The future of Australia’s aid programme

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Briefing paper: A human rights framework for complex emergencies; The role of rural education in post doi moi Vietnam
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The future of Australia's aid programme
Discussion Series

The 1996-97 Aid Budget: A sharper humanitarian focus
Andrew Thomson

The future of Australia’s aid programme
Gordon Bilney

A new paradigm for aid
John Longmore

Commercial objectives of the Australian aid programme
Bob Warner and Sandy Cuthbertson

In search of an Australian overseas aid policy
John Browett and Susanne Schech

Australian aid to Africa: Can donor interest and recipient needs be reconciled?
Christine McMurray

A new agenda for Australian aid
Russell Rollason

Overseas aid: The scalpel and the suture
Dean Forbes

A poverty focused aid programme
Beris Gwynne

Balancing humanitarian needs and Australian interests: The need for a poverty focused philosophy for aid and development
Cherry Gertzel

Increasing the poverty focus of Australian ODA
Joe Remenyi

Globalisation, poverty eradication and aid
Patrick Kilby

Aid: The way ahead
Janet Hunt

Non government organisations and aid
Denis Griffin

The future of aid: Contextual challenges and opportunities
Greg Thompson

The role of civil society in development
John Scott Murphy

Rukmani Gounder

Results of an opinion poll on overseas aid

Recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Terms of reference for the review of Australia’s aid programme
Viewpoint

Black access to electronic research services in South Africa: Problems and prospects for real change
Peter Limb 59

Updates

Food security, population and development
Joint statement by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development 62

Privatisation
Colin Kirkpatrick 65

New Zealand-African relations: The end of an era
David Dorward 67

From the field

Engendering eco-timber production in the Solomon Islands
Regina Scheyvens 69

Pre-departure briefing for aid workers: Benefits for NGOs
Gordon Knowles 73

Training as a component of community economic development in rural Vietnam
Kathryn Gow 75

From the press 77
Conferences 79
Publications 86
Courses 100
Resources 103

Briefing papers

Charity or rights? A human rights framework for complex emergencies
Bernard Broughton

The role of education in post doi moi Vietnam
Ary Laufer

List of acronyms

ACFOA Australian Council for Overseas Aid
APEC Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
DAC Development Assistance Committee
DIFF Development Import Finance Facility
FAO Food and Agriculture Organisation
GATT General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GNP Gross National Product
ILO International Labour Organisation
IMF International Monetary Fund
NGO Non Government Organisation
ODA Overseas Development Assistance
OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHO World Health Organisation
In concert with the review of the aid programme, this issue of the Development Bulletin focuses on the future directions of Australia's overseas aid. We have included the views of individuals from government, non-government and academic organisations and institutions, and they address the important issues of poverty, globalisation, the geography of Australian aid, how the commercialisation of the aid programme can be balanced with humanitarian interests, and so on.

**Briefing papers**

Ary Laufer discusses the role of education in the transformation of post doi moi Vietnam, and Bernard Broughton argues that humanitarian NGOs should adopt a human rights focus based on international charters and covenants.

**Viewpoint**

Peter Limb discusses the access and availability of electronic research services in South Africa, suggesting that this could be used as a measure of real change in the country.

**Updates**

We have reprinted the Joint Statement by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, Colin Kirkpatrick provides an update on privatisation and David Dorward gives his interpretation of the closing of the African Information Centre in Wellington, New Zealand.

**From the field**

Regina Scheyvens provides an interesting account of SWIFT, an eco-timber organisation in Solomon Islands, as well as suggesting ways in which women might become more involved in eco-timber production. Gordon Knowles outlines the benefits of pre-departure briefing for NGO aid workers as well as ways to improve this process, and Kathryn Gow discusses the need for sustainable training in the rural areas of Vietnam.

**AusAID**

The Australian Development Studies Network gratefully acknowledges the ongoing assistance of AusAID in publishing the Development Bulletin.

**The back half**

The back half of the Bulletin includes the latest information on new books and new courses, a conference calendar, conference reports and an up-to-date listing of development studies resources.

**Next issue**

The next issue of the Bulletin will focus on the progress made in the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. If you have any queries or would like to contribute please call, fax or e-mail us.

Pamela Thomas, Lisa Law and Rafat Hussain
The future of Australia’s aid programme

In a global situation of increased conflict, increased need for emergency relief, dramatic increases in the gaps between rich and poor, and increases in the absolute numbers of those living in poverty, the level of development assistance is declining. At the end of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, development assistance has become increasingly privatised and poverty more deeply entrenched. At a time of globalisation of economies, markets and information, funding to organisations which have the capacity to operate at a global level is being cut. Clearly, development assistance globally is in a state of transition. What is less clear is what it is in transition to.

In Australia the transition is obvious. While the Coalition Government has reaffirmed the ‘humanitarian’ focus of the aid programme, it cut the aid budget and then commissioned an independent review. The aim of the review is to find ways in which the aid programme can achieve the objectives of ‘assisting developing countries reduce poverty and improve the standard of living of their people through sustainable development and to assist in achieving a more secure and equitable international order.’

It has been ten years since the last major review and it is time for a reappraisal of the rationale and objectives of the aid programme, its size, effectiveness and management. This issue of the Development Bulletin considers the future of Australia’s aid programme and provides a variety of perspectives on how a humanitarian focus might best be achieved in an increasingly interconnected world.

Andrew Thomson outlines the Government’s position on aid to Papua New Guinea, the South Pacific, East Asia and Africa, and discusses the delivery of humanitarian relief. John Langmore reviews the way in which globalisation impacts on the processes and delivery of development assistance and puts forward a new concept of aid in the form of global public goods. Russell Rollason also considers the impact of globalisation and the increasing urgency of eradicating poverty. Both he and Gordon Bilney stress that the Australian public believe that Australian development assistance goes to poor countries and to relieve poverty. A large majority believe that the motives for aid should put altruism before self-interest. Many of the papers here, however, outline the ways in which Australian assistance benefits Australia rather than the recipients.

Bob Warner and Sandy Catherbertson query the commercial interests of the aid programme and maintain that tied aid is not in Australia’s best interest. John Browett and Susanne Schech also discuss the DIFF scheme and the commercialisation of the aid programme.

The issue of aid to Africa is raised by a number of contributors most of whom voice concern that assistance is going to South Africa rather than to much poorer countries to the north.

The bottom line for contributors to this issue of the Development Bulletin is finding a better balance between conflicting aid programme objectives: humanitarian concerns and Australia’s interests. Most opt for a future aid programme that is focused clearly on humanitarian concerns.
The 1996-97 Aid Budget: A sharper humanitarian focus

Andrew Thomson, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs

The 1996-97 Budget outcome has seen some important changes in the focus of Australia’s development cooperation programme. It is true that Australia’s ODA in 1996-97, expected to be A$1,450 million, represents a decline of ten per cent in real terms on 1995-96 expenditure. However, the aid programme remains a large expenditure item and demonstrates the Government’s commitment to assisting developing countries, even in times of budgetary constraint. The 1996-97 budget outcome places the ratio of Australia’s ODA to GNP ratio at 0.29 per cent, which is still above the current weighted average of 0.27 per cent for donor members of the DAC of the OECD.

The Budget reaffirms Australia’s commitment to the Asia-Pacific region and has a sharper humanitarian focus by: maintaining aid to Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the South Pacific Island countries; maintaining aid to Africa and funding for emergencies; introducing a new policy on education and training; and enhancing the role of NGOs. In addition, the Australian Government is working towards a greater emphasis on private sector involvement in overseas development.

This is, however, only the first step in making sure Australia’s overseas aid programme achieves its fundamental objectives - to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living of their people through sustainable development and to assist in achieving a more secure and equitable international order. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, has commissioned an independent review of the aid programme which will make recommendations on how these objectives can best be achieved. While the aid review will be important in setting future directions for the aid programme, the Government has moved ahead with some key policy thrusts in this year’s Budget.

Papua New Guinea

The Australian Government will continue to meet its aid commitments to PNG under the PNG-Australia Treaty on Development Cooperation, with total 1996-97 aid flows expected to be A$319.5 million. PNG receives the largest share of the Australian aid programme (over one-fifth) reflecting the significant relationship between the two countries. For the first time, programmed aid will outweigh budget support to PNG, reflecting an agreement by the two Governments to move to 100 per cent jointly programmed activities by the year 2000.

Australia’s aid programme to PNG aims principally to increase self-reliance, stability and social cohesion and, more recently, assist the successful implementation of PNG’s economic reform programme. The PNG Government has identified education, health, and transport and communications as priority areas, with an emphasis on upgrading basic service delivery to rural areas, especially to women and children.

PNG hopes to achieve universal basic education over the next decade to address low literacy, school enrolment and retention levels. In supporting this aim, AusAID’s current major activities include upgrading provincial high schools, supplying educational materials to primary and elementary schools, supporting the training of elementary teachers and helping the PNG Department of Education improve its capacity to plan and implement reforms.

In the area of health, activities include a programme to strengthen the management capacity in major hospitals, training for doctors, nurses and other health professionals, an HIV/AIDS project and a five-year family planning project in collaboration with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. New activities will focus on high priority needs for women’s and children’s health and services to rural provinces.

A particular priority in 1996-97 is assistance for Bougainville to help restore essential health and education services and meet humanitarian needs such as basic household items, pharmaceuticals and vaccines for people displaced by the conflict. In addition, a major restoration and relocation programme will continue in East New Britain as a response to the volcanic destruction of Rabaul in 1994.

South Pacific

Pacific Island countries have relatively small economies, many are subsistence-based, and are remote from potential markets. In 1996-97, total flows to the South Pacific will be around A$129 million, making Australia one of the largest donors to the region. The focus will be on education, health, sustainable resource use, private sector development and economic and public sector reform.

Education and training is the largest element of the Australian aid programme to the South Pacific. More than one-quarter of 1996-97 funding is expected to be spent on education or training related activities. These include providing scholarships, constructing classrooms, training teachers and basic education and literacy enhancement.

A big change this year is the doubling of the allocation for the South Pacific regional policy and management reform.
(PMR) initiative to support Pacific Island countries in undertaking economic and public sector reforms. This initiative fosters the regional reform agenda endorsed by Pacific Heads of Government at the last three annual South Pacific Forum meetings. It is to help increase the efficiency and accountability of governments, and develop appropriate policy frameworks for natural resource management, foreign trade and investment and the domestic private sector.

East Asia

The East Asian region is one in which many countries continue to experience rapid and sustained economic growth. Some countries nevertheless remain among the poorest in the world. Total flows to the region will be A$371 million in 1996-97.

Particular features of the 1996-97 Budget are:

- an increase in assistance to the China, Indonesia and Philippines country programmes to offset in part the decline in assistance to these countries following the termination of the Development Import Finance Facility;
- maintenance of the former Prime Minister's aid pledge to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; and
- reductions to Malaysia and Thailand, reflecting their considerable economic and social progress over the past decade and the fact that their development needs are less pressing than those of other poorer countries.

Africa

Total assistance to Africa in 1996-97 is to be maintained at 1995-96 levels, amounting to an estimated A$105.6 million. It will focus on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries and the Horn of Africa. Three SADC member countries now have full country programme status within the Australian development cooperation programme: South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. As well, the regional programme focusing on Southern Africa is to receive priority. Education and training remains a priority area; agricultural development, water supply and sanitation, health services delivery and private sector development will also be emphasised. Other countries in southern, eastern and the Greater Horn of Africa will receive support for training assistance, reconstruction and reform activities, and emergency and relief programmes.

Humanitarian relief

In 1996-97, emergency and refugee assistance will be A$81 million. Australia channels most of its humanitarian relief funds through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as the World Food Programme and Australian NGOs.

Africa is likely to remain the major recipient of Australia's humanitarian assistance. In Mozambique, Australia helps support the repatriation and reintegration of thousands of refugees. In Angola, Australia's efforts are directed at supporting UN-sponsored demobilisation of soldiers and NGO programmes repairing community infrastructure. In both countries Australia contributes to the international effort to clear landmines. In the Horn of Africa rehabilitation of infrastructure, reintegration of displaced persons and efforts to promote food security are contributing to stability in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In the Pacific, a significant contribution is being made to disaster preparedness programmes. These programmes aim to strengthen the institutional capacity of local authorities to respond effectively to emergencies. In South and Southeast Asia, Australia supports programmes for refugees and internally displaced people in Bangladesh, Thailand, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Cambodia.

A new education and training policy

Education and training assistance is a significant component of Australia's overseas aid programme. By supporting improvements in education in developing countries, Australia is helping to overcome one of the major obstacles to poverty reduction and economic growth. Assistance to the education sector totalled some A$242 million in 1995-96, or over 15 per cent of Australian ODA. Much of Australia's education assistance has traditionally focused on tertiary scholarships. At present, there are over 6,000 sponsored students in Australia. These scholarships account for more than two-thirds of aid expenditure on education and training.

