work to create safe spaces for victims to share their stories and prepare

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them emotionally and legally for the judicial process." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)**

Furthermore, the head of HRRG advocacy asserted that:

"In many rural areas, access to legal aid is almost nonexistent. HRRG steps in by organizing legal outreach programs, where lawyers and paralegals visit these communities, listen to cases, and offer solutions on the spot. This helps people feel seen, heard, and supported." **(Interview with HRRG Advocacy Officer, 2024)**

- **Research Documentations**

Another theme emerged was the role of Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) in research and documentation, which is critical for fully understanding and addressing human rights issues in the country. Effective research and documentation lay the groundwork for campaigning and policymaking, enabling HRRG to identify injustices, educate the public, and force systemic change. As **one HRRG Executive** explained,

"HRRG conducts thorough research on human rights abuses, documenting violations and publishing reports that inform the public and policymakers. We collect information from various sources, such as interviews with victims, witnesses and experts, then we review and record them we then examine the data to identify patterns and evidence of human rights abuses. After everything, we keep a detailed record of the problems and take further actions when necessary." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 7, 2024)**

Furthermore, one of HRRG's Directors of Advocacy indicated the documentation process is critical not only for holding perpetrators accountable, but also for ensuring that human rights

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violations are acknowledged at the governmental level. HRRG's systematic gathering of evidence and reporting on human rights violations contributes significantly to a more informed public discourse on human rights in Ghana. In line with these perspectives, one of the Director of Advocacy at HRRG, stated that:

> *"Our research initiatives are designed to shine a light on issues that often go unnoticed, particularly those affecting marginalized communities. This approach reflects HRRG's focus on the systematic and rigorous documentation of abuses, particularly those that involve vulnerable populations such as women, children, and persons with disabilities…… The emphasis on marginalized communities ensures that their experiences and struggles are recorded and communicated effectively, making them central to the narrative on human rights in Ghana……."* **(HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

Additionally, the Director of Administration at HRRG, pointed out that:

> *"Through our documentation efforts, we not only provide evidence of human rights violations but also create a repository of knowledge that can be utilized for advocacy and legal recourse. The creation of a knowledge repository is essential for ongoing education and advocacy efforts, allowing HRRG to reference previous violations and track patterns over time."* **(Interview with executive 9, 2024).**

A volunteer also had this to say:

> *"HRRG's rigorous research efforts help in influencing policy frameworks that protect human rights. The data collected by HRRG informs not just the public and the victims but*

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also policymakers, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding human rights legislation and implementation." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 3, 2024)**

HRRG's commitment to transparency and accountability is also reflected in its efforts to engage with the media. As highlighted by another volunteer who was interviewed:

"By collaborating with journalists and media outlets, HRRG ensures that human rights issues are prominently featured in public discourse. This partnership does not only amplify HRRG's findings but also broadens the reach of their advocacy efforts, allowing for a wider audience to engage with critical human rights issues. Media engagement serves to bring attention to documented violations and holds authorities accountable for their actions, creating a feedback loop that reinforces the importance of research and documentation." **(Interview with executive 17 HRRG, 2024).** This view illustrates how the insights gained through research can lead to targeted advocacy efforts aimed at addressing root causes of human rights violations rather than merely addressing individual cases and so we can say that HRRG's research and documentation efforts are fundamental to its mission of promoting and protecting human rights in Ghana.

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- **Empowering marginalized groups**

Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) focuses on uplifting underprivileged populations such as women, children, and people with disabilities. This was another major theme that emerged upon data analysis. This approach is crucial since these populations frequently confront institutional hurdles to obtaining their rights and services that promote their well-being. A participant noted that:

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"*HRRG plays* a role in e*mpowering marginalized populations, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are protected. The organization's commitment is to ensure that those who are most vulnerable are not only acknowledged but also actively involved in advocating for their own rights. .... You know, People need to learn and know how to speak for up themselves at times and so in the midst of all this we empower individuals to express their needs, wants and rights without fear, make their own decisions and take control of their lives, choices and futures.....Empowerment through community engagement is a cornerstone of our approach. That is why, we try to help individuals have access to resources and services. We get them help, support and other opportunities they need to thrive"* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 9, 2024)**

One of the executives of HRRG also reiterated that:

"We work closely with community members to educate them about their rights and empower them to stand up against injustices. This approach illustrates how we actively seeks to transform communities from passive recipients of information into active participants in the fight for their rights" **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

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Additionally, the organization's commitment to enhancing access to services for marginalized populations is a significant aspect of its work. **A Volunteer** highlighted that:

"HRRG's efforts in enhancing access to sexual and reproductive health services for underserved populations. This commitment is particularly important given the barriers that women and marginalized groups often encounter in accessing healthcare services. By prioritizing the needs of these communities, HRRG not only ensures that they are included in the pursuit of health and human rights but also actively works to dismantle the barriers

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that prevent them from exercising their rights." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 3, 2024)**

One of the employees at HRRG, also emphasized the organization's focus on women and children, stating,

> *"Our initiatives are designed to empower women and children by providing them with the tools and resources they need to advocate for themselves. By tools and resources, I mean educations and training social support etc… empowering is about creating a sense of ownership, allowing women and children to take charge of their lives and create positive change for themselves and those around them."* **(Interview with HRRG 16 Executive, 2024)**

Moreover, the empowerment of marginalized groups through HRRG's initiatives contributes to a larger societal change. One of the interviewees stated that:

> *"By empowering marginalized populations, we are creating a ripple effect that promotes inclusivity and social justice…. Imagine throwing a stone into a pond. The stone creates a ripple effect, where the water waves spread out and impact the surrounding area. Empowering marginalized populations is like throwing that stone. When we support and uplift people who have been excluded or oppressed, we create a ripple effect that yields a whole lot of benefits."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 9, 2024)**

HRRG's work in empowerment is also evident in its advocacy for legal reforms that benefit marginalized communities. As noted by one of the executives interviewed:

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"*The organization advocates for policies that ensure gender equity and protect the rights of marginalized groups. Our commitment is not only to individual empowerment but also to systemic change that addresses the root causes of inequality and discrimination. HRRG's focus on empowering marginalized groups is integral to its mission of promoting human rights in Ghana."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

- **Coalition building and partnerships**

Coalition and partnership which highlight the role played by HRRG emerged as another theme. As per the data analysis, HRRG collaborates with like-minded organizations, stakeholders, and community leaders to strengthen efforts in promoting human rights. Also the data analysis revealed that coalition building and collaborations which is aimed at increasing the influence of human rights advocacy is a critical role. The organization's collaboration with many stakeholders strengthens its ability to affect change, broaden its impact, and solve Ghana's multifaceted human rights concerns. A volunteer who was interviewed stated that:

> *"HRRG collaborates with various organizations and stakeholders to further its human rights agenda through partnerships, lecture series, and special campaigns. This commitment to collaboration allows HRRG to pool resources, share expertise, and leverage the strengths of different organizations in its advocacy efforts."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)**

The Project Coordinator of HRRG further explains that:

> *"As reporters and journalists, we also document a lot of cases we come across. Currently, we're working on putting together a database of stories related to human rights abuses.*

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This will allow us to categorize the cases and provide status reports on those reported in the media. We're developing a monitoring system to track human rights cases reported in various media outlets and produce a status report on the actions taken. We may not deal with all these cases directly, but we aim to raise awareness about the many issues, some of which go through due process and others that do not". **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)**

HRRG Volunteer reiterated that:

"……We also partner with organizations like Crime Check to follow up with inmates in various prisons who may not have access to justice. We work with other stakeholders to help resolve these issues, and we advocate for policy changes whenever possible. In addition, we train young journalists, particularly those fresh out of school who are unsure of where to specialize. We provide orientation and encourage them to specialize in human rights reporting and investigative journalism…… **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)**

As one of the key HRRG Executives noted, HRRG collaborates with organizations representing persons with disabilities to ensure that their rights are prioritized. She explained,

"We work with the umbrella organization of persons with disabilities in Ghana to ensure that their rights are protected. Some of them are Ghana Federation of disability organizations (GFD), Ghana Blind Union (GBU) and Ghana National association of the deaf (GNAD). This collaborative approach is crucial in addressing the unique challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, who often experience compounded discrimination." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 1, 2024)**

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A HRRG volunteer also noted that:

> "*In terms of collaboration, we regularly pay advocacy visits to our key stakeholders, such as the police, legal aid, and community leaders like assembly members. This helps raise awareness and ensures they understand how we can complement their work. As a civil society organization, we have a more flexible schedule for carrying out activities. We identify gaps in their operations, particularly in areas where they face challenges, and offer assistance. Building confidence and trust is essential, especially in a politically charged environment where there is often apprehension about CSOs (civil society organizations) and human rights reporters. Some may fear we are coming to investigate or expose them.*" **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 11, 2024)**

4.2 Challenges Encountered by and Implications of HRRG in Promoting Human Rights

4.2.1. Challenges Encountered by HRRG

Human Rights Reporters Ghana plays a vital role in promoting human rights and addressing social injustices in Ghana. However, the data analysis conducted showed that their activities are hindered by several challenges that limits their capacity to operate as an entity. These challenges as emerged as themes were limited financial resources, human resource capacity limitations, cultural and societal resistance and lack of public awareness and media engagement.. Financial instability is another critical issue, as HRRG rely on inconsistent donor funding, which limits their capacity to sustain programs and expand outreach (Manji & Marks, 2007). Social challenges, such as cultural resistance, further complicate efforts to foster community acceptance of human rights initiatives (Brautigam, 2010). These among other limitations are further discussed in the subsequent subsections.

