International Organizations

Working Together

Organizations are groups of people, businesses, or governments that work together to solve an issue. *International organizations* involve governments or people from different countries working together to solve an issue that crosses country borders. Reaching across borders is what makes them "international." There are two main types of international organizations.

Intergovernmental Organizations

"Inter" means *among* or *between.* It is a prefix that shows there is a connection between things. *Intergovernmental organizations* are organizations that are formed between governments. They are based on formal agreements between three or more countries that have come together for a specific purpose. For example, several governments might come together to share the national experts and resources to develop solutions for fighting hunger around the world.

American, British, and Spanish ships participate in a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military exercise.
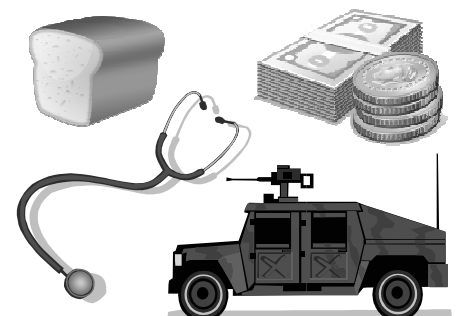
Nongovernmental Organizations

"Non" means *not*, of course. *Nongovernmental organizations* (NGOs) are groups that work to solve problems around the world. Although they may have members that come from government organizations, they are not connected to any government. A nongovernmental organization is free to work toward its own goals without interference from any government. If an NGO wanted to fight hunger globally, it might collaborate with other NGOs or raise money independently to fund projects.

A bundle of clothes from the Red Cross in Finland waits to be donated to people in need.

What International Organizations Do

International organizations have often been responsible for providing help to nations in need. They also keep the peace in countries that are having violent uprisings or civil war. In addition to using troops or volunteers to maintain peace, international organizations also work to provide better education and medical care to people in war-torn areas.

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