On 20 August 1996, the Minister for Foreign Affairs announced a new education and training policy for Australia's aid programme. The new policy articulates a change in focus for Australian assistance in this area. There will be increased emphasis in the areas of basic education and vocational and technical education. Targeted support for higher education and the provision of tertiary scholarships for study in Australia will also continue in recognition of their role in meeting human resource development needs in recipient countries. There will also be a focus on institutional strengthening needs, incorporating distance education where appropriate. Most importantly, the policy emphasises the need to tailor Australian assistance in this sector according to the needs and priorities of the recipient country.

Non government organisations

The Australian government supports the valuable role NGOs play in delivering Australia's foreign aid programme. NGOs implement projects in developing countries often addressing basic needs at the community level, as well as delivering emergency relief and rehabilitation assistance. The work of NGOs relies on dedicated members, often volunteers, and on the financial support they receive from the Australian public as well as the government's aid programme. Total funding to NGOs is expected to exceed A$100 million in 1996-97.
A number of important reforms to NGO funding will take place in 1996-97. These reforms include improved systems for accountability and performance measurement, streamlined and simplified application and reporting processes and a strengthened system for NGO accreditation.

While the bulk of support for NGOs is provided through country programmes and the humanitarian relief programme, a key element of the aid programme's support for NGOs is the AusAID-NGO Cooperation Programme (ANCP). The ANCP provides a framework through which NGOs are accredited, submitted to regular peer review and receive subsidies for development activities designed and implemented by NGOs. Funding through the ANCP has been increased to A$15.8 million in 1996-97.

Key programme evaluations: HIV/AIDS and food aid

AusAID has begun evaluations in two key areas:

- A review of the effectiveness of Australia's foreign aid HIV/AIDS projects and programmes over the past five years which will make recommendations on policy guidelines and programming approaches. The review is being undertaken in response to the growth in Australian funding for international HIV/AIDS activities as well as the continually changing nature of the global pandemic.

- A review of the Australian Government's food aid programme, valued at approximately A$100 million in 1996-97, is expected to make recommendations on the future extent and nature of the food aid programme.

Private sector involvement in development cooperation

If countries are to develop, they need to attract private investment. Indeed, total global flows of finance to developing countries have increased significantly over the past decade, most of this is due to increases in flows from the private sector. Between 1985 and 1994, private flows as a proportion of total net resource flows to developing countries rose from 30.1 to 60.1 per cent.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of private investment to sustainable development and is actively exploring ways to encourage Australian private sector involvement in overseas development. One recent example of this is encouraging Australian business and NGO communities to provide greater assistance for microenterprise development.

The review of Australia's overseas aid programme

The independent review of the aid programme has been asked to report on the overall priorities, objectives and focus of the aid programme. A key issue to be considered is how Australia's aid programme can best contribute to sustainable poverty alleviation. It is expected that the Review Committee will report to the Minister for Foreign Affairs early in 1997.

The review is being conducted by a three person Committee. The Chairman of the Committee is Paul Simons, AM, former Executive Chairman of Woolworths. He is joined by Cliff Walsh from the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, Flinders University and the University of Adelaide, and Gaye Hart who is the Director of the Hunter Institute of Technology.

Community input to the review is essential to its success. A call for public submissions was made and submissions have been received from a wide range of community groups, institutions and individuals. The review team has been active in attending seminars and meeting key players in the development field and has also undertaken a first visit to some key recipient countries. A second visit is planned in November.

The Government looks forward to the recommendations of the review and hopes it will set a new vision for the future of Australia's aid programme, carrying it into the next century. In the meantime, the recent Budget sets a sharper humanitarian focus for Australia's international development efforts.
On 7 June 1984, the Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Aid Programme - commonly known as the 'Jackson Report', named for the Committee Chairman, the late Sir Gordon Jackson - was presented in Parliament. To encourage wide debate on what was and remains the most comprehensive analysis of Australia's aid programme, the then Foreign Minister Bill Hayden formally referred the Report to the Joint Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee and it fell to me to chair the subcommittee which took on the task of evaluating the Jackson recommendations. We agreed with almost all of them, and Australia's aid programme is, still, recognisably in the mould that Jackson shaped.

New another distinguished Australian businessman, Paul Simons, AM, is to conduct a 'major independent review' of the aid programme, assisted by Gaye Hart and Cliff Walsh. Their brief is similar to Jackson's: to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the aid programme. As Alexander Downer has said, it is to be 'the most comprehensive report since the Jackson Report more than ten years ago.'

When I first read of the establishment of the Simons Committee my reaction was somewhat uncharitable, as befits an ex-proprietor. After all, hadn't I been systematically reviewing the aid programme for the 36 months I had had responsibility for it? What would these amateurs know anyway? Since then, I have come to what lawyers would call disant 'economic rationalists' are among those conducting it, since some of the best arguments for a substantial and indeed expanded aid programme are based in right economic reason.

Furthermore, the aid programme is not in anything like the chaotic, directionless and unprofessional shape it was when Jackson was called in. So I do not expect revolutionary change. With regard to Downer's decision to abolish DIFF, for example, I confidently predict a recommendation that an amazingly similar scheme be reinstated - naturally with as different a title as can be devised.

This is not to argue that the Committee's task is straightforward. Partly that is because there are thought to be no, or very few, popular votes in supporting foreign aid in Australia. In Pauline Hanson's famous maiden (sic) speech of 10 September 1996, she did not just take a swing at Aboriginals and Asian migration, but said that Australia 'should cease all foreign aid immediately and apply the savings to generate employment here at home.' Her 20 per cent swing - in Bill Hayden's old seat! - is at once instructive and disquieting.

Increasingly, aid is becoming unpopular elsewhere in the OECD. A recent two day OECD Joint Consultation, involving journalists, scholars, educators and development practitioners, concluded that the acceptance of development aid in OECD countries was far from robust:

Yet if the new Government is truly a believer - as Alexander Downer says it is - its first Budget is hardly evidence. The Budget saw a cut in the aid programme of A$155.3 million in 1995-96 dollars (or ten per cent in real terms), comparable only to the Fraser cuts of 8.7 per cent in 1975-76 and the even larger Hayden cut of 11.9 per cent in 1986-87. The 1996-97 estimate represents an ODA to GNP ratio of 0.29 per cent, the lowest level since statistics began to be compiled. It is true that in 21 of the 24 DAC members of the OECD, ODA/GNP ratios also fell this year. While previous Australian governments have resisted this trend, this year the new Government has embraced it.

The future of aid

What can we say about the future? For a start, I think we should discount the uncharitable view that the Simons Inquiry will do no more than provide justification for further cuts to the aid programme. Nothing in its terms of reference gives colour to that view. I am encouraged by the fact that soi-disant 'economic rationalists' are among those conducting it, since some of the best arguments for a substantial and indeed expanded aid programme are based in right economic reason.

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Reasons for optimism

But there are positive factors which will weigh more heavily with Simons than Hansonesque redneckery or essentially northern hemisphere hesitations. First, there is evidence that aid works. In his excellent 1996 Heindorff Lecture, Trevor Kanaley, Director General of AusAID, thoroughly outlined the progress that has been made in improving the lives of people in developing countries since large-scale overseas aid began in the 1950s. Before then, the lives of people outside the developed countries were - to recall Hobbes - 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'. In the four decades since, however, the improvements have been spectacular:

- life expectancy in developing countries has risen by more than 20 years (from 41 to 62 years);
- the percentage of the population with access to clean water has doubled (from 35 to 70 per cent);
- adult literacy has risen from less than half the population to about two-thirds;
- food production and consumption have increased at a rate about 20 per cent faster than population growth; and
- infant mortality rates have more than halved.

It would be foolish to attribute these improvements solely to aid, but it's a good bottom line however it has been achieved.

Secondly, we now have a much better idea of how aid works best - Australian aid practitioners included. Aid works when it is combined with, and in some cases is used to help bring about, domestic policies which are conducive to sustainable improvements in the lives of developing country citizens. To quote Trevor Kanaley:

If countries are to develop, they require a sound and stable policy framework; market based policies which encourage integration in the global economy; an emphasis on social development; enhanced participation by the local population, and notably by women; good governance, in the widest sense; policies and practices that are environmentally sustainable; and better means of preventing and resolving conflict and fostering reconciliation.

The high performing East Asian economies provide a clear illustration of these development strategies. In general, they have adopted market friendly policies and stable macroeconomic management. They have given priority to primary and secondary schooling with the effect of increasing labour force skills. They have invested in health care. They have provided a competitive climate for private enterprise including providing the legal, social and institutional framework that encourages people to undertake commercial activity and trade with each other.

The other side of that coin is that there remains a distressingly large number of countries - mostly in Africa, but also in the Asia-Pacific region - whose governance is such that the welfare of their peoples rarely gets addressed. Nor are all donor programmes so impeccably designed, or so well delivered, as to make an optimal contribution to achieving development ends.

In Australia, however, I think one can modestly claim that the recent trend has been towards supporting programmes in countries which are following appropriate policies, and towards encouraging the adoption of such policies through sustained and sometimes robust 'policy dialogue'. If Simons does not recommend we continue along that path I should be very surprised. I also suspect that we will see more of what might be called the flip side, sticks rather than carrots, of the kind we saw last year in our decision to reduce assistance to the Solomon Islands forestry sector, when Solomon Islands forestry policy was so blatantly antipathetic to sustainable development (working to avoid a similar situation in Papua New Guinea will take a great deal of effort, but will be worthwhile if it produces the right result in a country of such importance - if it does not, drastic action will be needed).

The third reason for optimism about the future of our aid programme is that Australians stand to gain comparatively more from having a substantial aid programme than do the populations of most other donors (sorry, Ms Hanson!). Why so? The DAC in its May 1996 Review of Australia's aid programme put it succinctly:

Australia has a special position among donor countries: many of its main partner countries for aid are also its neighbours. Their economic, social and political development is of vital interest to Australia, in both the short- and the longer-term. Some critics have urged more emphasis on help for even poorer countries in Africa and South Asia, but there are also strong humanitarian and national interest arguments for the regional focus of Australia's aid programme, complemented by smaller programmes elsewhere and multilateral contributions.

It is a consequence of the rapid progress towards the integration of Australia's economy with the economies of the APEC countries that important Australian constituencies have been called into being, and these constituencies support further progress to that end. While this is part of a shift which affects all Australians, even Ms Hanson, some constituencies stand out. These range from the universities, increasingly dependent as they are on foreign fee-paying students; through the engineering and construction industry, rapidly expanding as it is in the APEC region; to newer entrants such as health and hospital services. It is true that each of these industries enjoys a degree of comparative advantage over their international competitors, which makes them natural supporters of integration, but each of them has also enjoyed a leg-up in the past from the aid programme (such as student sponsorship, success in DIFF or other infrastructure projects, participation in aid-financed health training).
which has sensitised them to the importance of the aid programme. It is a measure of the new Government's lack of sophistication in this regard that it could believe axing DIFF would be politically costless or even popular, and I predict that a son of DIFF will be born before the body of its parent is cold.

**Continuity in Australian aid**

Against this background, what else might the future hold for Australia's aid programme? As you would expect from an ex-proprietor, I predict a continuation and enhancement of the main themes which have marked the past three aid budgets, from which - with the DIFF exception, which I think temporary - Mr Downer's first Budget is barely distinguishable. This is inevitable in a programme where a multi-year commitment is the norm. Trying to make radical changes within a year or two is like trying to turn the Queen Mary around in a minute or two. To illustrate this, consider the five points Mr Downer singled out for emphasis in his Budget-night press release. He claimed that the 1996-97 Aid Budget:

- has a sharper humanitarian focus;
- reaffirms our regional commitment to Asia and the Pacific;
- emphasises basic education and continued assistance to women's health;
- maintains aid flows to Africa; and
- ensures an increase in the funds available to NGOs.

These could equally have been said - indeed were said - of the 1995-96 Aid Budget, and most I think will be true of the next few. The last two commitments, however, should not be adhered to willy-nilly. In the case of Africa, there will need to be continued effort by recipient countries to encourage appropriate domestic policies if we are to continue to assist. If this does not occur, the commitment is as much nonsense as the demand by some NGOs that Africa should receive a set, higher proportion of our budget, however little that is justified by the efforts African recipient countries themselves make. Adhering to this particular commitment to African (or other) countries which follow policies hostile to development is to give hostages to the whole rationale of internationalism, for the shortcomings of aid programmes can become a convenient scapegoat. Some well-meaning work is occurring in various fora to find ways of dealing with and preventing complex emergencies, and Australia's aid programme will need to give serious support to those efforts.