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- **Political resistance**

One of the significant challenges faced by HRRG in its operations which emerged as a theme via the interviews conducted was political resistance. Advocacy for human rights can lead to push-back from government officials or institutions that perceive HRRG's work as a threat. This resistance often results in harassment or intimidation, which hinders their efforts. One of the interviewees of HRRG explains that:

> *"HRRG sometimes encounter resistance from government officials or entities that view human rights advocacy as a threat to their authority, leading to potential harassment or intimidation. When HRRG speaks out against human rights abuses, some government officials feel threatened. They think their wrong doings will be exposed by HRRG's work or even to some extent limit their power"* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 1, 2024)**

Closely related to this, another executive stated that:

> "*Because of the fear of being exposed, some political officials try to silence the organization. They do this by constantly bothering and intimidating HRRG members making it hard for them to work. These political officials also use fear and threats to stop HRRG from speaking out against human rights abuses*" **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

This can be challenging but they continue to advocate for human rights, even in the face of resistance. Similarly, one of the executives interviewed highlighted that:

> *"Political resistance and bureaucratic barriers have hindered HRRG's advocacy efforts, making it difficult to influence policy changes or hold authorities accountable for human*

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rights violations…… we face a lot of bureaucratic barriers within the government system. Sometimes we get delayed responses to our requests, sometimes the procedures are complicated and confusing and there is lack of transparency or accountability" (**Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024)**

Adding to this sentiment, a volunteer shared a related experience:

"When HRRG raises awareness about sensitive issues, especially those involving government agencies, it becomes a problem. Some officials respond by questioning our motives or trying to discredit our work publicly. This kind of resistance creates a hostile environment, but we remain committed to the cause." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 3, 2024)**

In addition, HRRG's challenges extend to administrative roadblocks, as another executive pointed out:

"Sometimes, political officials use subtle forms of resistance, like withholding permits or approvals for our programs. They create administrative bottlenecks, which delay our activities and frustrate our efforts. This slows us down, but it doesn't stop us from pushing for human rights." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 6, 2024)**

The issue also affects HRRG's public image, as noted by their Advocacy Officer:

"One challenge we constantly face is being labeled as an opposition group. When HRRG highlights human rights violations, some authorities accuse us of having political motives, which undermines our credibility and makes it harder to gain community trust." (**Interview with HRRG Administrative Officer, 2024)**

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Despite these barriers, HRRG's members demonstrate remarkable resilience. As one volunteer shared:

> *"In some instances, our members have received anonymous threats for exposing certain violations. This is intended to instill fear and silence us, but instead, it motivates us to work harder. The threats show that our work is making an impact, even if it's uncomfortable for those in power."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 7, 2024)**

These challenges make it harder for HRRG to achieve their goals but they still surge forward.

- **Limited Financial Resources**

In addition to the political resistance, limited financial resources also emerged as a consistent and common theme among the interviewees. Limited financial resources significantly constrain HRRG's ability to fully execute its mandate of promoting and protecting human rights. Financial challenges affect the organization's capacity to sustain campaigns, expand outreach, and provide adequate legal and logistical support to vulnerable groups. This limitation restricts the scale and consistency of HRRG's initiatives, including advocacy, education, and community engagement programs. One of the interviewees remarked that:

> *"The major challenges faced by HRRG are finance, political resistance, and legal barriers, and these financial constraints limit the reach of HRRG's programs…. You know every organization needs money to make it stand right? Without that, things become very hard. We struggle to pay staff and volunteers. This includes salaries, benefits, or even stipends for their work and because of that we do not employ many people so that we can take care of the few people we have."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

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In line with the above, a volunteer affirmed:

> *"HRRG sometimes is unable to fund programs and projects. The organization does not have enough money to implement its plans, provide services, or support its beneficiaries. This is embarrassing to say, but it may interest you to know that some years back we had difficulties in covering operational costs like rent, utilities, and office supplies."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 2, 2024)**

Building on these sentiments, another executive described how financial constraints directly affect HRRG's operational reach:

> *"We have had to cut back on many of our planned activities because of limited funds. For instance, there were times when we couldn't conduct field visits to document human rights abuses due to the cost of transportation and lodging. These are basic expenses, but without the funds, they become insurmountable challenges."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024)**

Similarly, an HRRG project coordinator highlighted the difficulty of sustaining long-term programs:

> *"The lack of stable funding makes it hard to sustain our programs over time. We often have to rely on short-term donor funding, which means some of our initiatives end abruptly when the funding ends. This not only affects our impact but also disappoints the communities that rely on our support."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 3, 2024)**

Another volunteer shared insights into the impact of funding constraints on advocacy efforts:

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"Without adequate funds, it becomes nearly impossible to organize large-scale campaigns or reach a wider audience. Even printing educational materials or hosting awareness workshops requires resources we don't always have. Sometimes, we have to scale down our activities or limit them to a few locations, which reduces their overall effectiveness." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 4, 2024)**

Furthermore, financial limitations also affect HRRG's ability to retain skilled staff. One executive observed:

"We've lost some of our most talented team members because we couldn't offer competitive salaries or benefits. Its heart breaking because these are people who are passionate about human rights and want to make a difference, but they also need financial stability to continue this work." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 7, 2024)**

Another respondent pointed out how limited resources hinder HRRG's ability to leverage technology effectively:

"We want to use modern tools like data analytics or digital platforms to enhance our advocacy, but these technologies require investment. Without the funds, we're left relying on outdated methods, which limits our ability to reach new audiences or respond quickly to emerging issues." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 1, 2024)**

Finally, an HRRG staff member emphasized the broader impact of financial challenges on the organization's vision:

"The lack of funding doesn't just affect our programs; it affects our morale and long-term vision. When you're constantly struggling to make ends meet, it's hard to focus on

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strategic planning or growth. Instead, you're stuck in a cycle of survival mode, which limits the potential of the organization." **(Interview with HRRG Staff 6, 2024)**

- **Human Resource Capacity Limitations**

Another theme that emerged out of the data analysis was human resource capacity limitations. Human resource capacity limitations refer to the challenges HRRG faces in terms of insufficient staffing, skills gaps, and limited access to specialized expertise needed to effectively implement its human rights initiatives. These constraints hinder the organization's ability to scale programs, conduct extensive advocacy, and provide timely support to vulnerable populations. An informant mentioned that:

> *"Capacity limitations, such as insufficient staff and expertise, have led to operational inefficiencies, affecting the quality and sustainability of our programs and initiatives."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024)**

Another participant also highlighted another concept of capacity limitation as:

> *"The slow nature of the judicial system has exacerbated capacity challenges, particularly when the organization provides legal assistance. This systemic issue, combined with the lack of staff, has delayed HRRG's ability to achieve justice for individuals who have experienced human rights abuses, further limiting the organization's operational efficiency."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 7, 2024)**

Furthermore, an executive also explained:

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> *"… The organization lacks sufficient employees with the necessary skills, expertise or experience to perform certain tasks. Most of our experts are part-time workers and so we do not get the benefit of their full potential…… the few skilled people we have experience burnout because of the workload which is unhealthy for them."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 13, 2024)**

Similarly, another respondent reiterated:

> *"Because the majority of the workers are part-timers and some work remotely, there are limitations in providing staff with adequate training, mentorship, or capacity-building programs they need to grow professionally."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 1, 2024)**

Moreover, another executive elaborated on the challenges of retaining skilled staff:

> *"We train individuals to be excellent at what they do, but because we can't afford competitive salaries, they often leave for better opportunities elsewhere. This constant turnover makes it difficult to maintain consistency in our operations or scale up our programs."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

Adding to this, a project coordinator noted the strain placed on existing team members:

> *"The workload is overwhelming for the small number of staff we have. This not only affects the quality of our work but also creates a lot of stress and dissatisfaction among the team. It's hard to sustain morale when everyone is overburdened."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 9, 2024)**

Another participant shared insights on the impact of these limitations on advocacy efforts:

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> *"We want to expand our advocacy to reach more communities, but without enough trained personnel, it's almost impossible. This means there are many issues we can't address or areas we can't cover, which limits our overall impact."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 4, 2024)**

Finally, an HRRG member reflected on how capacity limitations hinder innovation:

> *"With more skilled and dedicated staff, we could explore innovative solutions and technologies to enhance our advocacy. But as it stands, our team is stretched too thin to even consider such advancements."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 6, 2024)**

- **Cultural and Societal Resistance**

The data analyzed showed that cultural and societal resistance is another key challenges that is faced by HRRG, especially on issues such as gender equality, and reproductive health. Cultural and societal resistance challenges human rights promotion by creating opposition to change, hindering acceptance of rights-based initiatives, and reinforcing harmful traditional practices, making it difficult to protect vulnerable groups. A volunteers interviewed pointed out that:

> *"Societal norms and cultural attitudes hinder the acceptance of human rights advocacy, especially concerning issues like gender equality and minority rights. Our work sometimes conflicts with deeply held traditional beliefs, customs, and practices, and so what we advocate for does not hold water in some communities because some of these norms contradict the organization's mission and goals."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 3, 2024)**

Also, HRRG Executive 3 noted that:

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> *"Victims of human rights abuses are sometimes scared to speak up due to blackmail or fear of retaliation. This fear impedes our efforts to document human rights violations and seek justice for victims, as the organization faces resistance from both the community and authorities."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 3, 2024)**

An interviewee also mentioned that:

> *"Safety and security risks have deterred individuals from participating in advocacy efforts, leading to a reduced pool of activists and supporters for HRRG's initiatives. In some cases, HRRG challenges existing power structures within the community, leading to resistance from those who benefit from the status quo."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 2, 2024)**

To further buttress these points, one of the HRRG executives interviewed also noted that HRRG members have been harassed for their work, stating:

> *"There have been incidents of intimidation and harassment by some individuals and groups aimed at silencing their voices. Such threats not only endanger the lives of HRRG activists but also limit the organization's capacity to carry out its advocacy initiatives effectively."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024)**

Building on these challenges, a volunteer described the challenges of gaining acceptance for HRRG's advocacy in traditional communities:

> *"Many traditional leaders see our advocacy as a direct challenge to their authority. For example, advocating for child rights or opposing early marriages often conflicts with their long-standing practices, making it difficult to foster meaningful collaborations."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)**

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Another participant noted the emotional toll these challenges take on HRRG members:

> *"It's not just about the threats or resistance; the constant pushback and lack of appreciation for the work we do can be demoralizing. It sometimes feels like we're fighting an uphill battle with little support from the communities we're trying to help."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 9, 2024)**

Similarly, one of HRRG's staff members explained how these societal attitudes affect victims of abuse:

> *"In some communities, victims of abuse are ostracized for speaking out. They fear being labelled as troublemakers or facing additional harm, so they stay silent. This silence makes it difficult for us to intervene or even gather enough evidence to push for justice."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 4, 2024)**

