

WARM UP

1 What types of business organisations are there in the private sector? Are they all focused on making a profit?

■ NGOs, non-profit organisations and charities

An important and developing area of business is that formed by NGOs, non-profit organisations and charities which, although they have different legal and corporate structures, can often be grouped together due to their common ideology and purpose. These organisations are usually centred around social, environmental and developmental issues, in areas like health, famine, peace, security, poverty, education, climate change, trade and human rights. They operate on a local, national or international level, with both paid and voluntary staff. Money can come from membership fees, fundraising, private donations, selling of goods such as handicrafts, and grants from governments and other organisations.



A **non-governmental organisation (NGO)** is not affiliated with any government. It might get some or all of its funding from governments, but no government officials are allowed to be members of the organisation and it operates independently from any government influence. They are often also non-profit organisations. Well-known international examples include the Red Cross, Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Médecins Sans Frontières/ Doctors Without Borders and WWF.

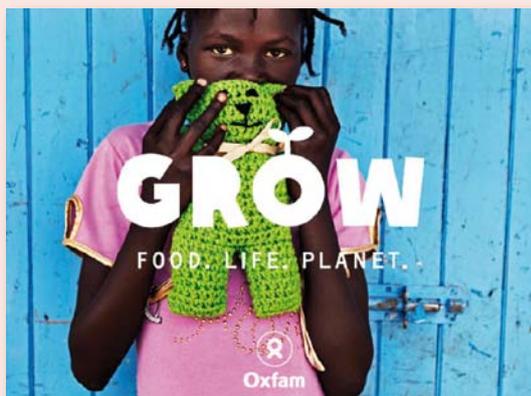
A **non-profit organisation**, also known as a not-for-profit organisation or NPO for short,

has to use its profits and revenues for the purpose of its organisation, such as to plan and fund other projects. It cannot allocate profits to shareholders as dividends. Many NPOs operate on an international level, but there are lots of local and national organisations too.

A **charity** is a type of non-profit organisation which operates exclusively for charitable purposes. It has to follow strict rules regarding its purpose, operations and finances, and all of its actions and spending must be transparent and accountable. There are normally tax exemptions for this kind of organisation. Oxfam, for example, is a registered charity in England and Wales.

Oxfam

In its 70 years of history, Oxfam has transformed itself from a local charity in Oxford, UK, to an international aid agency. The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief was set up in 1942 to campaign for food to be sent to starving civilians in Belgium and Greece during World War II. Today there are 17 member organisations of the Oxfam International Confederation. It is perhaps best known for its emergency relief in areas hit by natural disasters and conflict, but Oxfam is also involved in long-term development projects and campaigns for issues such as climate change, fair trade, better health and education and the eradication of poverty. One of its current campaigns is 'GROW Food. Life. Planet' which aims to make sure that everyone always has enough to eat. Oxfam relies on donations and volunteers from the general public for much of its work.



Source: www.oxfam.org

READING COMPREHENSION

2 **BEC** Read the texts and decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F). If there is not enough information, choose 'doesn't say' (DS).

- 1 NGOs, NPOs and charities are similar in their legal and organisational structure.
- 2 Everyone who works for one of these organisations is paid a salary.
- 3 Private donations provide the majority of funding for these organisations.
- 4 Governments have no influence on how NGOs operate.
- 5 A non-profit organisation can choose how to invest its profits.
- 6 Charities often do not have to pay taxes.
- 7 Oxfam originated in the UK.
- 8 Oxfam is the biggest international aid agency which offers emergency relief.

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SPEAKING

3 Discuss these questions in small groups.

- 1 Are there many organisations of this kind in your country?
- 2 In what ways can this kind of organisation play an important role in society?
- 3 Do you donate money or volunteer for charities and similar organisations? Or are you a member? Why/Why not?
- 4 Would you like to work for an organisation of this kind? Why/Why not?

INTERNET RESEARCH

4 Find out about an NGO, non-profit organisation or charity which operates or is based in your country. Prepare a short oral report, including the following points:

- the type of organisation and its structure;
- its main areas of operation;
- its funding and how it spends the money;
- details of a current project or scheme.