**Urbanisation, population growth and complex emergencies**

There are three other main areas to which I hope Simons will devote attention. The first is the challenge posed by rapidly increasing urban populations, in the Asia-Pacific and elsewhere, bringing with them the reality that, increasingly, mass poverty will be a city-based phenomenon. Given that an aid programme the size of Australia's has to pick its targets, it seems to me that - as one of the most urbanised societies in the world, with particular expertise in the related areas of waste management, water conservation and public health - Australia is strategically placed to make a difference in the lives of the poorest millions in the exploding megacities of our region. The terms of reference for the Inquiry envisage 'consideration of ... the appropriate balance of sectoral activities between ... education, health, agriculture and infrastructure,' and if Simons were to recommend a greater role for the last-named in tackling the poverty of the urban poor I for one would applaud.

The second area is the challenge of population growth itself. Population activities now account for a modestly respectable two per cent of Australia's aid programme expenditure, some three times the level of 1993. But as made clear in the Ahlburg Report, which I commissioned, but for which Senator Harradine deserves the real credit, there is every reason to redouble that effort in future years. I hope Simons so recommends, but fear the Government will put Senator Harradine's Senate vote before the welfare of developing country women, or indeed of Australia's interests in a world growing at the rate of Sydney every fortnight.

The third area which I foresee Australia's programme will need to give increasing attention involves the so-called complex emergencies which more and more frequently lead the TV bulletins - Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, the Kurds. These situations are truly the stuff of tragedy. They are multidimensional, yet it is emergency relief aid which is the first and last resort as other arms of policy fail, as they have so far. They are endlessly demanding of aid resources and efforts, of which there is never nearly enough; and they are so seemingly intractable that they bring into question the whole rationale of internationalism, for the shortcomings of which aid programmes can become a convenient scapegoat. Some well-meaning work is occurring in various fora to find ways of dealing with and preventing complex emergencies, and Australia's aid programme will need to give serious support to those efforts.

One of the Simons Inquiry's terms of reference relates to aid delivery mechanisms. There are cheap ways of delivering aid - channelling it all through international organisations, for example - but they are not necessarily the most effective and are likely to produce stories about tractors rusting on wharves. I would be surprised if Simons recommends, or the Government implements, anything but marginal changes here, particularly given the much greater professionalism of AusAID compared to its predecessor of 1984.
Conclusion

It is fitting to end with Sir Gordon Jackson, one of the most distinguished Australians of the post-war era, whose work I greatly admired and whose friendship I valued. In January 1988 he wrote to me, as Chairman of the Joint Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, at a time when AusAID (then AIDAB) was about to undergo the Parliamentary Review we had instituted to ensure Jackson's reforms were carried through. He wrote:

I am mulling over what to say to the forthcoming review of AIDAB. At this point it seems to me that while there is still more to do, the shakeup of the Bureau has made considerable progress, overall policy is clearer than it was (although lagging behind events somewhat), and the largest issue is how to achieve reasonable generosity in the size of the aid programme.

In 1988, the size of the aid programme, expressed in today's dollars, was almost exactly A$2,000 million. Today, it's A$1,450 million. For many of us, Gordon Jackson's 'largest issue' of 1988 remains the largest issue for the future of Australia's aid.
A new paradigm for aid

John Langmore, MP

In addition to private financial flows and voluntary aid by governments and NGOs, globalisation has increased the imperative for support to developing countries through the provision of global public goods. With rapidly intensifying global integration, the only efficient means of offsetting some forms of international market failure is through cooperative public provision of certain types of goods and services, including basic development assistance.

Presenting the case for development assistance should be unnecessary since the need is greater than ever before. There are over 1,300 million people living in absolute poverty and the number continues to increase. One effective means of offsetting the international and national impediments to human development is through the external provision of finance, technology and expertise.

Yet aid from some donor countries is being reduced as they struggle to reduce outlays as a way of reducing the size of domestic budget deficits. Automaticity in the provision of at least part of the financial and technical support for low income developing countries may now be a necessary means of providing required funding for development.

During the first half of the 1990s private financial flows added substantially to the resources of some developing countries, but most of this private investment has been concentrated in fewer than a dozen countries. Further increases in private financial flows to emerging markets may well occur as confidence in their profitability and reliability improves, but this offers little potential benefit for most low income countries. Concessional assistance will have a vital role for the foreseeable future; the question is how it can be generated in the current fiscal climate. A major change in the aid paradigm is necessary. The need to offset global market failure offers a way forward.

Globalisation

During the last few decades there has been a striking increase in the extent of global integration. The explosive growth in the integration and size of global financial markets is a particularly clear example. Daily turnover on the world’s financial markets has grown from US$18 billion in 1977 to US$1,230 billion in 1995 (Haq et al. 1996:291). This is more than three times Australia’s annual national income. The revolution in computer and telecommunications technologies has combined with financial liberalisation to relentlessly force national financial markets into a single world market.

Many other examples of globalisation are obvious. During the last three decades the value of exports of industrial countries grew at an annual average rate of 12 per cent (Aaron et al. 1994); the number of international tourists increases rapidly each year; and the environmental consequences from depletion of the ozone layer, acid rain and global warming are felt far beyond the countries in which the causes of the damage originate. One effect of this growing interdependence is diminished national autonomy. The Brookings Institution notes that 'as cross-border economic integration increases, governments experience greater difficulty in trying to control events within their borders ... all nations are constrained, some severely' (Aaron et al. 1994:xxii).

There are two obvious responses. One is to encourage governments, the private sector and civil society to act as effectively as possible within these limits, aiming for the best available outcomes from national policies and action within the global constraints. The other is for countries to act together to achieve agreed goals. The role of the UN, the IMF and the World Bank is to facilitate such cooperation.

The UN and its agencies have 50 years of experience in attempting to organise international cooperation. While there have been many important achievements in this time, the current vision and structure of the UN is still strongly determined by precedents set in the 1940s which are inadequate for the requirements of the 1990s.

Innumerable achievements in the economic and social fields have included:

• technical assistance to developing countries through the UNDP;
• development finance lent by the World Bank;
• global campaigns to eradicate particular diseases and reduce malnutrition by UNICEF and WHO;
• standard setting for labour relations by the ILO;
• negotiating reductions in tariff and non tariff barriers through the GATT;
• assistance in agricultural development through the FAO and the World Food Programme;
• the provision of a global framework for vital parts of the international infrastructure such as telecommunications, civil aviation, shipping, postal services and meteorology through various specialised agencies; and
• research and the circulation of information and ideas by many agencies including the above plus, for example, the UN Secretariat, UNCTAD and UNESCO.

Many of these agencies and their activities were established or evolved during the last five decades in response to a recognition of intensifying need. Yet this process has not kept up with the speed of global change, there are an increasing
number of gaps and many of the continuing organisations and activities are ill-equipped to cope effectively with the complexity of global integration.

A new concept of aid

A conceptual shift is required. The current vision of the role of the UN and other international agencies - in the economic and social fields as well as in areas of dispute resolution, peacekeeping and peacemaking - is too limited, organisational structures are inappropriate and funding is quite inadequate and unreliable. A central aspect of the required conceptual shift must be a recognition of the pervasiveness of global market failure, of the incapacity of nations to act alone and of the necessity for cooperative international action to offset such failure. Just as national governments cope with market failure within their countries by organising the provision of public goods, so the international community is compelled to respond to international market failure through expanding the provision of global public goods. While the organisations referred to above are already providing global public goods, their range and depth will have to be greatly expanded.

Competitive markets are the most efficient means of allocating scarce resources between competing uses in a way which allows a high degree of freedom. However, markets fail internationally for the same reasons they fail nationally: because of monopolies and the concentration of ownership; because of external factors which are not taken into account in the price structure; because of the failure of prices to reflect future scarcities, causing imperfect investment decisions; and because of incomplete information. And, of course, markets give far more power to the wealthy than to the poor. In practice, few markets work efficiently as an allocative mechanism, let alone equitably. Therefore, governments must intervene to both increase the efficiency with which markets operate as well as achieve other goals such as greater equity.

A particularly important aspect of market failure is the inability of the private sector to provide goods and services which automatically benefit everyone. This is the reason for national public goods such as the law and order system, roads, public health services and public education. It is also the principal rationale for such global organisations as the International Telecommunications Union, the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the World Meteorological Organisation. Their services are global public goods.

Global public goods

During the last decade there have been some significant extensions of global public goods, such as the negotiation and implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the establishment of the World Trade Organisation. Yet a growing range of issues remain unaddressed or given inadequate attention. Examples include the provision of swift, adequate emergency relief and support in response to natural disasters or the consequences of civil war, international financial volatility, competition between countries over tax rates, economic coordination and stabilisation, drug trafficking, international migration, protection of the global environment and management of the global commons, let alone the continuing issues of improving global economic performance by facilitating economic development in poorer countries and of improving security for all through peacekeeping and peacemaking.

Inge Kaul (1995) has described one way of classifying the required provision of global public goods into four categories:

- correcting negative global externalities such as cross-border pollution, the spread of diseases or civil and political conflict which may cause refugee movements or tides of illegal migration;
- managing scarce developmental opportunities and resources through, for example, the distribution of pollution rights;
- providing global infrastructure through, for example, the harmonisation and coordination of telecommunications and civil aviation services, and providing negotiating fora for, amongst other tasks, the harmonisation of property rights or tax systems; and
- maintaining critical global balances, such as the amount of forests judged necessary for retaining biodiversity and global climatic conditions.

A major task arising from this new conceptual approach to the role of the UN and its agencies is how to clarify which activities should be undertaken on a global basis. Multilateral programmes should not do what nations can do better. Global public goods are those activities which no country can efficiently undertake alone or for which the 'free rider' problem inhibits adequate provision. Development assistance is a clear example.

Political support for expanding the provision of global public goods will certainly increase as more governments become aware that this is the only way to equitably share the costs of effective provision - a calculation which should take only a few minutes once the issue is seriously addressed. This situation is called 'the prisoners' dilemma' by economists since unless all beneficiaries are compelled to contribute, the motivation for one or a few to provide the service voluntarily is severely undermined since they know that non contributors will benefit.
A crucial question is how to pay for an expanded range of global public goods. Many proposals have been made including borrowing, user-pays fees, increased compulsory subscriptions and new taxes on air travel, telecommunications, the use of energy or the arms trade. One possibility which deserves particular attention is a small levy on foreign exchange transactions. This would contribute to stabilising financial markets as well as to raising revenue.

**The Tobin Tax**

There is widespread unease about the effectiveness with which international financial markets are operating. The Volker Commission in the US has argued that the swings in foreign exchange markets since floating rates were introduced have been a contributory cause of the low growth rates in industrialised countries since the 1970s. The apparent misalignment of major currencies in 1994-95 appears to be a significant factor in the slowness of economic recovery in some countries, notably Japan and Germany. Currency dealers foreseeable circumstances, except on a regional basis as in Mexico has so vividly demonstrated since late December 1994. The collapse of Baring’s Bank added to concern about the effectiveness of internal corporate and market supervision.

The constant smaller fluctuations of exchange rates also add to the cost and risk for business. The variability of financial flows increases the difficulty of monetary management, particularly in thin emerging markets. Swings of confidence can cause massive movements of capital and in exchange rates, with enormously damaging economic and social consequences - as Mexico has so vividly demonstrated since late December 1994. The collapse of Baring’s Bank added to concern about the effectiveness of internal corporate and market supervision.

These and related issues have caused increased interest in finding a means of reducing international financial volatility and risk. A return to fixed exchange rates seems fanciful in foreseeable circumstances, except on a regional basis as in the European Union and perhaps between Australia and New Zealand at some point. Proposals for macroeconomic coordination between the G3 (the United States, Japan and Germany) with the aim of constraining currency movements to target zones would involve a degree of cooperation in which none of the major countries are currently interested. This has led to some growth of interest in the possibility of a small levy on foreign exchange transactions as proposed by the Nobel Laureate in economics James Tobin.

A new book, *The Tobin Tax: Coping with financial volatility* (Haq et al. 1996), discusses these issues and outlines technically feasible approaches to introducing and managing such a tax. An *ad valorem* tax could be applied to all transactions - swaps, forwards and futures as well as spot transactions - by banks and other dealers in the foreign exchange markets. Avoidance would be minimised by imposing a penalty tax rate to dealings with parties based in tax-free jurisdictions. Keeping the rate low would enhance viability: contributors to the book veer towards a rate of 0.1 per cent. The tax would be collected at dealing sites because these are less readily movable than settlement or booking sites: dealing sites involve employees and dealing rooms.

Such a levy would generate considerable revenue for national governments and for the provision of global public goods. On the basis of plausible assumptions, a tax of 0.1 per cent would raise around US$150 billion a year globally and close to A$5 billion annually in Australia. The major recipients would be countries where the volume of financial transactions is greatest. In descending order these include: UK, US, Japan, Singapore, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Germany, France and Australia. For other countries the tax would be a valuable additional source of revenue. An international treaty would have to be negotiated on the rate and administration of the tax, and the extent to which the revenue would be shared internationally.