Another executive highlighted the challenge of building trust in resistant communities:

> *"Winning trust is a slow and delicate process. Some communities are skeptical of our intentions, believing that we are imposing foreign ideas that disrupt their way of life. This skepticism often delays the implementation of our programs."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 7, 2024)**

- **Lack of public awareness and Media Engagement**

The majority of the interviewees cited a lack of public awareness and media participation as a theme. According to the informants, Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) face a formidable obstacle in this regard, as these constraints have a direct bearing on their capacity to garner public backing, strengthen their lobbying campaigns, and effect legislative changes. When public

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awareness is low, HRRG face difficulties in mobilizing communities, while limited media engagement reduces their visibility, making it harder to build momentum for their campaigns. This leads to a stagnation of human rights advocacy, allowing violations to persist unchallenged and reducing the overall impact of their work. An informant highlighted this challenge, stating:

> *"There may be a lack of awareness and engagement from the general public regarding human rights issues, which significantly hinders grassroots mobilization. This lack of awareness often stems from inadequate education, limited media coverage, and sometimes misinformation, leaving communities disconnected from the struggles and solutions at hand. Without widespread public understanding and support, even the most well-crafted strategies risk falling short, as meaningful change relies on collective action, advocacy, and pressure on decision-makers to address systemic issues effectively."* (Interview with HRRG Executive 2, 2024)

Building on this, the issue of limited access to mainstream media and online platforms hampers HRRG's ability to disseminate information widely. An HRRG Executive observed that:

> *"Media censorship and limited access to mainstream platforms have significantly hindered HRRG's ability to communicate its message effectively to the public. These restrictions limit opportunities for broad dissemination of information, forcing reliance on independent outlets and social media. While these alternative channels provide some level of outreach, their reach is often constrained by algorithmic biases, resource limitations, and audience segmentation. As a result, it becomes challenging to influence public opinion, spark widespread engagement, or even generate the large-scale awareness needed to drive meaningful action on human rights issues."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 4, 2024)**

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Reinforcing this point, another participant revealed that the lack of media engagement poses a direct barrier to advocacy. Thus, the HRRG Volunteer highlighted that:

> *"The absence of consistent media coverage of human rights issues significantly diminishes the urgency and visibility of our campaigns. Media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, driving public discourse, and amplifying advocacy efforts. When human rights issues are underreported or overlooked entirely, it becomes challenging to create widespread awareness or mobilize public support. This lack of visibility also reduces the pressure on policymakers to prioritize these concerns, often leaving critical issues unaddressed. Moreover, we have noticed that the gap in media coverage perpetuates misinformation or, in some cases, apathy, as the public remains unaware of the severity or scope of human rights violations. Without the entire media as a key ally, our ability to rally communities, attract partners, and secure funding for sustained advocacy is severely limited. Addressing this challenge requires strategic partnerships with independent media outlets, innovative storytelling on alternative platforms, and persistent efforts to engage journalists in highlighting the importance of human rights campaigns. We have some journalists and media houses supporting us, but they are a few."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)**

Moreover, this limitation affects public perception and undermines HRRG's credibility. Another HRRG Volunteer explained:

> *"When the media doesn't engage with us, it creates a gap in how the public views our work. People begin to question our relevance or think that the issues we raise are not significant, which is far from the truth."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 3, 2024)**

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Additionally, another HRRG Executive stressed the importance of media partnerships, noting:

> *"Strategic media engagement can change everything. When the press supports our initiatives, it amplifies the message far beyond what we can achieve alone. However, with limited media involvement, we are often left struggling to connect with larger audiences and show them why human rights issues should matter to everyone."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

Further complicating the issue, HRRG Volunteer 4 pointed out the challenges of competing narratives:

> *"Sometimes, our messages are drowned out by competing interests in the media landscape. Entertainment and political news dominate coverage, leaving little space for human rights stories. This lack of balance makes it harder to sustain public attention on critical issues, which in turn weakens our campaigns."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 4, 2024)**

Finally, an HRRG Project Coordinator emphasized the need for innovation in communication strategies:

> *"To bridge the gap created by limited media engagement, we've started exploring alternative platforms like podcasts, social media campaigns, and community radio. While these tools help, they cannot fully replace the reach and credibility of mainstream media coverage. This gap highlights the urgency of building stronger media collaborations."* **(Interview with HRRG Project Coordinator, 2024)**

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The varying perspectives shared by the informants on public awareness and media engagement revealed how the lack of media involvement limits HRRG's reach and undermines its ability to mobilize public support, influence policymakers, and sustain advocacy efforts effectively.

4.2.2. Implications of HRRG Activities

The operations of Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) carry profound implications for human rights advocacy, community empowerment, and societal transformation in Ghana. These implications reflect a critical role in shaping public awareness, holding authorities accountable, and fostering inclusivity and collaboration. HRRG's advocacy efforts meaningfully influence public discourse and policy reforms at local and national levels.

- **Influence on Public Discourse and Policy Reforms**

HRRG's advocacy efforts significantly shape public discussions on human rights and drive policy reforms at both local and national levels. By raising awareness and amplifying marginalized voices, the organization acts as a catalyst for systemic change, ensuring that human rights issues receive legislative and policy attention. The Director of HRRG emphasized this role, stating:

> *"HRRG drives awareness and advocacy for human rights issues, influencing public discourse and policy decisions at local and national levels."* (Interview with Director of HRRG, 2024)

Another HRRG Executive further highlighted the organization's role in policy influence:

> *"Through our engagement with policymakers and civil society, we have contributed to shaping laws that protect vulnerable groups and strengthen human rights frameworks in Ghana."* (Interview with HRRG Executive 3, 2024)

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In addition, an HRRG Volunteer explained:

> *"Public advocacy is a powerful tool, and we have used it to challenge unjust policies and push for reforms that promote human dignity and fairness."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 2, 2024)**

- **Community Empowerment and Grassroots Mobilization**

Through education and mobilization, HRRG empowers communities to understand and assert their rights, fostering a culture of activism. This grassroots-driven approach enables individuals to take ownership of their rights and actively participate in social justice movements, strengthening civic engagement at the local level. An HRRG Executive explained:

> *"By educating and mobilizing communities, HRRG empowers individuals to understand and assert their rights, fostering a culture of activism."* (Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)

Another HRRG staff member emphasized how grassroots mobilization ensures community-led advocacy:

> *"When communities understand their rights, they become the best advocates for themselves. We work closely with them to build this awareness."* (Interview with HRRG Executive 7, 2024)

An HRRG Volunteer added:

> *"Through our training sessions and awareness programs, people who once felt powerless now have the confidence to speak up and challenge injustices."* (Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)

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- **Accountability and Transparency in Governance**

HRRG plays a critical role in documenting human rights abuses and publishing reports that hold authorities accountable. By monitoring violations and ensuring that perpetrators face consequences, the organization contributes to greater transparency and justice within Ghana's human rights landscape. An HRRG Executive elaborated on this role, stating:

> *"HRRG's work in documenting human rights abuses holds authorities accountable, contributing to a more transparent and just society."* (Interview with HRRG Executive 2, 2024)

Additionally, an HRRG representative explained how their reports have been instrumental in justice processes:

> *"Our documentation provides concrete evidence that can be used in legal cases and policy discussions, making it harder for violations to be ignored."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 9, 2024)**

An HRRG Volunteer noted:

> *"Without organizations like ours documenting abuses, many violations would go unnoticed and unpunished. Our reports shine a light on these issues and demand accountability."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 4, 2024)**

- **Strengthening Civil Society through Partnerships**

HRRG enhances the impact of human rights advocacy by collaborating with other NGOs and stakeholders. These partnerships facilitate resource sharing, amplify advocacy efforts, and ensure a more comprehensive approach to addressing human rights issues through collective action. An HRRG Executive emphasized this, stating:

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"HRRG strengthens civil society by building networks with other NGOs, fostering collaboration that enhances collective impact and maximizes resource sharing in advocacy efforts. By working together with like-minded organizations, we are able to amplify our reach, pool expertise, and create more sustainable solutions to human rights challenges. These partnerships enable us to leverage diverse perspectives, strengthen policy influence, and ensure that advocacy efforts are more coordinated and impactful in addressing systemic injustices." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 4, 2024)**

Another Executive highlighted the importance of collaboration in addressing systemic issues:

"No single organization can tackle human rights challenges alone. By working together, we create a stronger force for change, combining our strengths, resources, and expertise to drive meaningful impact. Collaboration allows us to address human rights issues more comprehensively, ensuring that advocacy efforts are far-reaching and sustainable. When organizations unite, we amplify our voices, influence policy more effectively, and provide greater support to vulnerable communities in need of protection and justice." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024)**

An HRRG staff member further explained:

"Through strategic partnerships, we have been able to expand our reach and influence, ensuring that more communities benefit from human rights interventions." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 6, 2024).**

- **Promoting Social Justice and Equity**

With a strong emphasis on inclusivity, HRRG ensures that marginalized and vulnerable populations are represented in advocacy efforts. By addressing structural inequalities and

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championing social justice, the organization contributes to building a more equitable and fair society where all individuals have a voice. As one HRRG Executive noted:

> *"The organization's focus on marginalized groups ensures that their voices are heard, promoting social justice and equity in Ghana."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

A Volunteer further elaborated on HRRG's inclusive approach:

> *"We advocate for those who are often ignored by mainstream policies. Whether its women, children, or persons with disabilities, we ensure their rights are not forgotten."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 3, 2024)**

Another HRRG executive explained the long-term impact of their inclusivity efforts:

> *"By promoting equity, we are fostering a society where no one is left behind, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their background, gender, or socio-economic status, has access to the rights, resources, and opportunities they need to thrive. Our work is centered on breaking down systemic barriers that marginalize vulnerable populations, advocating for policies that promote fairness, and creating an inclusive environment where everyone's voice is heard and valued. Through targeted initiatives, we empower communities to challenge discrimination, demand justice, and actively participate in shaping a more just and equitable society."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 10, 2024)**

Grassroots NGOs like Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) play a transformative role in promoting human rights, empowering communities, and fostering systemic change in Ghana. Through advocacy, education, and collaboration, HRRG amplifies marginalized voices, holds authorities accountable, and influences public discourse and policy reforms. Their efforts not only

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empower individuals to assert their rights but also strengthen civil society through strategic partnerships and resource sharing. By addressing systemic injustices and focusing on inclusivity, HRRG continues to be a driving force for social justice and equity in Ghana, paving the way for a more transparent, accountable, and equitable society.