The rationale for international revenue raising is now very strong. In the light of growing globalisation an increasing number of issues must be addressed, in part at least, on a global basis. Yet they remain inadequate because of a combination of the ‘free rider’ problem and the ‘prisoners’ dilemma’.

Many important functions would be served by the Tobin Tax. By discouraging short-term speculation the tax would unambiguously reduce the volatility in the volume of international financial flows, easing the difficulty of national monetary management. The tax would also lengthen the time horizon of speculators, thus moving resources away from short-term speculation towards longer-term transactions. By reducing the proportion of short-term flows and increasing stability, the economic and social costs of volatility in thin, emerging markets would be reduced. This would also help to constrain the power of financial markets to influence national economic and social policies - a power which has skewed national policies towards obsessive concern with inflation rates and the neglect of economic development, employment, equity and the environment.

Whether or not the tax would reduce exchange rate volatility has not been theoretically or empirically proven. While the introduction of a small levy would certainly reduce the volume of financial transactions and lengthen the time horizon of traders, whether this would reduce either daily fluctuations or longer-term overshooting, or by reducing liquidity also increase volatility, cannot be conclusively assessed without empirical testing over time. Considerable expert opinion is, however, inclined towards the view that exchange rate volatility would be reduced. In any case the other three purposes are so important that introduction of the tax would be warranted by them alone.

The book demonstrates that the Tobin Tax is technically feasible. Whether there will be sufficiently widespread political support for its introduction is another matter. It is not impossible, however, because the tax is so clearly in the interests of all governments. The tax would generate significant or substantial amounts of revenue for governments looking for ways of reducing budget deficits, funding desperately needed improvements in services or reducing other taxes. In addition, it is difficult to imagine a more
electorally feasible tax than one on speculators - a tax on Wall Street rather than Main Street, as Americans say. Finally, there are major potential benefits to every nation from the improvement and extension of global public goods.

Interest in the tax is increasing. About a dozen countries including Australia have spoken at international fora like the Social Summit in Copenhagen and the UN General Assembly last year in favour of studying the proposal further. The UN Secretary General (in his *Agenda for Development*), UNDP, ILO and the Commission on Global Governance have each called for such a study. *The Economist* reviewed the book moderately favourably. The IMF is holding a session at their annual seminar on the issue. Many more issues still have to be addressed but the progress so far has been promising.

**Conclusion**

There is likely to be much debate about which activities should be included in the category of global public goods. Growing recognition of the importance of global peace, economic security and equity for sustainable living standards in advanced countries is beginning to strengthen interest.

If this new paradigm becomes more widely accepted there would be a dramatic change in the framework for economic and social development assistance. The world would move out of the era of voluntary charity, which is essentially the nature of current aid, into an era of effective, universal global infrastructures. This is the transition which industrial countries began to make early this century.

The logic of such an international extension is water tight. Political leadership will still be required to make the transition, but pressure of circumstances will force the process to some extent. The extension of global public goods is inevitable in an orderly world. The issue is the speed and effectiveness with which the evolution occurs. The sooner it happens the more effectively underdevelopment and poverty will be addressed.

**References**


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Commercial objectives of the Australian aid programme

Bob Warner and Sandy Cuthbertson, Centre for International Economics

The first of three goals in AusAID's corporate plan for 1994 to 1996 is to:

- promote ecologically sustainable development in developing countries in response to Australia's humanitarian, foreign policy and commercial interests.

Here we pose a simple question: can the aid programme promote development and Australia's commercial interests? Our answer is: it depends. If we mean are Australians better off when their neighbours are better off, the answer is yes. But if we mean promoting Australia's commercial interests through having Australian firms deliver the programme, the answer is no. There is a conflict in trying to do these two things at the same time. AusAID's task is difficult enough without having it saddled with mutually inconsistent objectives.

The objectives of the recently terminated DIFF scheme specified that commercial benefits meant supply by Australian firms. As articulated by AusAID, the DIFF scheme's objectives were to:

- effectively deliver development benefits to recipient countries; and
- bring substantial commercial benefits to Australia.

Tied aid: who benefits?

During its 16 year life, the DIFF scheme has intermittently been criticised for tying aid to Australian suppliers. One response to this criticism was to observe that virtually all of the aid programme is tied - so why single out DIFF? Yet in examining the reasons for the dismantling of DIFF, it becomes apparent that its downfall had less to do with tying aid, and tying or sourcing aid through Australian firms, than its status as a big spending item (around A$120 million or ten per cent of aid expenditure) in a time of widespread cuts.

Given the general focus of Australia's aid, suppliers of education services (universities), food aid (the Australian Wheat Board and the New South Wales Ricegrowers' Cooperative), construction projects (Australian construction firms) and consultancy services (Australian or New Zealand consulting firms) all have a vested interest in the aid programme. Many of these suppliers support the continuation of tying aid, and tying or sourcing aid through Australian (and in some cases New Zealand) firms is an important way to promote their commercial interests. How does such sourcing contribute to Australia's - as opposed to individual suppliers' - 'commercial' interests?

Several reasons might justify restrictive procurement. The first has to do with political-cum-marketing-cum-foreign relations: 'if we (Australian taxpayers) are going to give aid then recipients should jolly well know it has come from Australia.' Anonymous gift giving is all very well but there is not much of it about, and using Australian suppliers might make identifying the source of aid easier. A second reason might be that Australian firms are efficient and low cost, and procuring from them is a wise thing to do. But if this was the case there would be no need to restrict funding to Australian firms. A third reason could be that restrictive procurement helps Australian exporters get a 'foot in the door', and could therefore be justified as market development assistance. It is not obvious that some Australians should be asked to give money to others so they can develop commercial markets, but in any event such assistance should be in an Austrade budget where it can be properly scrutinised. A fourth reason might be that all countries tie their aid, but a policy action is not sensible just because 'everybody else does it'. A fifth reason could be that maintenance of the aid budget and the aid distribution process require a stronger local constituency than the charitable intentions of average Australians. This suggests that some share of tied aid funds finds its way back to Australia - as profits and wages for the Australian supplying firms, and as taxes on these wages and projects. Such reasoning is suspect, however, since it implies that Australian firms would not be engaged in any economic activity if they were not engaged in tied aid.

There are two questions which arise from this discussion. First, does Australia benefit if Australian firms supply aid-funded goods and services? Second, is there a case for tying aid to ensure the benefits are captured? The broad answer to the first question is no. Aid involves a transfer of wealth from Australia to the recipient country. No matter how the goods and services are procured, consumption and investment in Australia must fall if the resource transfer occurs - whether it be in the form of financial or physical resources. As Figure 1 illustrates, there is no 'clawback' of the transfer if Australian firms supply the goods and services. If Australians donate $x million to another country, having Australian firms supply the aid has an opportunity cost of $x million assuming the project is supplied at market prices. The contracted Australian firms gain at the expense of firms in the rest of the economy from whom resources are bid away, so that the contracted firm can meet the aid-created demand. There is no net commercial benefit; the major effect would be the Australian 'packaging and labelling effect'.

Twenty or 30 years ago Keynsian reasoning might have led to such government activity on the grounds it would generate additional economic activity. Governments around the world have now recognised that an important effect is the displacement of productive activity with unproductive, government-stimulated activity. Furthermore, there is a
Australia gives $4 million aid to Zimbabwe to purchase solar power equipment. This implies Australia chooses to forego $4 million of domestic consumption and investment to transfer resources to Zimbabwe.

If Australian firm X wins contract

X employs local labour, capital and materials to produce equipment

What is seen

Payments to labour, capital and materials suppliers

+ $4m of value added and materials production

Net 'clawback' to Australia $0m

All other firms reduce employment of labour, capital and suppliers

Reduction in payments to labour, capital and materials suppliers

- $4m of value added and materials production

Net 'clawback' to Australia $0m

The overall impact on Australia is not affected by who is chosen to supply the solar equipment. Australia foregoes $4 million in domestic consumption and investment to effect the transfer to Zimbabwe.
further potential problem with tying: it may involve more than just a redistribution of economic activity within the economy - that is, it may involve outright waste. If Australian suppliers are not internationally competitive, tying involves a dilution of aid. To use a simple example, consider an Australian aid project to supply solar energy equipment to Zimbabwe. The equipment could be secured from a Korean firm for $4 million. The best Australian bidder offers to do it for $5 million. If the Australian bidder gets the job, a $5 million project turns into $4 million worth of equipment provided to Zimbabwe at a $5 million sacrifice for the Australian economy. Hopefully, the Australian firm would accrue some of the $1 million as economic profit. More likely, real resources are consumed.

To put it another way, the government would be saying: 'here is $4 million. It cost the Australian taxpayer $5 million to give it to you, but you should be pleased to get $4 million.' To the Australian taxpayer the government would say: 'Give us $5 million and we will give $4 million to a developing country and $1 million to other Australians.' It need not be the case that Australian firms have higher costs and the $1 million could end up where it was intended. But in these circumstances there would be no need to tie aid in the first place and there would be no net commercial benefit to Australia anyway.

Several responses might be given to this example. First, some people consider that the portion of aid which is diluted in this way should at least (for transparency reasons) be in an industry or in the Austrade vote. This would be a good idea - it would have the benefit of making it explicit. Others say that since most of our aid is 'sold' on export markets, any extra payment may be regarded as an export subsidy. The major reason for subsidising exports is not as significant as it used to be, and general arguments for export subsidies are weak and - under new World Trade Organisation agreements - would not be internationally sanctioned anyway. Chances are if we wanted to argue for tying aid to Australian suppliers explicitly on export subsidy grounds, then the policy would not be introduced and, as noted above, if it was explicit it would not be in the aid vote.

Reviewing DIFF

In a paper to be published in the September 1996 issue of Agenda, Ross McLeod and Sandy Cuthbertson demonstrate that some special features of the DIFF scheme made it a more inefficient way of delivering aid than the normal mechanism of tied aid delivery. The DIFF scheme exaggerated the undesirable aspects of tying aid since its leveraged nature meant that recipient countries' funds were tied to Australian suppliers as well. Terminating the DIFF scheme therefore reduced the scope for tying aid to dilute the aid budget. But conflict remains over the procurement policy that applies to much of the aid programme. Aid for people in recipient countries cannot, at the same time, confer commercial benefits to Australian firms without costs to the Australian community at large. Foreign aid involves transfers from Australians to people in developing countries. When 'commercial benefits' mean sourcing from Australian firms at premium prices, it involves a transfer from some Australians to others.

An obvious way of focusing aid objectives - having Australians doing the supplying with all the political-marketing benefits - would be to untie aid and have aid projects done in areas where Australians have expertise. In this way, Australian firms would automatically do most of the delivery, and delivery would be at international prices so the 'aid' dollars would go as far as possible. 'Commercial benefits' would accrue to all Australians through the benefits of having wealthier neighbours - and not just to firms in the aid industry supplying aid services under preferential purchasing arrangements. Loosening the extent to which aid is tied would probably still see most aid services purchased from Australian suppliers, but it would give AusAID more flexibility to do its job.
In search of an Australian overseas aid policy

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The tangled web within which Australia's overseas aid programmes have been enmeshed (Browett 1992) is now rapidly unravelling under a Coalition Government that is embarking on an uncontrolled, and probably uncontrollable, experiment in decision making that is driven by an A$8 billion budget black hole rather than by policy or vision. The Australian overseas aid programme, like much of the Coalition Government's 'not the fightback' agenda, is largely a policy-free zone devoid of either direction or justification.

This contrasts with that of the previous Labor Government, particularly under the guidance of Gareth Evans and Gordon Bilney, when Australia's overseas aid programme was explicitly and unashamedly linked to Australia's foreign policy goals and to promoting its commercial interests. Accordingly, foreign aid was, on the one hand, overwhelmingly directed towards East Asia in order to reinforce a desire to develop increasingly closer relationships with nations in 'our' region. Under this deliberate strategic focus, Australia's traditional alliances first with the United Kingdom and then with the United States were de-emphasised in favour of a stronger orientation towards nations more geographically adjacent.

On the other hand, the Labor Government also justified the aid programme and made it more politically acceptable on the basis of the commercial benefits for the Australian economy (most critically job creation and/or retention) which were to be derived from its foreign aid. Numerous studies and public announcements, not only from government sources but also from non government agencies such as the ACFOA, consistently emphasised the dollar benefits that accrued to Australian companies and workers from foreign aid disbursements. In opening the Aid Business, Good Business seminar in Sydney on 4 April 1995, the Minister for Development Cooperation and Pacific Island Affairs, Gordon Bilney, noted that: some 90 per cent of all goods and services delivered through the aid programme were provided by Australian companies; that the commercial returns available through the aid programme could be quantified in relation to Indonesia where aid of A$990 million provided between 1980 and 1993 had 'generated a A$1,760 million contribution to the Australian economy'; and that for every dollar spent through the DIFF 'five dollars [were] generated in the Australian economy through ongoing commercial sales' (Bilney 1995). Such were the compounded direct and indirect benefits arising from the opportunities available to Australian commerce as a result of foreign aid expenditure.