4.3 Measures to Enhance the Sustainability of HRRG in promoting human rights in Ghana

To overcome the constraints articulated by the informants, it is essential to design methods that guarantee the continuity and efficacy of Human Rights promotion in Ghana. Consequently, interviews were conducted to address this research focus; thus, the principal themes that emerged from stakeholder interviews emphasize the necessity for diversified funding sources, capacity building, community engagement, strategic partnerships and collaborations, adaptation to the socio-political environment, and the utilization of technology and social media. These interrelated initiatives provide pragmatic solutions to HRRG's financial, operational, and advocacy issues. Diversified funding guarantees financial stability by minimizing dependence on a one source, whilst capacity-building initiatives enhance internal frameworks and operational efficacy. Community participation cultivates trust and local ownership, ensuring that projects align with local reality and receive broad support. Ultimately, strategic alliances enhance HRRG's influence by consolidating resources, experience, and networks to cooperatively address intricate human rights challenges. Collectively, these strategies mitigate the current constraints of HRRG while establishing a durable framework for their enduring efficacy in promoting human rights in Ghana. Themes were further examined in the following sub-sections.

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- ***Diversified Funding Sources***

Funding source diversification was one key sustainability strategy theme that emerged in all the interviews conducted. Diversified funding sources refer to securing financial support from multiple channels, including grants, donations, partnerships, and income-generating activities. For HRRG, diversifying funding reduces dependency on a single source, ensuring financial stability and sustainability. This approach enables the organization to overcome resource limitations, expand its programs, and maintain consistent advocacy and support initiatives. By tapping into various funding streams, HRRG can scale its efforts, reach more vulnerable populations, and strengthen its role in promoting human rights effectively. An HRRG Executive stressed the importance of diversifying revenue streams:

> *"Without varied funding sources, we risk becoming stagnant and unable to sustain our programs or respond to emerging needs. Relying on a single stream of funding leaves us vulnerable to fluctuations or restrictions, which can disrupt operations and hinder long-term planning. To remain operational and impactful, we need a diversified funding strategy that includes a mix of grants, community-based fundraising, and partnerships with local businesses. Grants provide essential financial support for specific projects, while community-based fundraising fosters local engagement and ownership of our initiatives. Collaborating with local businesses not only strengthens our financial position but also creates opportunities for mutually beneficial relationships that can amplify our advocacy efforts. A diversified funding base ensures greater stability, flexibility, and continued impact in the communities we serve."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024)**

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Building on this, another participant emphasized HRRG's proactive steps to expand its funding base. She explained:

> *"We've initiated crowdfunding campaigns and built strong relationships with international donors to expand our funding base and ensure the sustainability of our programs. These efforts have helped us tap into a broader network of supporters who believe in our mission. Recently, we secured a small grant for our community education programs, which was a huge step in the right direction. This grant will allow us to expand our outreach, increase program visibility, and deliver much-needed education to underserved communities. While this is a promising development, we recognize the need to continue diversifying our funding sources to maintain momentum and scale our impact."*
> **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

Furthermore, HRRG has placed significant focus on fostering community involvement through fundraising drives. An HRRG Volunteer highlighted:

> *"We encourage local ownership by actively involving the community in fundraising drives. This approach not only provides essential financial support but also fosters a sense of pride and responsibility within the community. When community members contribute to fundraising efforts, whether through organizing events, spreading awareness, or directly donating, it deepens their connection to our work and strengthens their commitment to the cause. This sense of ownership enhances long-term sustainability, as people are more likely to support and participate in initiatives that they feel personally invested in."*
> **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)**

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In addition to community fundraising, partnerships with corporate entities have emerged as a significant funding avenue. A staff member elaborated:

> *"Our outreach to local businesses has started to bear fruit, with several businesses stepping forward to support our initiatives. Some have agreed to sponsor workshops, providing both financial backing and resources that enhance the impact of our programs. Others have committed to donating a percentage of their sales to our cause, creating a steady stream of funding while also raising awareness within their customer base. For example, the contributions from Verna mineral water producers came in handy to support the annual breast cancer awareness. These partnerships not only strengthen our financial position but also foster a collaborative spirit, aligning the business community with our mission and expanding our reach to new supporters."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 3, 2024)**

Moreover, an HRRG Volunteer emphasized the role of cultivating trust with donors and stakeholders:

> *"Securing long-term funding requires building trust with our supporters. We've made it a point to provide detailed updates and reports on how funds are used, ensuring transparency and accountability. This not only strengthens our relationship with existing donors but also encourages new ones to join our cause. Trust is the foundation of sustainable partnerships, and we're committed to maintaining it."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 7, 2024)**

Finally, another executive highlighted innovative approaches HRRG is exploring to diversify funding:

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"We've started exploring social enterprise models, such as selling HRRG-branded merchandise, to generate consistent revenue streams. These initiatives not only provide financial support but also serve as a means of spreading our message. Every purchase becomes an opportunity to raise awareness about human rights issues, creating a dual impact—financial and educational." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 9, 2024)**

- **Capacity Building**

Human resource development was also identified as a key strategy to NGO longevity and this emerged as capacity building. Building the skills and knowledge of HRRG staff and volunteers is essential for operational efficiency and the sustainability of its initiatives. A Director at HRRG emphasized this need:

"Investing in our team is non-negotiable, as it is essential to building a strong foundation for our organization's long-term success and impact. We recognize that our people are our greatest asset, and to maximize their potential, we've introduced comprehensive training programs in key areas such as advocacy, grant writing, and financial management. These programs are designed to equip our staff and volunteers with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of our work, from crafting compelling advocacy campaigns to securing critical funding and managing resources effectively. By focusing on continuous professional development, we ensure that our team is not only equipped to address current challenges but also prepared to adapt to evolving needs and opportunities. This investment in human capital enhances our organizational capacity, improves decision-making, and strengthens our ability to deliver impactful programs. Moreover, it fosters a culture of growth and empowerment within our team, ensuring that we remain motivated, resilient,

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and better positioned to drive meaningful change in the communities we serve." **(Interview with HRRG Director, 2024)**

Staff members are also encouraged to attend workshops and conferences to gain new perspectives. An HRRG Volunteer noted that:

"Participating in a recent human rights summit taught me valuable strategies to mobilize youth in our campaigns. The summit provided insights into engaging younger generations through social media, peer networks, and grassroots organizing, which are all essential for fostering active involvement. These learnings have been invaluable in enhancing our outreach efforts, enabling us to connect with a broader, more dynamic audience. By incorporating these strategies, we are now better equipped to inspire youth participation, empower them to become advocates, and create lasting change in the communities we serve." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 5, 2024)**

Additionally, capacity building extends to communities. A team member explained:

"We train community leaders to take up advocacy roles themselves, empowering them with the knowledge and tools needed to drive change at the local level. This approach decentralizes our efforts, allowing us to reach more communities by cultivating a network of leaders who can carry the movement forward independently. By building local capacity and fostering leadership, we ensure that our initiatives remain sustainable and impactful, even if we're not present in every locality. This not only strengthens the resilience of the movement but also helps to embed advocacy efforts within the communities, ensuring long-term progress." – (Interview with HRRG Volunteer 2, 2024)

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Internally, mentorship programs have been introduced to ensure knowledge transfer among staff. An HRRG Executive highlighted:

> *"Our mentorship initiative pairs experienced staff with newer team members, fostering a supportive environment where knowledge and skills can be shared. This relationship helps newcomers navigate the complexities of human rights work, from understanding the legal landscape to handling sensitive community issues. Mentors provide guidance on best practices, offer emotional support in the face of challenges, and help mentees build confidence in their roles. This initiative not only accelerates the professional growth of new team members but also strengthens our overall team cohesion, ensuring that all staff are equipped to contribute effectively to our mission."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 4, 2024)**

The informants acknowledges gaps in capacity. Another executive remarked:

> *"We still face limitations in advanced technological expertise, particularly, data analysis and digital advocacy, and we're actively seeking support to fill these gaps."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 6, 2024)**

- **Community Engagement**

Engaging deeply with communities is central to HRRG's mission and it was another key theme that was identified through the interview. By building trust and encouraging active participation, HRRG ensures that its initiatives resonate with those it seeks to support. An HRRG Executive explained:

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> *" Engaging directly with communities ensures that our work is grounded in their realities. We listen, learn, and adapt our programs to address their specific needs*.**"** **(Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024)**

HRRG uses workshops, forums, and focus group discussions to educate the public on human rights issues. A volunteer noted:

> *"During a recent community forum, many participants expressed concerns about access to justice. These insights help us tailor our advocacy to address pressing local issues."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 7, 2024)**

Moreover, HRRG collaborates with local leaders to foster grassroots ownership. An interviewee shared:

> *"Partnering with chiefs and opinion leaders has been transformative. When they endorse our programs, it boosts community participation significantly."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 4, 2024)**

The organization also prioritizes youth engagement. Another staff member explained:

> *"Our youth programs inspire the next generation of advocates. They're the ones who will carry this work forward in the years to come."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 2, 2024)**

However, sustaining engagement requires consistency. One volunteer observed:

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> *"We need to maintain regular contact with communities. Sporadic visits can make us seem disconnected, which is why we're working on establishing permanent focal points."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)**

Expanding on this, another participant highlighted the importance of cultural sensitivity:

> *"Our community engagement strategy takes into account the cultural nuances of each region we work in. Respecting local traditions and norms helps build trust and ensures our messages are well-received."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 5, 2024)**

Additionally, HRRG ensures that community voices are at the heart of its initiatives. As one executive stated:

> *"We incorporate feedback from community members into our program design. This participatory approach not only enriches our interventions but also empowers locals to take ownership of the outcomes."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 9, 2024)**

Furthermore, HRRG has made efforts to include marginalized voices in its outreach programs. A volunteer explained:

> *"We actively seek out individuals who are often left out of decision-making processes, such as women and persons with disabilities. Their inclusion ensures that our advocacy truly represents the needs of the entire community."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 3, 2024)**

Lastly, an HRRG staff member emphasized the long-term vision of their community engagement:

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"Our goal is to create self-sustaining communities where people are empowered to advocate for their own rights. This means building their capacities and connecting them with resources they can access long after our programs end." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 7, 2024)**

- **Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations**

Strategic partnerships and collaborations involve forming alliances with organizations, institutions, and stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness and reach of HRRG's human rights initiatives (Metcalfe-Hough, 2021). These partnerships enable resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and joint advocacy efforts, creating a united front in addressing complex human rights issues. For HRRG, collaborations with local and international NGOs, policymakers, and community leaders strengthen their capacity to implement impactful programs, influence policy changes, and provide comprehensive support to vulnerable populations. Such partnerships are vital for amplifying HRRG's mission and achieving sustainable progress in human rights promotion. An HRRG Director remarked:

"Partnerships allow us to pool resources, expertise, and diverse perspectives, creating a powerful synergy that significantly amplifies our impact. By collaborating with a wide range of partners—NGOs, academic institutions, and even private firms—we can leverage each organization's unique strengths, whether it's technical knowledge, research capabilities, access to networks, or funding opportunities. These partnerships not only enhance our operational capacity but also enable us to tackle complex human rights issues from multiple angles, ensuring more comprehensive and sustainable solutions. Moreover, working with academic institutions provides access to the latest research and evidence-

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based approaches, while private sector partnerships can offer innovative tools and technologies to improve our programs. By diversifying our network of collaborators, we strengthen our ability to engage stakeholders, drive change, and create a broader, more supportive ecosystem that bolsters our advocacy efforts. Ultimately, these partnerships expand our reach, deepen our influence, and enhance the overall effectiveness of our initiatives, allowing us to have a far greater impact on the communities we serve." **(Interview with HRRG Director, 2024)**

Building on this, a volunteer highlighted the role of international partnerships:

"Working with international human rights groups has provided us with invaluable resources, including access to specialized training, funding opportunities, and best practices that significantly strengthen our local operations. Through these partnerships, we gain insights into global human rights strategies and innovative approaches that can be adapted to our specific context. Training programs from international organizations help build our team's capacity, ensuring they are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills. Additionally, the financial support from international partners enables us to expand our programs, reach more communities, and implement more effective interventions. By learning from established best practices, we can improve our operational efficiency, enhance the impact of our advocacy efforts, and contribute to a more unified global movement for human rights." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 1, 2024)**

Further emphasizing collaboration, an HRRG Executive shared insights on partnerships with grassroots organizations:

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> *"We've partnered with grassroots organizations to run joint campaigns on critical issues such as child rights and gender equity. By combining our resources, networks, and expertise, we create a unified front that has greater influence and reach. These collective efforts allow us to tap into local knowledge and perspectives, ensuring that our campaigns are culturally relevant and resonate deeply with the communities we aim to support. Additionally, collaborating with grassroots organizations helps amplify voices that might otherwise be marginalized, making our advocacy more inclusive."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

Expanding on this theme, another executive highlighted the opportunities presented by corporate partnerships:

> *"Engaging with the private sector has opened new and valuable avenues for advocacy, providing us with resources and platforms that we wouldn't otherwise have access to. Businesses bring financial support, technological tools, and broad visibility that help amplify our messages and reach a wider audience. Through corporate partnerships, we gain opportunities to showcase our work through company networks, marketing channels, and social responsibility programs. This collaboration also opens doors for joint initiatives that address social issues, leveraging the private sector's influence and reach to further our advocacy goals. Ultimately, these partnerships enable us to expand our impact and drive meaningful change in ways that would be difficult to achieve alone."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 3, 2024)**

Moreover, partnerships with media organizations have proven essential for advocacy efforts. As one executive noted:

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> *"Collaborating with journalists and media houses has given our campaigns a stronger voice. Media partners not only provide platforms to share our message but also help shape public discourse around human rights issues. By leveraging these relationships, we can draw greater attention to pressing concerns, rally public support, and create pressure for systemic change."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 7, 2024)**

Additionally, another HRRG volunteer emphasized the importance of mutual learning through partnerships:

> *"When we work with other organizations, we exchange ideas, strategies, and lessons learned from different contexts. This mutual learning strengthens our capacity to address challenges and adapt successful approaches to our local context, ensuring that our advocacy remains relevant and effective."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 4, 2024)**

Finally, partnerships with international development agencies were noted to enhance credibility and access to resources. An HRRG staff member shared:

> *"Our collaborations with international development agencies have elevated our work, giving us access to critical resources and enhancing our credibility with both local and global stakeholders. These partnerships also connect us to broader networks, enabling us to influence policy at higher levels while maintaining our focus on grassroots advocacy."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 2, 2024)**

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- **Adaptation to the Socio-Political Environment**

Furthermore, adaption to socio-political environment was came out as another theme which was widely spoken of by the interviewees as a strategic approach to ensuring NGOs sustainability in their role to promote human right. **Adaptation to the Socio-Political Environment**

Adaptation to the socio-political environment involves adjusting strategies to align with changing political climates, policies, and societal dynamics. For HRRG, this flexibility helps navigate challenges such as resistance, limited resources, and shifting priorities. By staying responsive to these changes, HRRG can build strategic alliances, leverage opportunities for advocacy, and effectively address human rights issues, ensuring their initiatives remain relevant and impactful.

As opined by one of the informants:

> *"HRRG continuously monitors the socio-political landscape, analyzing changes in government policies, public sentiment, and emerging human rights issues to inform its strategies."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 7, 2024)**

This approach was complemented by HRRG's engagement with policymakers. As one volunteer explained:

> *"We engage with stakeholders and policymakers to influence favorable changes and ensure our programs remain responsive to evolving needs and contexts. For instance, when certain policies are introduced that have the potential to harm marginalized communities, we act quickly to present evidence, highlight concerns, and propose alternatives that protect vulnerable populations."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 3, 2024)**

Additionally, HRRG's adaptability in advocacy is key to its impact, as noted by an executive:

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> *"By actively participating in advocacy efforts, HRRG can influence policy changes and hold authorities accountable, adapting its messaging to resonate with the current political climate. This includes tailoring our communication to speak directly to the interests of decision-makers, ensuring they recognize the broader benefits of supporting human rights reforms."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024)**

Building on this, another participant emphasized HRRG's ability to use data effectively in shaping policy discussions:

> *"We base our advocacy on real data collected from communities. This makes our arguments stronger and more difficult for policymakers to ignore. When you present facts about how a certain policy is harming people or how systemic issues are leaving groups behind, it becomes hard for authorities to dismiss our concerns."* (Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)

Furthermore, HRRG Executive 5 pointed out the importance of partnerships in amplifying their policy advocacy:

> *"Collaborations with other NGOs, civil society organizations, and even international bodies allow us to approach policy change from a united front. When multiple groups present a coherent, evidence-based position to authorities, it increases the pressure for change and makes our collective advocacy much harder to overlook."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

Expanding on this, another staff member highlighted how HRRG leverages public campaigns to drive momentum:

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> *"Our public campaigns are designed to align with ongoing policy discussions. For example, when the government proposed a controversial directive last year, we launched an awareness campaign that mobilized public support, making it clear to policymakers that people demanded more transparent and equitable legislation."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 9, 2024)**

In addition, the organization's efforts are rooted in continuous stakeholder engagement. As one executive observed:

> *"We don't just advocate for change; we actively involve policymakers in dialogues to ensure they understand the human impact of their decisions. These conversations are invaluable in creating policies that reflect the realities on the ground while maintaining alignment with human rights principles."* – (Interview with HRRG Executive 4, 2024)

- **Utilizing Technology and Social Media**

Finally, technology and social media utilization was also identified as a key theme among the strategies that can be used to ensure continuity and sustainability. Utilizing technology and social media involves leveraging digital tools and platforms to amplify advocacy, raise awareness, and engage broader audiences. For HRRG, this strategy helps overcome challenges like limited resources and societal resistance by enabling cost-effective campaigns, real-time information sharing, and greater outreach. Social media also facilitates documentation of abuses, mobilization of support, and direct engagement with policymakers, enhancing HRRG's impact in promoting human rights. In view of the foregoing, an informant asserted that**:**

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> *"We leverage digital platforms and social media for advocacy, outreach, and fundraising, reaching wider audiences and increasing engagement."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 2, 2024)**

This sentiment is reinforced by another HRRG team member, who shared that:

> *"Social media has become an invaluable tool for us. Through platforms like Twitter and Instagram, we've been able to share stories, highlight violations, and engage with younger audiences who might not otherwise be involved in human rights discussions. These platforms allow us to connect with supporters globally, amplify local voices, and even attract international attention to pressing issues in Ghana."* **(Interview with HRRG Executive 3, 2024)**

Additionally, the use of technology has enabled HRRG to innovate its approach to monitoring and reporting. One staff member explained:

> *"We recently introduced an online portal where individuals can anonymously report human rights violations. This platform has been a game-changer, allowing victims or witnesses to share their experiences without fear of retaliation. The data collected is then analyzed to identify patterns and systemic issues, which helps us design more targeted interventions and advocacy campaigns."* **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 9, 2024)**

Another interviewee emphasized how digital tools enhance their educational initiatives:

> *"We use video conferencing tools and e-learning platforms to host workshops and seminars on human rights topics. These digital methods have allowed us to diaspora groups who might not be able to attend in-person events. The flexibility of these tools*

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ensures that our educational content is accessible to a much broader audience." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024)**

Moreover, HRRG Executive 1 highlighted the role of technology in strengthening collaborations:

"Digital platforms have also improved our partnerships. We regularly use tools like Zoom and Slack to collaborate with other organizations, both locally and internationally. These technologies make it easier to coordinate joint campaigns, share resources, and exchange knowledge, which enhances the overall impact of our advocacy efforts." **(Interview with HRRG Executive 1, 2024)**

Another participant discussed the importance of mobile apps in their outreach programs:

"With the rise of smartphone use, we've been exploring mobile applications to deliver educational content and updates directly to people's phones. For instance, we are trying to have an app developed to provide quick guides on human rights laws, emergency contacts, and steps to report abuses. The aim of this mobile approach is to ensure that even those without regular internet access can stay informed and connected." **(Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024)**

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Finally, HRRG Executive 8 emphasized the critical role of data analytics:

"Data analytics is another area we've tapped into recently. By analyzing engagement metrics from our digital campaigns, we can see what's resonating with people and adjust our strategies accordingly. This data-driven approach not only improves our reach but also ensures that we're focusing on the issues that matter most to our audience." – (Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024)

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4.4 Findings and Discussions

This study investigates the role of Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) in promoting human rights, focusing on their contributions, challenges, and strategies for sustainability. The findings address the research problem of pervasive human rights challenges in Africa and the capacity limitations faced by grassroots NGOs like HRRG.