Now, however, perhaps because of the ill-effects of 13 years spent wandering in the wilderness of opposition, there is an incoming Government which is unwilling or unable to define and embrace policies and agendas other than a commitment to eliminate the budget deficit within two years. Policy vacuums and fiscal rectitude are a potentially dangerous combination, and so it has proven to be to date. In the year that the United Nations has declared as The International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the first Howard Budget has cut the overseas aid programme by ten per cent in real terms, bringing the ratio of aid to GNP down to 0.29, a historic low which 'directly reflects Australia's reduced capacity to provide assistance due to the urgent need to address Australia's budget deficit problem' (Commonwealth of Australia 1996:iv). However, and following the same pattern that was set for the higher education sector, the reduction in Australian aid flows is to be followed by an independent review that is expected to formulate policies and make recommendations as to which ones could/should be adopted. Some may find it ironic that a government which makes changes to, and cuts in, resource allocations in advance of policy formulation would also propose to double the assistance given to Pacific Island governments so that they can be given expert advice on public sector policy and management reform.

Nonetheless, it is apparent from the details contained in the Budget Paper relating to the 1996-97 overseas aid programme that substantial resource allocation changes are to be made. The focus on the commercial benefits of Australia's aid is de-emphasised with the termination of the DIFF scheme. At the same time the focus on East Asia is lessened, a shift that could be seen to be consistent with a move towards a broader-based foreign policy that is not directed so much towards 'our' region - as witnessed, for example, with the agreement on closer defence ties with the United States. Indeed, it has been reported that the main task of the panel of 16 assigned with producing a White Paper on Australia's aid policies is to reassess Australia's Asia-first policy and to consider replacing it with an Asia-Pacific-first policy that embraces stronger links with the United States (The Weekend Australian 1996:6). Such a shift in vision undoubtedly will place questions about the role and place of Australia into a broader context. If in the past 15 years Australian aid can be seen to be part of a redefinition of Australian society towards a post-colonial understanding of itself as a part of Asia, then it could be concluded that the discomfort with such a redefined identity is driving the Coalition Government to seek solace in the arms of its long-standing Western allies.

At the level of resource allocation, aid to East Asia is decreased not only through the termination of the DIFF scheme, but also through cuts to other programmes that have been targeted at the region. For example, the Southeast Asia
Regional Program received one of the largest proportional cuts (36 per cent) in the aid budget. Reinforcing the geographical shift is a marginal increase in allocations to Africa, particularly Southern Africa. South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique have been granted full country programme status. Moreover, ‘the regional program focusing on Southern Africa is to receive priority’ (Commonwealth of Australia 1996:45). We are not told why.

So what remains with the down-playing of the nexus between overseas aid, foreign policy objectives and commercial interests is a humanitarian motive for aid that is still donor-interest, rather than recipient-needs, driven. There is also a faint suspicion that aid is also provided to support countries that are seeking to improve civil and political rights (hence the priority for Southern Africa?) and can be withdrawn when not; aid to Burma, for example, is suspended because of ‘concerns over the lack of progress towards the restoration of human rights’ (Commonwealth of Australia 1996:34). However, a heightened concern for human rights does not appear to be consistent with other pronouncements made by the Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer. An example of this is Australia’s opposition to having basic workers’ rights and child and slave labour included on the agenda of the World Trade Organisation meeting in Singapore in December 1996 (Denholm 1996:24). Consistency is also lacking in the Coalition’s approach to the South Pacific, with aid flows remaining largely unchanged but the Prime Minister refusing to accept legally binding reduction targets on greenhouse gas emissions, without which global warming and rising sea levels will most likely threaten the physical existence of the island nations presently being provided with aid.

Australian aid appears to have been repositioned so that the ‘achievement of lasting poverty reduction’ is at its heart through a focus on assistance to ‘developing countries to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living of their people through sustainable development’ (Commonwealth of Australia 1996:iv). Thus, in countries where there has been economic progress (Thailand) or continuing strong economic growth (Malaysia), aid disbursements are to be reduced. What is not as clear, however, is the rationale for cuts in the aid allocations to other countries where the Australian Government acknowledges that ‘progress towards poverty alleviation has been slow’ (Philippines), where ‘85 per cent of the population live in rural poverty’ (Cambodia), where there is ‘pervasive poverty’ (Nepal) or where ‘the greatest development challenge is poverty’ (Bangladesh) (Commonwealth of Australia 1996:33,36,42). All that can be offered in these circumstances is a feeble lament that Australia is still above the weighted ODA/GNP average for DAC members of the OECD, and a budget bottom line that the Government has to address in terms of putting its own economic house in good order first before it can contemplate providing higher levels of aid (Commonwealth of Australia 1996:iv).

Putting one’s own economic house in order also appears to be the message being sent to aid recipients. As part of an ‘international consensus’ - presumably unilaterally declared by the OECD donor nations - what is now recognised as being significant is ‘the importance of issues such as recipient government responsibility [and] the need for structural adjustment’ (Commonwealth of Australia 1996:6). In a globalised environment of ‘development partnerships’, welfare, growth and prosperity are defined as being primarily the developing countries’ own responsibility. Questions about the causes of the present uneven distribution of resources, wealth and well-being across the globe are excluded from this narrowly defined development debate in which ‘ideology’ is said to have receded as a factor in the post cold war era (Commonwealth of Australia 1996:6). If the consensus is that welfare, growth and prosperity are a country’s own responsibility, then it can be deduced that the next step is to declare that they are also responsible for its own poverty, illiteracy and hunger.

Support for such an individualistic perspective can be found in an OECD report (OECD 1996) that is referred to in the Budget Related Paper. However, the OECD Report (1996:1) also reaffirms the important contribution that ODA can make towards development efforts and urges the international community ‘to sustain and increase the volume of official development assistance in order to reverse the growing marginalisation of the poor.’ Quite clearly the Coalition Government, following trends set by the United Kingdom and the United States, has chosen to overlook this ‘crucial part’ of the understanding to promote the ‘goals of human development’ (OECD 1996:1) by instead making substantial real cuts to its overall aid commitments.

Compensation for reduced aid disbursements is to be sought through an efficiency approach to the provision of development assistance. Yet policies which emphasise economic efficiency are unlikely to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged groups which are said to be the concern of Australia’s aid programme. In relation to women, who constitute 70 per cent of the poor in the developing world, it has been highlighted that a reliance on efficiency arguments in development planning and projects does little to challenge structural inequalities in production, distribution and consumption between women and men (Kabeer 1994). To date, reviews of Australia’s own programmes reveal that women have been marginally considered or completely ignored in programmes other than those relating to education, health and population (AIDAB 1991). In most of its country strategy papers women’s concerns only receive passing comment (Hunt 1996).

Whilst an emphasis on efficiency is unlikely to sharpen the focus of Australia’s aid programme on those most in need, it will ensure that aid to encourage capitalist market-led development is located in an ideology-free zone. All that now has to be found are a set of policies that will link enlightened self-interest, a sense of moral duty, global solidarity, regional stability and environmentally sustainable
development with 'a safer world and a better world in which to live and do business' (ACFOA 1996:2) that is expected to emerge when impoverishment and human rights abuses have been overcome. If only it were that simple.

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Australian aid to Africa: Can donor interest and recipient needs be reconciled?

Christine McMurray, Graduate Studies in Demography, Australian National University

The question of whether or not to provide aid to the poorer countries of Africa is a true test of the philosophy of aid. In no other region is there such a desperate need for development assistance as well as few prospects for reciprocal benefits to the donor. Even food and humanitarian aid during crisis situations may do little to relieve suffering or even gratify donors with the satisfaction of having saved thousands of lives.

Documents produced by both the Labour and Coalition Governments in recent years state that poverty alleviation and sustainable development are the central objectives of Australia’s aid programme (Kerin 1992:6; Bilney 1995:13; Downer 1996:10). Despite this, aid to Africa remains well below ten per cent of Australia’s total aid budget. Of this, the largest component is food and humanitarian aid which does little to alleviate poverty in the long-term or to help recipient countries progress towards economic sustainability. In 1995-96 development assistance comprised only A$38.5 million of the total of A$104.7 million given by Australia to African countries of Africa is a true test of the philosophy of aid. In

The rationale for Australian aid to Africa

A rough indication of the extent to which basic human needs are met in a selection of African countries is provided in Table 1. Although the percentage of GNP shared by the poorest 40 per cent of households in South Africa is second lowest on the Table, South Africa ranks best or second best for all other indicators. South Africa will receive a similar level of Australian aid in 1996-97 and the country ranked third (Zimbabwe) and one of the poorest (Mozambique) will gain full country programmes, although with much smaller budgets than the country programme for South Africa. ‘Other countries in southern, eastern and the Greater Horn of Africa will receive support for training assistance, reconstruction and reform activities, assistance through NGOs and emergency relief programs’ (Downer 1996:45). The total value of the African aid package will remain approximately the same as in 1995-96.

Why does so much of Australia’s development assistance go to some of the most developed African countries while the poorest receive mainly ‘bandaid’ assistance in the form of food and humanitarian aid? The very reasonable justification for the emphasis on South Africa is that the new Government needs assistance in the transition period. The South African package should contribute to the reduction of substantial inequalities within the country and bring undeniable benefits to many poor black South Africans in the form of improved water and sanitation, improved health services and improved education, among other things. But it is important to recognise that South Africa is able to attract Australian aid because of its advanced level of development which makes it easy for aid to reach the designated targets. Zimbabwe and Mozambique also have well-developed economic infrastructures which were historically established by Europeans and can be utilised by aid donors.

Geopolitics may also be a consideration in Australia’s preference for Southern Africa rather than the poorer countries to the north. For example, geopolitics has shaped Europe’s patterns of aid to Africa, with virtually all the European

\[\text{Table 1: Selected development indicators for some African countries}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GNP per capita</th>
<th>IMR</th>
<th>literate</th>
<th>HDI</th>
<th>lowest 40 per cent</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2980</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>.649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>2790</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>.534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>.400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>.411</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>.364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
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<td>36.6</td>
<td>.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>.261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia (6)</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>.237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

1. 1993 US$, from UNDP (1996) Table 1.
4. Human Development Index, estimated by averaging life expectancy, educational attainment and GNP per capita, 1993, from UNDP (1996) Table 1.
5. Percentage of GNP shared by poorest 40 per cent of households, from UNDP (1996) Table 17.
6. Eritrea is a recipient of Australian aid, but UNDP (1996) gives a figure only for Ethiopia.
Union's aid going to North Africa and the Middle East. Britain continues to assist former Commonwealth countries, with a marked preference for Kenya which has a substantial white presence, a good infrastructure and a valued tourist industry (Schindlmayr, personal communication). Similarly, Australia is concentrating its development assistance to Africa in three countries which are on roughly the same latitude as Australia, only ten hours away by plane and our most important neighbours to the southwest. South Africa and Zimbabwe are former members of the British Commonwealth, and their white minorities control substantial assets. This is also true in Mozambique.

The majority of Africa's 50 or so nations have impoverished economies, daunting rates of population increase and small economic and social infrastructures. Political instability, harsh climatic conditions and intermittent famines also make them difficult places to deliver assistance - even for leading international NGOs such as World Vision, CARE and Freedom from Hunger, who devote most of their efforts to assisting Africa. Local infrastructures are often inadequate to distribute goods and services to the needy, and in some cases economic aid intended for the poor has lined the pockets of the rich. Such bad publicity, along with appalling media images of vast numbers suffering malnutrition, brutality and displacement from their homes, has contributed to a widespread Australian perception that aid to Africa must focus on crisis relief. Much less attention is paid to the equally pressing need for development assistance, which could make a very real contribution to poverty alleviation by helping to develop economic sustainability and to prevent crisis situations.

The 1984 Jackson Report on Australian aid recommended the termination of 'project aid' and 'country programs' for Africa, but the continuation of 'general aid instruments' including training, food aid, relief aid and support for multilateral agencies (Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence 1985:24). It was argued that existing Australian development projects in Africa were largely capital-intensive and few in number, and that their withdrawal would be unlikely to damage Australian commercial interests. It recommended the expansion of technical assistance in fields which Australia has particular expertise and the continuation of food aid, which provides an outlet for Australian farm produce (AIDAB 1990:6). It also recommended that additional funding should go to NGOs and Heads of Mission Discretionary Aid funds, which could be used for small-scale aid projects.

Support for small-scale projects

As pointed out in a discussion of the cancellation of the DIFF on the ABC radio programme Background Briefing (1 September 1996), the Australian public approves of, and even prefers to support, small-scale practical aid projects which visibly improve the lives of the poor rather than large-scale, capital-intensive projects. It is also likely that the Australian public would like to support at least as much small-scale development assistance as food and humanitarian aid. We can all see the sense in the old adage: give a man a fish and you will feed him for a day, but teach him how to fish (and give him a fishing rod and an unpolluted river to fish in) and he will feed himself for life. The benefits to individuals from a similar amount spent on small-scale projects in poorer African countries could possibly equal or even exceed that of expenditure on large projects in countries which have already achieved economic takeoff, while their popularity with the Australian public could be even greater.

Development assistance for small-scale aid projects in poorer countries is, however, much harder to deliver. Expansion of this type of aid generates a substantial administrative workload. Much more time and effort must be spent on designing, implementing and evaluating projects since there are more of them. Because of their administrative complexity, small-scale aid projects in the poorest African countries, as elsewhere, are more often undertaken by NGOs and multilateral agencies such as UNICEF.

It is difficult to derive a dollar figure for total Australian support for small-scale development projects in Africa because of the complexity of the various components of AusAID's budget. For example, as well as direct funding for multilateral agencies and NGO projects, there are some NGO projects funded from country programmes, and AusAID also recruits NGOs to manage some project components of bilateral aid. In Mozambique the Mopeia Water and Sanitation Project is implemented by World Vision, the Chicomo Rural Development Project is implemented by Community Aid Abroad and the Women's Livelihood Training in Beira and Manica is implemented by UNICEF. A similar strategy is used to implement small-scale projects in Eritrea.

The point to be made here, however, is that support for small-scale projects could readily be extended to other needy countries in the African region which currently receive either no Australian assistance or only food and humanitarian aid. The simplest approach would be to increase grants to NGOs which already have well-established networks in the target countries but tend to rely on private donations. Projects which provide seeds, tools and machinery to small-scale self-help farming projects, or provide equipment to dig and pump from deep wells and laying water pipes, can make a huge difference to the lives of the poor, especially to women and children who often bear the greatest burden in poor communities.

Training aid

Another effective form of aid for most needy countries which is relatively easy to administer is training aid. A recent meeting of the North South Roundtable held in Johannesburg concluded that although some African countries had made economic gains in recent decades, these were offset by political and economic crisis in others, and the continent as a whole was becoming increasingly marginalised at the global level. The meeting focused on three issues in particular: constraints of the world economic system which hampered
African economic integration, conflict within Africa and the need to implement gender equity policies (SID 1996). Education was identified as an essential component of strategies to address all three issues.

Three types of education are particularly important:

- general professional training;
- population and health education; and
- education in gender issues.

General professional training brings improvements in economic management and living standards. Population and health education bring improvements in general health and especially in maternal and child health by encouraging longer birth intervals and correct immunisation and childcare practices. Education in gender issues is needed not only to improve the lives of women, but also because contemporary gender relations in Africa encourage high fertility thus eroding the benefits of economic progress.

Australia is a leader in international education in these fields and has the capacity to offer education at all levels, from in-country training-of-trainers at the village level to the highest level tertiary education in Australia. Even if no other aid were given, training aid can still bring immense benefits to recipient countries. There is also the happy coincidence that training in Australia is not only a very effective form of aid but one which benefits the Australian economy (AIDAB 1990:7-8). A major component of student scholarships is tuition fees which are paid directly to Australian universities. The remainder is living allowances and international airfares, most of which is spent in Australia on rent, food and consumer goods and travel on Australian airlines. Offshore training using Australian expertise also brings benefits to Australia in the form of employment and increased earnings which, again, are likely to be spent in Australia.

In 1995 only seven per cent of a total of 6,752 AusAID-sponsored university students studying in Australia were from Africa, and training of all types for Africa as a whole totalled some A$17 million. Countries of origin included Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia, as well as the focus countries in the Horn and Southern Africa. The 1996-97 Budget indicates that scholarship programmes will continue in most of these countries, but will be phased out in Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, so that overall fewer African countries will benefit. There is also to be a review of Australian training aid in Africa, which is likely to strengthen the broader 1996-97 training strategy of emphasising in-country training. One outcome of such a review should be to increase small-scale local education schemes at various levels, such as literacy training for adult women, gender awareness and population education.

It must also be remembered that while in-country training is important and should certainly be increased, it is not the only type of training required. Increases in in-country training should be complemented by both long- and short-term training in Australia. Teachers and planners who study overseas gain not only formal learning but also exposure to different lifestyles and new ideas which can serve as a model for their work and objectives.

The cost of expanding small-scale projects and training aid to a wider range of African countries need not be great. Even if there were no absolute increase in the aid budget, it is not hard to think of other areas in the global aid programme which might be squeezed a little. A few well-thought-out small projects and a few training activities and scholarships in the poorer African countries would ensure that Australia would be seen both at home and abroad as making an effort to provide the most useful type of aid to the countries that need it most. It would allow these countries to benefit from contact with the Australian way of doing things, and at the same time ensure that Australia does not miss opportunities to export technology and expertise to a continent which has many environmental similarities to our own.

Dorward and Geddes (1996) suggest that Australian NGOs working in Africa earn kudos for Australia because they are generally more efficient, effective and responsive to local needs than the larger multilateral agencies. In Africa, they argue that 'Australian business has repeatedly failed to take advantage of opportunities afforded in terms of trade, developing infrastructural linkages to service areas and research, or even service provision within international aid programmes' (Dorward and Geddes 1996:7). If this is true and the reasons for providing aid to poor countries are not only a compassionate response to poverty but also enlightened self-interest and international solidarity (Kanaly 1996:3-4), the real question is not 'how much would the expansion of development assistance to Africa cost Australia', but 'what is the price of not doing it?'
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A new agenda for Australian aid

Russell Rollason, Greater Mekong International Development Support Services

The Jackson Report argued that Australian aid had three interlocking objectives: humanitarian, foreign policy or strategic interests and economic or commercial interests (Jackson Report 1984). A decade later, it is time to review these priorities and to set a new agenda for aid recognising that the world has changed in at least three major ways. Aid priorities must reflect this new international context.

Firstly, the demise of the cold war has ended the 1970s and 1980s use of aid to support ‘client states’ in the Third World. During this time, the political inclination of countries was once not only a major consideration for aid donors, but a motivating rationale to increase aid. The Eastern Bloc countries that were once aid donors are now aid recipients, increasing demands on aid resources at the very time aid levels are falling. Now more than ever, aid donors must maximise the development impact of scarce resources. Aid policy makers need to define a new rationale for aid and it must reflect the expressed expectations of the taxpaying constituency in donor countries.

Secondly, the globalisation of communications with the advent of satellite links, rapidly led to the globalisation of the world economy. So much so that around US$1.3 trillion moves through the international money markets each and every 24 hours, with more than 80 per cent of this mainly speculative money making a round trip in seven days (Kaul 1995). The flow dwarfs the US$50 billion total annual aid flows from all sources. According to the World Bank, private capital flows to developing countries have quadrupled to US$170 billion a year over the past five years. But foreign direct investment is no substitute for aid as it is highly selective with most going to China and a small handful of other growth centres in Asia and Latin America. Eight countries got two-thirds of all foreign investment going to the developing world in 1991-93; none of them was in sub-Saharan Africa (The Economist 1996). Whilst direct investment has boosted economic development in the newly industrialised developing countries, especially in Asia, there has been no investment boom for the poorest countries and the poorest people. Aid flows remain critical to eradicating poverty and aid must compliment, not compete with, investment flows. A coherent aid programme must target those areas ignored by investment funds.

The globalisation of the world economy has been matched by the globalisation of social problems such as the trade in illicit drugs and the growth of ‘sex tourism’. The global spread of HIV/AIDS not only threatens the lives of millions of people in the prime of life, but also threatens to undermine the development gains of past decades.

Thirdly, governments are not what they used to be and increasingly are unable or unwilling to deliver the services people want. In the West, the prevailing philosophy of governments is to withdraw from service delivery through the ‘privatisation’ of everything from public transport to hospitals to water supply. In many developing countries, governments have a declining capacity to deliver services to an often rapidly increasing urban populations and increasingly poor rural populations. As a result, aid donors are looking for more cost-effective channels to deliver assistance and NGOs have grown to become a key alternative channel. According to the OECD, the proportion of aid from member countries channelled through NGOs rose from 0.7 per cent in 1975 to 3.6 per cent in 1985, and at least 5 per cent in 1993-94, some US$2.3 billion in absolute terms.

AusAID’s 1995 Review of the Effectiveness of AusAID’s NGO Programs concluded that NGOs ‘had made an effective contribution towards AusAID’s goal of sustainable economic and social advancement of the peoples in developing countries’ (AusAID 1995). Australia’s aid programmes should continue to enhance the dialogue and cooperation with Australian NGOs and encourage stronger partnerships between Australian NGOs and NGOs in developing countries.

Aid donors have increasingly channelled ODA through NGOs in order to strengthen what is referred to as ‘civil society’; that is, the complex web of social welfare groups and community organisations that are essential to the effective functioning of democracy and participatory government. NGOs are important facilitators for enhancing community involvement in development, the promotion and protection of human rights and the promotion of ‘good governance’. The Australian government and Australian NGOs need an improved mechanism to increase the dialogue and cooperation in this important but somewhat neglected field of development.

New global agenda

The new global agenda for development assistance or aid has been largely set by the series of UN Conferences over the past five years beginning with the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio - the Earth Summit - which placed environmental and biodiversity protection at the top of the development agenda. It was followed by the Cairo Population Conference which underlined the importance of increasing funding for family planning and maternal and child health services to ensure that families around the world have the opportunity to space the births of their children and increase the chances for the survival of both mother and child. The Beijing Women’s Conference reminded us that the poor are mainly women, and that opportunities for women to participate must be increased if their needs are to be met and development is to be achieved.
The watershed in development thinking came at the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 when the international community accepted that the world now had the capacity to eradicate poverty rather than just reduce or alleviate the effects of poverty. But the task would be no easier than it was at the beginning of the First Development Decade in the 1960s.

Eradicating poverty

Australia's aid programme must reflect the concerns of the Australian people and respond to the needs of the current global context. Australian aid is a very limited resource. It cannot do everything but the Australian people expect it to target poverty. One national opinion poll, commissioned by Community Aid Abroad and undertaken by Irving Saulwick and Associates in 1992, found that 76.7 per cent of respondents felt that Australian aid should go to people who are most in need, even though there may not be any commercial benefit to Australia from giving the aid (Hewett 1996). This finding is reinforced by the 1994 Roy Morgan survey for AusAID where 85 per cent of respondents believed that poor countries should be a priority for the Australian aid programme, and a large majority believed that the motives for aid should put altruism above self-interest (Roy Morgan Research Centre 1994). Australia's aid should target priority social development needs and assist in the protection of the environment on which all life depends. Aid is a key resource available to governments to increase global equity and assist those nations and people who have not benefited by recent economic growth. The principle objective of aid should be to assist the eradication of poverty through sustainable human development.

Increase aid and target

International development assistance is, regrettably, declining. Australia's aid is no exception. Within the last five years, every one of the world's 21 richest countries has reaffirmed its commitment to the UN target for aid contributions of 0.7 per cent of GNP. But in 1994, eight out of 21 donors cut their aid and a further four only managed to maintain their GNP ratio (Randel and German 1996). Aid levels fell to 0.3 per cent of GNP in 1994, and the most recent figures from the OECD show aid has fallen further to 0.27 per cent of GNP in 1995, the lowest average ever. This trend must be reversed and Australia must honour commitments to achieve the UN target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. Meanwhile, faced with the reality of limited resources, aid must be carefully targeted to poverty eradication drawing from 50 years experience of what works.

Aid works best when it is targeted, and when the people it aims to benefit are involved in designing and implementing aid projects. Australian aid must have one clear objective - poverty eradication - and it must be delivered with the effective participation of beneficiaries so as to ensure social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Geographical focus

Australian aid will need to be focused geographically and should include the poorest neighbouring countries of Asia, the Pacific and Africa as well as focusing in the poorest regions/provinces of these countries. The countries of the Mekong region, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Yaman province of China, will have high priority as will the countries of South Asia and the Indian Ocean states of southern and eastern Africa, including Eritrea and Ethiopia. Long standing commitments to assist development in Papua New Guinea and Pacific Island states should continue to claim a share of Australia's aid, but higher priority must be given to natural resource management and environmental protection in the Pacific region.

Sectoral focus

The World Summit on Social Development, in adopting the 20/20 compact proposal, agreed to urge aid donors to direct 20 per cent of aid flows and developing countries to allocate 20 per cent of the national budget to priority social development programmes in basic education, health and water supply/sanitation sectors. Involving women is an essential priority for poverty eradication programmes as the majority of the world's poor are women and children. Assisting food production and agricultural development must also retain high priority in the aid programme.