Key Contributions of HRRG and their Implications

In addressing the initial question of "what the key contributions and roles played by Grassroots NGOs such as Human Right Reporter Ghana to promote human rights in Ghana are?", the findings of this study emphasize the pivotal role of Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) in advancing human rights through advocacy, community education, legal assistance, research documentation, empowering of the marginalized groups and coalition building and partnership. These contributions directly address the pervasive challenges outlined in the research problem, such as systemic discrimination, socio-economic inequalities, and limited accountability mechanisms, and align with the theoretical framework of Liberal Institutionalism. By fostering cooperation and leveraging institutional mechanisms, HRRG exemplifies how grassroots NGOs can create meaningful change. These findings mirror earlier studies on grassroots NGOs. For example, Salamon (2002) highlighted the crucial role of NGOs in addressing social inequalities, while Anheier (2014) emphasized coalition-building as a key strategy for civil society effectiveness.

HRRG's advocacy and awareness campaigns stand out as a cornerstone of its human rights efforts. Through media engagements, community forums, and focus group discussions, HRRG amplifies the voices of marginalized populations and raises public awareness about critical issues. One interviewee highlighted the impact of these efforts: *"Human Rights Reporters has engaged in a*

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lot of advocacy and awareness actions, especially using the media and focus group discussions with key stakeholders to influence policy frameworks regarding the protection of vulnerable citizens." (Interview with HRRG Executive 1, 2024) This finding aligns with Goel and Tripathi's (2010) assertion that NGOs play a critical role in educating communities and fostering societal change. HRRG's campaigns reflect Donnelly's (2013) emphasis on public awareness as a fundamental pillar of human rights advocacy and resonate with Liberal Institutionalism's call for collective action to address societal challenges. This also reinforces the work of Smith and Jones (2012), who showed that awareness campaigns by NGOs significantly influence policy engagement at the local level. By fostering an informed populace, HRRG not only reshapes public perceptions but also builds the foundation for systemic reforms, advancing human rights norms in Ghana.

Another significant contribution of HRRG is its provision of legal assistance to victims of human rights abuses and coalition building. The organization ensures justice for marginalized groups by offering legal representation, emotional support, and guidance through complex judicial processes. As one volunteer remarked: *"We help individuals gather evidence, provide representation, and sometimes even cover legal costs, ensuring justice is accessible to everyone, regardless of their economic background."* (Interview with HRRG Volunteer 2, 2024). This aligns with Bordoloi et al. (2017), who highlight the role of NGOs in empowering communities through education and legal support. Similarly, Osei-Tutu (2015) observed that legal aid services by grassroots NGOs enhance trust in local justice systems, which mirrors HRRG's approach in Ghana. By bridging gaps in access to justice, HRRG operationalizes Liberal Institutionalism's principles of creating structured frameworks to promote accountability and equity (Keohane & Nye, 2015). This contribution also reflects Rahman et al.'s (2021) findings on the transformative impact of legal aid

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in addressing systemic injustices, further reinforcing HRRG's role in fostering equitable and just systems.

Research and documentation of human rights violations constitute another critical area of HRRG's work. By systematically collecting and analyzing data, HRRG informs its advocacy efforts and strengthens its credibility as an authoritative voice in human rights discourse. An HRRG director explained: *"Our research initiatives are designed to shine a light on issues that often go unnoticed, particularly those affecting marginalized communities."* (Interview with HRRG Executive 5, 2024) This practice aligns with Merry's (2006) assertion that systematic documentation is essential for translating abstract human rights principles into actionable advocacy. HRRG's commitment to evidence-based advocacy enhances its capacity to hold authorities accountable, mobilize public support, and inform policy interventions, addressing gaps in both knowledge and action.

The implications of HRRG's contributions are profound, particularly in addressing systemic human rights challenges and advancing grassroots advocacy. Firstly, HRRG's advocacy and awareness efforts demonstrate the transformative potential of localized approaches. While international NGOs (INGOs) often focus on policy-level interventions (Dietrich & Murdie, 2017), grassroots organizations like HRRG address immediate community needs, creating a vital bridge between international norms and local realities. By fostering public awareness and mobilizing support, HRRG lays the groundwork for collective action, driving systemic change from the ground up. Secondly, HRRG's provision of legal assistance highlights the critical importance of accessible justice mechanisms. This aligns with global human rights frameworks and underscores the need for sustainable support structures to empower victims of human rights abuses. HRRG's efforts in this area reflect Liberal Institutionalism's emphasis on cooperation and institutional mechanisms to address systemic issues (Keohane & Nye, 2015). By addressing barriers to justice,

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HRRG not only empowers individuals but also strengthens the broader human rights landscape in Ghana. Lastly, HRRG's research and documentation initiatives underscore the value of evidence-based advocacy. By shedding light on underreported issues and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups, HRRG enhances public discourse and informs policy reforms. This contribution reflects the theoretical insights of Merry (2006) and Donnelly (2013), who emphasize the importance of systematic documentation in advancing human rights norms. The findings also highlight the importance of credible, data-driven approaches in building trust and driving effective interventions.

Also, to address the central focus of the research which aimed at addressing "the major challenges faced by Grassroots NGOs such as Human Right Reporters Ghana in their operations in Ghana", the results of this study highlight the multifaceted challenges that Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) faces in its efforts to promote human rights in Ghana. These include political resistance, financial constraints, cultural opposition, and inadequate human resources. Each challenge presents significant implications for HRRG's ability to sustain its operations and achieve its advocacy goals. It is worth noting that political resistance is one of the most significant barriers to HRRG's work, characterized by intimidation, harassment, and bureaucratic delays. This aligns with Chaudhry and Heiss (2019) and Chakawarika (2017), who describe the suppressive environments in which many African NGOs operate. An HRRG Executive detailed: *"Political resistance and bureaucratic barriers have hindered HRRG's advocacy efforts, making it difficult to influence policy changes or hold authorities accountable."* (Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024) Such resistance not only undermines HRRG's ability to hold authorities accountable but also creates a hostile environment for human rights advocacy. Additionally, state interference reflects one of the criticisms of Liberal Institutionalism, as powerful actors often manipulate

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cooperative frameworks to serve their interests (Waltz, 2014). However, HRRG's persistence in advocacy despite these obstacles highlights the resilience of grassroots organizations and their role in advancing human rights within challenging political landscapes.

Financial instability which was another critical challenge, significantly limiting HRRG's ability to sustain programs and retain skilled staff. A volunteer noted: *"We've had to cut back on many of our planned activities because of limited funds. This directly affects our impact and the communities we aim to support."* (Interview with HRRG Volunteer 4, 2024) This finding resonates with Arhin et al. (2018) and Sarpong (2022), who emphasize the impact of donor dependency and resource limitations on African NGOs. Financial constraints hinder HRRG's operational efficiency and long-term sustainability, restricting its capacity to expand outreach efforts or implement innovative projects. From a theoretical perspective, Liberal Institutionalism's emphasis on cooperation and resource sharing offers a potential avenue for overcoming such challenges. However, the practical application of these principles requires HRRG to diversify its funding sources and foster stronger partnerships with both local and international stakeholders.

HRRG's efforts to promote gender equality and minority rights often face cultural opposition, rooted in deeply entrenched societal norms. This resistance is particularly pronounced in communities where traditional beliefs conflict with universal human rights principles. An HRRG Volunteer explained: *"Societal norms often conflict with our mission, making it difficult to gain community acceptance for our advocacy initiatives."* (Interview with HRRG Volunteer 3, 2024) This finding echoes Merry's (2006) critique of the tension between universal norms and cultural relativism. Cultural resistance limits HRRG's ability to foster community ownership of human rights initiatives, underscoring the need for localized advocacy strategies that balance universal principles with cultural sensitivity. Despite these challenges, HRRG's adaptability in engaging

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with community leaders and incorporating local perspectives demonstrates its commitment to bridging these divides and fostering inclusivity.

Inadequate human resources further constrain HRRG's effectiveness, as the organization struggles to retain skilled staff and provide adequate training. One HRRG Executive noted: *"The organization lacks sufficient employees with the necessary skills and expertise to perform certain tasks. The few skilled people we have experience burnout because of the workload."* (Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024) These limitations reflect broader issues of capacity development among grassroots NGOs, as documented by Rahman et al. (2021). From a Liberal Institutionalism perspective, these constraints highlight the importance of international cooperation and resource-sharing frameworks to strengthen organizational capacity. Addressing this challenge is critical for HRRG's sustainability and its ability to scale advocacy efforts.

The challenges faced by HRRG underscore the urgent need for adaptable and resilient strategies to sustain grassroots human rights advocacy. Political resistance highlights the fragility of civic space and the need for protective mechanisms to safeguard NGO operations. Financial constraints emphasize the importance of diversified funding strategies and local partnerships to reduce dependency on external donors. Cultural opposition reveals the necessity of balancing universal human rights principles with culturally sensitive approaches, ensuring that advocacy efforts resonate with local communities. Finally, human resource limitations point to the critical role of capacity-building initiatives in strengthening organizational effectiveness. These findings also offer broader insights into the limitations of Liberal Institutionalism, particularly its inability to fully address power imbalances and cultural relativism. However, HRRG's efforts to navigate these barriers demonstrate the potential of grassroots NGOs to operationalize universal norms within localized frameworks, mitigating these theoretical critiques. Addressing these challenges is

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essential not only for sustaining HRRG's operations but also for enhancing the overall impact of grassroots human rights advocacy in Ghana and beyond.