Australia's world class technology in solar energy and experience in applying solar power in remote areas must be given higher priority in development assistance to the energy needy countries of Asia/Pacific and Africa. So too should Australian aid retain its commitment to agricultural research whilst increasing the emphasis on ensuring the application of the benefits of this research through extension and training. Matching development needs with Australian expertise or technology is a critical element in designing an effective aid programme.

The major shift in the sectoral focus of Australian aid should be away from the large infrastructure projects of the past, which should now be left to private investment and loan financing by the Development Banks, towards targeting the social development priorities in areas of greatest poverty and providing resources for human resource development and institutional capacity building in the government and non-government sectors. Such a sectoral shift will require a more labour intensive and participatory approach to development assistance, but the benefits are increased impact on poverty and improved sustainability.

United Nations agencies

All bureaucracies, including the UN and AusAID, may at times need to be pushed to change to meet the needs of the time. Global cooperation in a globalised world economy is essential and Australia must maintain its commitment to around 25 per cent of Australian aid flowing through UN
agencies and the Development Banks. It is no accident that the world's most powerful state has become one of the UN's most strident critics and the world's smallest states are amongst its most ardent supporters.

Australia must actively support the UN and the work of the UN specialised agencies. Many of the milestones in development, such as the eradication of smallpox, are a result of the coordinated efforts of countries through the UN.

Professional development assistance

Effective management of Australia's development assistance programme requires more than sound administration. Development assistance requires specialist knowledge and skills. Environmental impact and social impact assessments and gender analysis are essential elements of project appraisal, monitoring and evaluation. Development assistance officers need specialist skills and training and AusAID should be recognised as a specialist agency with specialised recruiting requirements.

Conclusion

As the Aid Review Committee begins drafting its report, there is another critical difference between the context of the Jackson Inquiry a decade ago and the context in which Mr. Simons must conduct his inquiry today. Both reviews are within the first year of a new government. But whereas the Jackson Inquiry was in the first year of a government which had come to power with a strong policy commitment to internationalism and to increasing aid, the Howard Government has come with a domestic economic focus and a commitment to cut aid. Its first Budget has provided regrettable evidence of this.

Perhaps the strongest challenge facing the Simons Committee is not only to clarify the role of aid and lay down the case for its defence, but also to argue for rebuilding public support for international cooperation and development assistance. The recent high-level meeting within the DAC of the OECD, which reviewed 50 years experience in providing aid and set forth priorities for the 21st century, found itself facing the same dilemmas as the Simons Committee. In adopting the DAC Report (DAC/OECD 1996), the DAC noted:

The international community needs to sustain and increase the volume of official development assistance in order to reverse the growing marginalisation of the poor and achieve progress toward realistic goals of human development. Domestic preoccupations in Member countries should not jeopardise the international development effort at this critical juncture ... Everyone is made less secure by the poverty and misery that exist in this world.

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Overseas aid: The scalpel and the suture

Dean Forbes, School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management,
Flinders University

Aid goals

The hierarchy of goals of Australian aid have generally constituted flimsy post hoc rationalisations. Though the emphasis has been on 'development' assistance, trade needs and strategic issues have played a major role in final decisions. This has, inevitably, had negative effects. It has created confusion in the minds of the public and many aid professionals about the purpose of Australian aid, and that confusion is bound to promote inefficiency. But more importantly, multiple aid goals have fostered a situation of moral ambiguity.

Consider the parallel situation of government spending on the needy in Australia. Government support payments for the local poor are not determined by the multiplier effects of welfare-recipient spending (important as this is to shopkeepers), nor should they just be targeted on the politically troublesome. The measurement and specification of need is both a technical and a political task. Likewise government support for regional development in Australia has, by and large, been motivated by goals of regional equity and not crude electoral pork-barrelling.

Overseas aid spending should similarly sharpen its focus and pursue a tighter set of goals. It needs to be driven by a single clearly articulated goal: improving the quality of life of people in poor countries (especially the poorest) through programmes of assistance geared towards sustainable economic and social development and the provision of short-term support in crisis situations (providing a strengthened safety net).

The recipients

Australian aid since the Jackson Report has focused on the Pacific and Southeast Asia, with more recent emphasis given to China, Southern Africa and India. The Coalition Government has maintained a focus on the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, China and Africa, and is phasing down aid to Thailand and South Asia.

Considering the limited funds available, the ending of aid programmes in fast developing Asian countries, such as Thailand and Malaysia, should be achieved more quickly than in the past. This would free resources to focus on countries of greater need. The number of countries in which Australia has sought to deliver substantial programmes of aid has been very large relative to the size of the programme. The fixed costs associated with effective aid make this an unnecessarily wasteful process. A reduction in the number of countries with official country programme status would therefore help to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

Determining which countries are more needy than others, or more worthy of support, has almost exclusively been based on perceptions of Australia's national interest. The use of an indicator-based matrix of measures of human (or economic) well-being has been avoided, presumably because it would undercut the political prerogative to pick and choose who receives aid support. It would also draw assistance inevitably towards South Asia and Africa, which contain the largest concentrations of the global poor. On balance it therefore remains appropriate to determine the country focus for Australian aid by taking account of need and ability to have an effective impact. Given that need far outweighs the capacity of Australia to deliver aid, programmes might be better given a finite existence, say of five years.

One of the consequences of global change is an increasingly borderless world. East and Southeast Asia in particular are dotted with examples of innovative cross-border economic arrangements, many of which are new but others have been built on social and economic patterns of long duration. A larger share of the aid budget could well be used to support regional development and poverty alleviation programmes.

Sectoral specialisation

Whilst the needs of each aid-recipient country might have a broad scope, greater efficiency will result from a degree of sectoral specialisation by the aid donor. For example, efforts to improve human resources should have very high priority as they are vital to sustainable development. This means support for primary and secondary education, training programmes (eg, trade skills) and healthcare, particularly primary health care.

The more difficult question is how to choose the sectoral concentrations. If this is left to recipient countries it will tend to reflect past experience of Australia's strengths, and thus minimise the opportunities for new and more effective aid. If determined by the aid deliverer it depends on which industry or political lobby is most effective.

A compromise might be to start by identifying sectors (or subsectors) in which Australian aid has been delivered with proven success, for which there is still demand and which could therefore form the basis of future aid. A parallel task would be to identify new subsectors for aid delivery in which, depending on the success of pilot programmes, capacity could be fostered. This would help produce a programme that was built around both tried and tested forms of assistance, for which there is still great demand, as well as supporting a cutting edge for new kinds of aid programmes.
Aid delivery

The management of the aid programme has borne the brunt of criticism for many years. In the aftermath of the Jackson Report there was a modest buildup of technical capacity, and an attempt to upgrade particular kinds of in-house skills. It was ambitiously labelled the professionalisation of aid management. However, a narrow focus on already outmoded analytical techniques, conservative risk-minimisation management strategies and the complex nature of aid administration meant this thrust was allowed to wind down and eventually disappear. Aid managers continued to specialise in administration and consultants provided any additional inputs. Despite the apparent desire for a lean and hungry aid agency, critics labelled AIDAB (now AusAID) a 'cumbersome bureaucracy' (Hill 1992:6).

The most suitable model of aid administration centres on a core of administrators located in Canberra, able to draw upon specialised expertise from whatever source is appropriate in Australia or beyond. It provides maximum flexibility while containing costs. Whether this requires more or fewer bureaucrats than at present is impossible to determine from the outside, though there are ardent advocates of both positions.

A greater sense of professional independence in aid delivery needs to be fostered. The pursuit of world best practice is not synonymous with standards and practices in the World Bank. Although it has accumulated considerable knowledge and expertise over the years, it has been an inward-looking and pampered body, prone to preaching and therefore not a good role model. Aid management in Australia could benefit and eventually disappear. Aid managers continued to specialise in administration and consultants provided any additional inputs. Despite the apparent desire for a lean and hungry aid agency, critics labelled AIDAB (now AusAID) a 'cumbersome bureaucracy' (Hill 1992:6).

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At the same time, the programme and its constituent parts needs to be regularly reviewed by independent reviewers. The accountability of aid spending to the public, which has a poor grasp of aid issues, needs to be reinforced. While there is a risk of review fatigue, neither Australian politicians nor aid managers can provide the continuous degree of supervision necessary to ensure proper use of what are, after all, significant quantities of public money.

NGOs have been well catered for in recent years and the AusAID-NGO Cooperation Program has received an increase in the 1996-97 Budget. There is an assumption that NGOs are the best means of targeting the poor, but this needs to be rigorously tested since NGOs are an increasingly heterogeneous lot and are not infallible. The strength of NGOs is that they effectively mobilise community resources in support of development aid, but there needs to be greater scrutiny of which NGOs are appropriate recipients of public money.

Finally, there remains scope for innovative arrangements for aid delivery. Third party partnerships between Australian and more developed Southeast Asian countries (such as Thailand and Malaysia) hold promise. As neighbouring countries acquire significant development capacity and specialised expertise it makes good sense for Australia to seek out overseas partners - government, private and NGOs - for third country activity. Combinations of aid practitioners judiciously chosen from Australia and, Asia for example, should be capable of providing a higher standard of development project than either group can achieve single-handedly.

Such an initiative is dependent on a more flexible policy for procuring project goods and services. Inevitably, the question of tied aid must once again be raised. Tied aid of the kind which has characterised Australia's aid programme is simply incompatible with the goals outlined above.

Conclusion

It is difficult to disagree with the argument that overseas aid has had a helpful, supportive role in the economic development that has characterised many countries, especially in Pacific Asia, during the last decade or two. The proposition that aid is necessarily the antithesis of development can be firmly discarded. Yet the blemishes and failings of aid programmes, including Australia's, are far from invisible. Having wielded the scalpel, it is now time for the suture. The challenge for Australia is to achieve a greater level of consistency in the quality of its aid, improve the impact on the world's needy and achieve it with fewer resources.

Acknowledgment: Cecile Cutler and Andrew Lyons-Reid made helpful comments on the first draft of this paper.

Endnotes

1. The DIFF, widely criticised as it swallowed more and more of the aid budget, was only enthusiastically embraced by those not expecting direct benefits from it once its abolition was announced. If there is a need for such a scheme, and there probably is, it needs to be considered in the context of the Government's forthcoming White Paper on Foreign Affairs and Trade Policy.

2. According to the budget papers the fundamental purpose of Australia's aid programme 'is to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living of their people through sustainable development and to assist in achieving a more secure and equitable international order' (AusAID 1996:1).

3. The poor knowledge which journalists have of aid was demonstrated during the recent turmoil over the decision to abolish the DIFF scheme.

References


A poverty focused aid programme*

Beris Gwynne, World Vision Australia

If we take as given that:

- there is continuing chronic poverty for a fifth of the world’s population (the more than one billion without access to clean water, sanitation or adequate food),

- there are widening gaps between rich and poor, and

- the heightened threats to global stability largely negate existing levels of assistance through mounting conflict, refugee movements and environmental impact (land degradation, contamination of water resources, deforestation and desertification),

- there is an urgent need to re-examine development objectives, motivations and programmes to facilitate greater and better targeted effort on the part of the international community,

the current review of Australia’s aid programme, the Simons Review, is a most timely initiative.

Issues

Further analysis is needed on the root causes of poverty, the role of economic growth - its benefits and dangers - and the need for safety nets to assist the most vulnerable while the benefits of economic development ‘trickle down’. ‘Consensus’ formulations need to be tested to ensure they reflect all perspectives, not just those of the donor communities or even national governments. The poor themselves need a voice.

For many years, the rationale for the Australian aid programme was explained in terms of a response to Australia’s humanitarian concerns and foreign policy and commercial interests. In recent years, not only in Australia but throughout the donor community, adverse economic conditions have led governments to give greater priority to short-term national interest at the expense of longer-term global objectives. We have been seduced into believing that because it was easier to defend a policy based largely on self-interest, we were ‘protecting the aid programme’.

This approach has been reinforced by a conviction that economic growth is the key to poverty alleviation. This conviction is derived from comparisons which do not bear close scrutiny. There is considerable evidence that market forces do not guarantee an equitable distribution of benefits and the social and environmental costs of rapid economic growth can be significant. At a time of increased humanitarian need, the preoccupation with ‘economics’ has placed even greater pressure on those parts of the aid programme which directly target poverty in people-focused development.