To address the final question, "What are strategies to ensuring Sustainability of the role and contributions of Grassroots NGOs such as Human Rights Reports Ghana's in improving human rights practices in Ghana?" the study also identified key strategies that Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) employs to sustain its contributions to human rights advocacy. These include diversified funding, capacity building, community engagement, strategic partnerships, adaptation to socio-political environments, and leveraging technology and social media. Each of these strategies emphasize HRRG's commitment to navigating systemic challenges while ensuring long-term sustainability. Together, it reflects the principles of Liberal Institutionalism, which emphasize cooperation, resource sharing, and adaptability as cornerstones of effective advocacy.

In view of the foregoing, securing diverse and sustainable funding sources remains central to HRRG's strategy. The organization actively pursues grants, engages in community-based fundraising, and fosters partnerships with local businesses. An HRRG Executive emphasized: *"Without varied funding sources, we risk becoming stagnant and unable to sustain our programs or respond to emerging needs. A diversified funding base ensures greater stability, flexibility, and continued impact."* (Interview with HRRG Executive 8, 2024). This aligns with Arhin et al. (2018), who advocate for financial diversification among African NGOs to reduce dependence on single funding streams. HRRG's efforts to secure crowdfunding and collaborate with local businesses also mirror Kumi's (2019) emphasis on alternative funding mechanisms. The implication is clear: financial resilience is critical for sustaining advocacy efforts and expanding outreach. Diversified funding not only ensures operational stability but also fosters local ownership and community involvement, strengthening HRRG's overall impact.

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More so, investing in capacity building is another cornerstone of HRRG's sustainability strategy. The organization prioritizes training and mentorship programs to enhance the skills of its staff and volunteers. An HRRG Director remarked: *"We've introduced comprehensive training programs to equip our team with the skills needed to navigate the complexities of human rights work. These initiatives have significantly boosted our operational efficiency."* (Interview with HRRG Director, 2024) This approach reflects Keohane and Nye's (2015) emphasis on institutional resilience and Yan, Lin, and Clarke's (2018) findings on the importance of building organizational capacity for sustained impact. By equipping its team with the necessary skills and knowledge, HRRG not only strengthens its internal operations but also enhances its ability to respond to emerging challenges. The implication here is that capacity building fosters organizational adaptability, enabling HRRG to sustain its contributions even in dynamic socio-political environments.

Furthermore, HRRG's commitment to grassroots engagement underscores the importance of localized advocacy. The organization actively collaborates with community leaders, organizes workshops, and conducts public education campaigns. As an HRRG Volunteer noted: *"Engaging directly with communities ensures that our work is grounded in their realities. We listen, learn, and adapt our programs to address their specific needs."* (Interview with HRRG Volunteer 6, 2024) This strategy reflects Merry's (2006) emphasis on contextualizing human rights advocacy to resonate with local cultural norms. By fostering community ownership of human rights initiatives, HRRG ensures that its efforts are both relevant and impactful. The implication is that strong community ties enhance the sustainability of advocacy programs by fostering trust and collective action.

In addition, strategic partnerships amplify HRRG's impact by pooling resources, expertise, and networks. Collaborating with NGOs, academic institutions, and private firms enables HRRG to

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tackle complex human rights issues from multiple angles. An HRRG Volunteer explained: *"Partnerships with international human rights groups provide us with resources, training, and funding opportunities that significantly strengthen our local operations."* (Interview with HRRG Volunteer 1, 2024). This reflects Liberal Institutionalism's principle of interdependence and Yan, Lin, and Clarke's (2018) emphasis on collaboration as a driver of organizational capacity and impact. These partnerships not only enhance HRRG's operational efficiency but also create a supportive ecosystem that bolsters its advocacy efforts. The implication is that sustained collaboration with diverse stakeholders is essential for scaling impact and addressing systemic challenges.

Also, HRRG demonstrates remarkable adaptability in navigating Ghana's dynamic socio-political landscape. By monitoring policy changes, engaging policymakers, and adjusting its messaging, the organization ensures its initiatives remain relevant and effective. As an HRRG Executive explained: *"We continuously monitor the socio-political landscape to inform our strategies and ensure our programs remain responsive to evolving needs."* (Interview with HRRG Executive 7, 2024) This adaptability resonates with Liberal Institutionalism's emphasis on the importance of flexibility and cooperation in achieving systemic change. The implication is that organizations like HRRG must remain agile to address emerging challenges and sustain their advocacy efforts effectively.

Lastly, technology and social media play a crucial role in HRRG's advocacy, outreach, and fundraising efforts. By leveraging digital platforms, the organization expands its reach and engages with a wider audience. An HRRG Volunteer noted: *"We leverage digital platforms and social media to raise awareness, reach wider audiences, and increase engagement with our advocacy programs."* (Interview with HRRG Volunteer 2, 2024). This reflects Appe and Schnable's (2021)

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findings on the importance of technology in enhancing NGO visibility and capacity. The implication is that integrating digital tools into advocacy strategies not only enhances outreach but also ensures cost-effective and scalable solutions for grassroots organizations.

These strategies collectively address the systemic challenges identified in the research problem, such as political resistance, financial constraints, and cultural opposition. By employing a combination of diversified funding, capacity building, community engagement, strategic partnerships, adaptability, and technology, HRRG exemplifies the transformative potential of grassroots NGOs. These findings align with Liberal Institutionalism, highlighting the importance of cooperative frameworks and resource sharing in sustaining advocacy efforts.

The implications are far-reaching. First, HRRG's strategies offer a model for other grassroots organizations to navigate resource limitations and systemic barriers effectively. Second, the organization's adaptive approach underscores the importance of localizing advocacy to ensure relevance and impact. Finally, by leveraging partnerships and technology, HRRG demonstrates how grassroots NGOs can scale their efforts and contribute to broader human rights initiatives. In conclusion, these strategies not only sustain HRRG's contributions but also provide actionable insights for strengthening grassroots advocacy in politically sensitive environments.

4.5 Conclusion

The roles and responsibilities of HRRG are far reaching. HRRG's monitoring of human rights violations and its commitment to accountability are fundamental to its mission of promoting and protecting human rights in Ghana. By systematically documenting abuses, collaborating with legal entities, and engaging with local communities, HRRG fosters a culture of accountability that is crucial for the protection of human rights. The insights provided by various interviewees highlight

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the importance of this role in not only addressing individual cases of abuse but also in advocating for systemic changes that ensure the protection of human rights for all. Through its diligent monitoring efforts, HRRG empowers communities to demand justice and contributes to building a more just and equitable society. With regards to HRRG challenges, the results highlight the need for stronger support systems for grassroots NGOs. Increased funding opportunities, better protection for activists, and an enabling legal framework would greatly enhance the effectiveness of HRRG and similar organizations. In doing so, the human rights movement in Ghana can overcome some of the barriers that currently impede progress and create lasting change. Lastly, the chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the various strategies HRRG employs to ensure its sustainability. These strategies—ranging from diversified funding, capacity building, community engagement, strategic partnerships, and adaptation to socio-political environments—are essential for maintaining and enhancing HRRG's contributions to human rights practices in Ghana.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

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5.0 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the key findings from the research on the roles, challenges, and strategies of Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) in promoting human rights in Africa. It presents a concise summary of the insights gained throughout the study, followed by concluding remarks that encapsulate the significance of grassroots NGOs in advancing human rights. Additionally, the chapter offers actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of HRRG and similar organizations.

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5.1 Summary of Findings

This section summarizes the key findings from the study, organized according to the three main research questions. It outlines the contributions and roles of Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) in promoting human rights, the challenges the organization faces in its operations, and the strategies it employs to sustain its advocacy efforts.

5.1.1 Key Contributions and Roles of HRRG in Promoting Human Rights

The following provides a summary on the key contributions and roles played by Human Right Reporters of Ghana in the promotion of human rights in Ghana:

- HRRG engages in advocacy and awareness campaigns, particularly for marginalized communities, using media, focus groups, and public forums to amplify human rights issues. Through these campaigns, HRRG raises awareness on various human rights violations, ensuring the issues affecting marginalized communities are brought to the forefront of public discourse.

- HRRG also provides legal assistance to victims of human rights violations, including legal education, representation, and emotional support. It offers legal representation to those unable to afford and also educates them about their rights, enabling victims to navigate legal processes effectively.

- By documenting human rights abuses, HRRG provides essential evidence that informs policy discussions and amplifies advocacy, making human rights issues visible and actionable.

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- HRRG builds community awareness and capacity by educating individuals about their rights and mobilizing grassroots support for human rights initiatives. Through education and grassroots mobilization, HRRG ensures that local communities are empowered to advocate for their own rights, contributing to a culture of human rights awareness and activism.

5.1.2 Challenges Faced by HRRG in Promoting Human Rights

Below is the summary of the findings on the challenges/limitation encountered by HRRG in their attempt to promote human rights in Ghana:

- HRRG faces political resistance, including intimidation, harassment, and bureaucratic delays, hinders HRRG's ability to advocate effectively and hold authorities accountable. The fear of political retaliation often undermines HRRG's work, with political actors using threats and intimidation to discourage human rights advocacy, obstructing HRRG's ability to challenge human rights abuses effectively.

- Financial constraints limit the organization's ability to implement programs, maintain operations, and expand outreach efforts was another challenge identified. HRRG's reliance on external funding creates financial instability, restricting its ability to plan and execute long-term programs, thus limiting the scope of its advocacy efforts.

- Also, cultural and societal resistance, especially around sensitive issues like gender equality, undermines community acceptance and participation in human rights advocacy. Local cultural norms and traditions often clash with HRRG's advocacy on issues such as

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gender equality, which hinders community engagement and support, particularly in rural areas where such issues are highly sensitive.

- Inadequate human resources and expertise result in operational inefficiencies, delays in delivering support, and difficulty scaling initiatives. Limited staff capacity, coupled with a lack of specialized skills, results in HRRG's inability to meet the growing demands of its programs, which undermines its overall effectiveness and scalability.

- Limited public awareness and media engagement reduce the visibility of human rights issues and advocacy campaigns, affecting public and policymaker support. The lack of sufficient media coverage and public engagement means HRRG's advocacy efforts are not reaching a broad audience, making it challenging to build the public pressure needed to bring about policy changes.

5.1.3 Strategies for Sustainability of HRRG's Contributions

The following are the summaries of the findings on the strategies employed by HRRG to ensure sustainability of human right promotion in Ghana:

- Diversified funding sources, including grants, community-based fundraising, and partnerships with local businesses, enhance financial resilience and reduce dependency. By diversifying funding sources, HRRG can mitigate the risks associated with donor dependency, ensuring greater financial stability and the ability to scale its programs.

- Capacity-building initiatives focus on staff training, mentorship, and skill development to improve operational efficiency and advocacy impact. Investing in staff development

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ensures HRRG can operate more efficiently and effectively, empowering its team to better advocate for human rights and respond to emerging challenges.

- Active community engagement fosters local ownership of human rights initiatives, strengthening grassroots advocacy and sustainability. Engaging communities ensures that HRRG's initiatives are not only sustainable but also supported by the very people they are meant to help, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment.

- Strategic partnerships with NGOs, academic institutions, and private entities pool resources, expertise, and networks to amplify impact. By collaborating with various stakeholders, HRRG can leverage additional resources and expertise, enhancing its capacity to address human rights issues more effectively and expand its reach.

- Adaptation to socio-political environments through monitoring, policy engagement, and flexible program design ensures relevance and effectiveness. By staying attuned to changes in the socio-political landscape, HRRG can adapt its programs to remain relevant, ensuring it can continue advocating for human rights even in shifting political climates.

- Use of technology and social media expands outreach, raises awareness, and mobilizes support for advocacy and fundraising efforts. Utilizing digital platforms allows HRRG to connect with a global audience, raise awareness, and engage supporters, making it an essential tool for both advocacy and fundraising.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has examined the key contributions, challenges, and sustainability strategies of Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG) in promoting human rights within the Ghanaian context. The

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findings demonstrate HRRG's significant role in advocating for marginalized communities, providing legal support to victims of human rights violations, and documenting systemic abuses. By utilizing media, focus groups, and community forums, HRRG amplifies the voices of those who are often unheard, ensuring that human rights issues remain visible in public discourse. Furthermore, HRRG's provision of legal aid, including education, representation, and emotional support, highlights its commitment to ensuring justice is accessible to all, regardless of economic background.

The study also reveals several challenges faced by HRRG, including political resistance, financial constraints, societal opposition, and insufficient human resources. These barriers hinder the organization's ability to operate effectively and scale its advocacy initiatives. The study identifies the importance of addressing these challenges to maintain HRRG's impact and to enhance its long-term sustainability. While political resistance poses a significant threat, HRRG continues to navigate these obstacles with resilience, ensuring that human rights issues remain a focal point of national discussions. Similarly, financial constraints and limited resources underscore the need for diversified funding sources and strategic partnerships to secure the organization's financial stability.

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In response to these challenges, HRRG has employed a range of sustainability strategies, including diversified funding sources, community engagement, and capacity-building initiatives. These strategies, as revealed by the findings, are essential for ensuring the organization's long-term viability and its ability to continue advocating for human rights in the face of systemic barriers. The role of strategic partnerships and the use of technology, particularly social media, have further enhanced HRRG's outreach, enabling it to mobilize support and raise awareness on a broader

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scale. By adapting to the socio-political landscape and leveraging technological advancements, HRRG has positioned itself as a critical player in Ghana's human rights landscape.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on grassroots NGOs, especially in the context of human rights advocacy in Africa. It provides valuable insights into the unique challenges faced by HRRG, and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. By focusing on HRRG, this research fills a significant gap in understanding the operational realities of grassroots NGOs in Ghana, offering both theoretical and practical implications for the broader NGO sector. The study also aligns with Liberal Institutionalism by emphasizing the importance of cooperation, resource-sharing, and the creation of normative frameworks for human rights protection. HRRG's work exemplifies how local organizations can operate effectively within these frameworks, despite the challenges posed by political repression and resource limitations.

In conclusion, the findings of this study not only highlight HRRG's contributions to human rights advocacy but also offer actionable insights for other grassroots NGOs facing similar challenges. The study's emphasis on the need for diversified funding, community engagement, and strategic partnerships presents a model for enhancing the sustainability and effectiveness of human rights organizations. Ultimately, HRRG's approach underscores the transformative potential of grassroots NGOs in advancing human rights, even in politically sensitive environments, and provides a roadmap for overcoming the systemic challenges that often hinder their work.

5.3 Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of Human Rights Reporters Ghana (HRRG), several strategic recommendations have emerged from this study. These recommendations focus

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on addressing the challenges identified in the findings and strengthening HRRG's ability to continue its critical work in promoting human rights across Ghana:

- First, to mitigate political resistance and harassment, it is recommended that HRRG collaborate with national human rights bodies such as the Ghana Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and work alongside the Ministry of the Interior to establish legal protections for human rights organizations. These collaborations can help to ensure greater safety and support for HRRG's advocacy efforts, particularly in politically sensitive contexts. This recommendation should be prioritized as a short-term goal, with the aim of establishing stronger legal safeguards for HRRG and other human rights organizations within the next 6 to 12 months.
- Second, financial sustainability remains a crucial challenge for HRRG. To address this, HRRG should expand its funding base by diversifying its revenue streams through partnerships with local businesses, international donors, and public-private collaborations. Engaging with the Ministry of Finance and the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) to promote corporate social responsibility (CSR) and alternative funding channels will be vital in securing long-term financial stability. This effort can be initiated in the medium term, with the goal of establishing consistent funding mechanisms within the next 1 to 2 years.
- Moreover, HRRG's capacity limitations must be addressed by enhancing its human resource base. It is recommended that HRRG partner with local universities, such as the University of Ghana, to offer specialized training in human rights advocacy and legal support. Additionally, collaborating with the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations to implement training and mentorship programs will help to enhance the

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organization's operational efficiency. This capacity-building initiative should be planned for the long term, with the goal of developing a skilled workforce over the next 2 to 3 years.

- To overcome cultural and societal resistance, particularly on sensitive issues like gender equality, HRRG should continue its public education campaigns and engage with the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection. These efforts should involve working with local cultural leaders, including chiefs and opinion leaders, to ensure that human rights advocacy is culturally relevant and widely accepted. HRRG should focus on this as a medium-term initiative, aiming to increase community buy-in and engagement within 1 to 2 years.
- Further, expanding legal support services is essential for HRRG's mission. It is recommended that HRRG strengthen its network by collaborating with the Ghana Bar Association and local law schools such as the Ghana School of Law to provide free or low-cost legal services to victims of human rights violations. This will enhance HRRG's ability to offer comprehensive legal support, thus improving access to justice for marginalized groups. This initiative can be implemented in the long term, with a target for the establishment of a legal support network within 3 to 5 years.
- Harnessing technology and social media will also be key to HRRG's sustainability and visibility. HRRG should partner with the National Communications Authority (NCA) to enhance its digital infrastructure and utilize online platforms to expand its advocacy reach. By integrating more sophisticated digital tools, HRRG can engage a wider audience, raise awareness, and mobilize support for its campaigns. This technology-driven strategy should be implemented in the short term, with improvements in digital engagement expected within the next 6 to 12 months.

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- Lastly, strengthening international collaborations will amplify HRRG's global impact. HRRG should continue building partnerships with international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. These collaborations will provide HRRG with the resources, expertise, and global visibility needed to enhance its advocacy work. This initiative can be initiated in the medium term, aiming for more robust international engagement within the next 1 to 2 years.

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APPENDICES

Appendix: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
LEGON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY (LECIAD)

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Delight Enyonam Sewornu, and I am a student in the MA International Affairs program at the Legon Center for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD). I am conducting research on the topic "An Examination of the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Promoting Human Rights in Africa - The Case of Human Rights Reporters Ghana."

This interview aims to gather insights into the contributions, challenges, and sustainability strategies of grassroots NGOs like Human Rights Reporters Ghana in promoting human rights in the country. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

I assure you that all information you provide will be kept strictly confidential, and your anonymity will be maintained throughout the research process. No personal details will be disclosed, and your responses will be used solely for academic purposes. Before we proceed, I kindly ask for your informed consent to participate in this interview.

If you have any questions or need further clarification during the interview, please feel free to ask. Thank you once again for your time and valuable insights.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

1. Name (optional):

2. Age:

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3. Gender:

4. Position/Role in HRRG:

5. Years of Experience with HRRG:

6. Educational Background:

SECTION B: KEY CONTRIBUTIONS AND ROLES

(iv) What are the key contributions and roles played by Human Right Reporter Ghana to promote human rights in Ghana?

i) Can you describe the main contributions of Human Rights Reporters Ghana in promoting human rights in the country?
ii) What specific roles does HRRG play in advocating for human rights at the grassroots level?
iii) Can you share any recent initiatives or campaigns that HRRG has been involved in to enhance human rights awareness and protection?
iv) How does HRRG collaborate with other organizations or stakeholders to further its human rights agenda?
v) In your view, what has been the most significant impact of HRRG's work on human rights in Ghana?

SECTION C: IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES

1. What are major implications of the role of and challenges faced by Human Right Reporters Ghana in their operations in Ghana?

i) What are the major challenges HRRG faces in its operations and advocacy efforts?
ii) How do these challenges impact the effectiveness of HRRG's human rights initiatives?
iii) Can you discuss any specific incidents or situations where HRRG had to overcome significant obstacles?
iv) How does HRRG address issues related to funding and resources in carrying out its activities?

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v) In what ways do external factors, such as government policies or societal attitudes, influence HRRG's work?

SECTION D: STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

1. What are strategies to ensuring Sustainability of the role and contributions of Human Rights Reports Ghana's in improving human rights practices in Ghana?

   i) What strategies does HRRG currently employ to ensure the sustainability of its human rights initiatives?
   ii) Can you suggest any additional measures that could enhance the long-term sustainability of HRRG's contributions?
   iii) How does HRRG adapt to changes in the socio-political environment to maintain its relevance and effectiveness?
   iv) In what ways does HRRG engage with the local community to build support and sustain its activities?
   v) What role do partnerships and collaborations play in sustaining HRRG's human rights efforts?

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