At the same time, we have consoled ourselves with the ‘reality’ that Australia’s reputation remained intact because we continued to hover around the average ratio of ODA to GNP for members of the OECD, an organisation described as the ‘touchstone’ for ‘good international citizenship’. Given our geographic proximity and strategic interest in our region (where the majority of the world’s poor live), one may question the wisdom of such complacency. Regrettably, as pointed out in the recent OECD/DAC’s recent review of Australia, our consolation is based on a comparison with the unweighted ODA/GNP ratio which is grossly distorted by the extremely poor performances of several of the largest contributors: the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom. Compared to the weighted ratio - which gives a more accurate picture of relative performance - the decline in Australia’s commitment to ODA has slipped more than all bar one.

In aid administration, economic rationalism and pressures for smaller government have favoured efficiency over effectiveness. In Australia, the impact of ‘efficiency dividends’ on a small and already relatively efficient aid agency has been particularly damaging. Highly motivated and skilled ‘development professionals’ have been transformed into ‘aid administrators’, and excellence is measured in terms of through-put, risk minimisation and commercial benefit for the donor. These conditions are not conducive to the advancement of poverty alleviation objectives within official aid programmes.

In recent times, managing the aid programme’s multiple objectives and often competing constituencies was described as trying to ride in a chariot with a dozen unruly horses. And it is true that the aid debate often degenerates into set piece presentations where views are sharply polarised, each side telling only a part of the story. Occasions where all parts of the constituency gather for discussion will be essential if we are to build consensus on what causes poverty, how Australian grant aid should be targeted to have maximum impact on its elimination, and to increase support for the programme among Australian taxpayers as well as encourage private and corporate contributions.

To call for more funds for overseas aid and an increased focus on poverty alleviation is not about idealism or ‘pie in the sky’ altruism. The importance of economic growth is not in dispute and the importance of knowledge or technology-based industries is self-evident. Few if any would suggest that efficiency and national interest (including commercial benefit) considerations are not important. We do, however, need to redefine our national interest in terms of longer-term global imperatives with regard to sustainable economic growth and protection of the earth’s environment, and our increasing
interdependence as nation states. Given that aid funds are such a small proportion of total flows directed to economic growth and development from private and governmental (including multilateral) sources, the Government's recent statement to the effect that the 'aid program needs to refocus on its fundamental purposes, namely to assist developing countries to help meet the basic needs of their people and to assist in achieving a more secure and equitable international order,' is welcome. Indeed, it was recently acknowledged that the most vital lesson learned has been that development cooperation is only a complement to the efforts of the people, the institutions and the governments of developing countries. There is a case for grant aid to be directed to those areas and sectors where private flows are manifestly deficient and not used in ways that exacerbate the widening gap.

Thus, as developing countries respond to the pressures of globalisation, activities that directly target poverty should be given higher priority within the Australian aid programme, helping to reduce vulnerability, building local capacity through appropriate technologies and promoting a fairer distribution of the benefits of economic growth in sustainable livelihoods.

How would such a programme look? The following are some examples.

Health

The WHO's 1996 report indicates that we are losing ground in a number of areas where earlier progress had been made. We would expect to see more resources allocated to primary health care, with greater emphasis on the delivery of maternal and child health services, immunisation programmes and nutrition.

The Alor Project in Indonesia is an excellent example of the way in which contractors, including NGOs like World Vision, are able to influence national government policy - in this case, in relation to immunisation. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is another area for increased activity with emphasis on prevention and community-based homecare.

While AusAID's increasing investment in health programmes are welcome, there is concern that such programmes tend to benefit those who are already advantaged. A higher proportion of funds disbursed in project expenditure is needed to benefit the largest possible numbers of poor.

Education

Of funds allocated to education, the greatest percentage goes to support tertiary students studying at Australian educational institutions. The effectiveness of such training in relation to broader poverty alleviation objectives is not always apparent, with some studies showing a low correlation between the declared objective (to assist the development of the countries concerned) and actual impact. This is not to argue against tertiary education, but is an appeal for such education to be better integrated in poverty alleviation programming.

A significantly greater contribution would be made - not only in support of economic development, but also in terms of participation and reduced vulnerability - by increased emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy and vocational extension programmes in-country.

Gender

Much has been written and said - indeed, Australia has international legal commitments - in relation to the elimination of discrimination. The 'feminisation' of poverty demands urgent attention. While there has been significant progress in promoting innovations in gender and development programmes, there is a need for more to be done. For example, there is a need to reduce vulnerability and improve the immediate circumstances of women and their children, while at the same time promoting participation and incorporating 'female' perspectives in decision making at all levels.

Food security

Collaboration between the relief and development and agricultural science constituencies shows great promise in terms of Australia's contribution to increased food security. This is a major factor in improving health and productive capacity in developing countries, and is clearly an area where Australia has considerable comparative advantage.

World Vision has recently seen an example of this in Rwanda where the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture were able to identify appropriate seed technology to assist recovery in Rwanda. Strategic use of food aid is another important vehicle, provided it is used in ways that assist survival and recovery at the community level, with accountability and effectiveness best guaranteed by using Australian contractors to deliver such assistance.

Environmental protection

In the Ansokia Valley, Ethiopia, what started as emergency relief in the mid-1980s has now transformed a whole valley, creating a microclimate that has substantially reduced vulnerability to drought and famine. In Nepal, an AusAID funded, community-based forestry programme has greatly reduced land degradation. Both of these projects showcase environmental management for sustainable livelihoods. An appropriately targeted 'green DIFF' would be another important element in addressing urban and rural environment problems in developing countries.

Microenterprise

The terms 'economic growth' and 'economic development' are widely used, but tend to be used in global or macro-economic contexts. A poverty-focused aid programme would place greater emphasis on microenterprise and micro-credit activities.
Participation

There is increasing recognition that good governance and sustainable development require higher levels of participation, and for many countries 'people' are the primary asset. Greater emphasis on people- or community-centred development would provide an opportunity to build awareness of political, economic and social rights, strengthen local institutions and assist value change, particularly in relation to gender and harmful traditional practices.

Conflict prevention

Greater emphasis on the above areas would make a significant contribution to dealing with the root causes of poverty and, thus, to the reduction of socioeconomic and political tensions that lead to conflict. At the same time, greater attention needs to be paid to reconstruction and rehabilitation elements of our emergency relief programmes. Resources in this area are under enormous pressure because of the increasing number of natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies in the less developed world.

Modalities

Australia's long-term national and global interests would be better served by increasing the size of the aid programme and, within this framework, by allocating a greater proportion of resources to programmes that directly target poverty. The engines of economic growth - that is, the commercially more attractive, economic development or trade promotion schemes - could be funded from other sources and not grant aid.

NGOs raise over A$100 million for community-based development programmes from the Australian public every year. This more than matches the government's contribution in this area. Although the contributions of other contractors are not measured, it could be argued that companies benefitting from the programme in profits, publicity and positioning should be asked to make a proportional commitment of shareholders funds in a similar fashion.

An aid programme based on the above priorities would lead to a significant shift in terms of geographic focus within developing countries (where the economic development focus results in a concentration of relatively advantaged regions and sectors), within our immediate region (to 'graduate' the more advanced economies), and with larger programmes in Africa (eg, an appropriately focused DIFF) and South Asia. To deliver such a programme, development practitioners face a number of very real challenges. A joint effort of aid administrators, private consultants, academics and NGOs will be required.

(i) Commitment: In the first instance, there is need for leadership and bipartisan support for development education to promote a better understanding of the issues; clarify the 'consensus' on what constitutes sustainable development, the role of economic growth and donor priorities; identify barriers to the eradication of poverty; and to re-examine the present mix of activities.

(ii) Funding: A clear commitment to reverse the decline in aid funding with a schedule of increases over an appropriate period of time is required.

(iii) Strategic alliances: More alliances between NGOs, private consultants, academics and scientists, with greater flexibility in programming and project design for people-focused, community-based development is necessary.

(iv) Quality control: The poor, Australian taxpayers and NGO supporters alike rightly demand full accountability in relation to efficiency and effectiveness. There is need for greater investment to increase the understanding of development issues and to provide evaluation that emphasises impact and not just inputs and outputs.

*This is an edited version of a paper presented at the Seminar on the Australian Aid Program, 31 July 1996, Parliament House, Canberra.
Balancing humanitarian needs and Australian interests: The need for a poverty focused philosophy for aid and development

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Australian governments over the past two decades have consistently explained their overseas aid programme as reflecting a combination of humanitarian concerns and Australia's own multiple interests. This position gathered strength with the Jackson Report of 1984, which now provides the framework for ODA. It began with the statement: 'aid is given primarily for humanitarian reasons to alleviate poverty ... and also complements (Australia's) strategic, economic and foreign policy interests' (Jackson Report 1984). Five years later the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Gareth Evans, believed that Australia's aid expenditure was 'both altruistic and in our own interests' (AIDAB 1991:22). In 1994 a review of Australian aid to Africa started from the premise that 'a future program should be based on an assessment of priorities in terms of both humanitarian needs and Australian interests' (AusAID 1995:5).

Australian governments' humanitarian concern for the reduction of global poverty has been recognised and shared by a large proportion of Australians who support overseas aid directed to this end. The philosophical underpinnings of such a programme have nonetheless rarely been spelled out in any detail. The notion of humanitarian assistance, certainly until very recently and notwithstanding the increased attention to poverty, has been linked primarily to disaster relief. In addition, as AusAID itself pointed out: 'neither the program objective nor the reasons we give aid - our humanitarian, commercial and foreign policy interests - provide direct guidance on the part the alleviation of poverty should play within the aid program' (AIDAB 1991:23). Priorities have never been set between humanitarian need and Australian interest. The Jackson Report took the view that the philosophy of aid went beyond poverty relief; as Philip Eldridge et al. (1986) observe, it spelled out the Committee's underlying philosophy of development more clearly than any philosophy of aid. The Jackson Report was, according to Higgott (1986), 'a product of a particular moment in development thinking on the one hand and thinking on Australia's perception of its global position on the other.' It followed World Bank thinking at a time when global recession had contributed, inter alia, to a retreat from the basic needs strategies of the 1970s, and the reassertion of a vigorous reliance on a growth model of development rooted in neo-classical economics and incorporating the dominant structural adjustment and stabilisation theories of the 1980s. The notion of development was characterised by growth, accumulation and wealth and by an underlying ideology of developmentalism - the latter reflecting the values and beliefs of the modernisation paradigm of the 1950s. The causes of poverty in poor countries were located within those countries rather than in their relationships with the rich, and the reduction of poverty was seen to depend on development and therefore growth. While the humanitarian obligation to reduce poverty was not denied it became in many respects a residual obligation.

The realities of global poverty have changed greatly since the Jackson Report. Poverty in the mid-1990s is deeper than ever before; the absolute number of people living in poverty is greater; and the gap between rich and poor has increased, between both states and people. Furthermore, the world is suffering from exponential population growth and pollution. Globalisation has fragmented the poor across the globe, as the destructive social consequences of structural adjustment have taken effect since the end of the cold war. Moreover, much of the Two Thirds World, particularly Africa, has been dislocated by increased internal war and disorder so that conflict resolution and peacemaking have become, in humanitarian terms, as much an obligation as is the reduction of poverty.

Australia's model of development, like that of most aid donors, has been extended and deepened in response to these changes and to incorporate questions of environmental degradation and sustainability, human rights, gender and justice. Growth has been broadened to include equity and poverty alleviation. Yet the underlying developmentalism continues to be reinforced by the resurgent neo-liberalism of the 1990s, giving preeminence to the individual; to the market, rather than the state; and to the virtues of competition in a liberalised, deregulated and privatised world. Such beliefs contain assumptions relating to the superiority and power of 'modern' technology and knowledge, and implicitly to the reduction of diversity in the global community. The philosophical underpinnings of development have thus remained much the same, as AusAID translates its humanitarian concern for the reduction of global poverty into policies which establish a balance between that concern and other (perceived) interests. AusAID has failed, however, to establish a clear basis or priority for poverty alleviation rather than its own interests.

Successive Australian governments since the end of the cold war have been generous in their commitment to international peacekeeping and disaster relief - exemplified by the Australian contribution in Cambodia, Somalia and Rwanda. In contrast, aid budgets have been reduced, and AusAID's approach to poverty alleviation as a central concern for aid policy has been described as ambivalent (Kilby 1996:53).

Aid policy is not determined in isolation and cannot be separated from domestic policy as a whole. AusAID has itself
maintained the position that 'Australia has interests in relationships with other countries broader than its interest in poverty reduction' and been challenged on many occasions for its choice of priorities (AIDAB 1991:23). Nevertheless, the more fundamental constraints upon its attempts to formulate an effective poverty alleviation strategy ultimately lie in the absence of a clear notion of what a poverty-focused aid policy would look like. This reflects philosophical underpinnings which bolster not a commitment to humanitarian relief, but a particular development model to which Australian governments have consistently subscribed.

Two elements of this model affect AusAID's understanding of, and approach to, poverty. The first has been the location of the causes of poverty within the Two Thirds World which obscures the extent to which the poor are poor because we are rich. The second is the continued belief in the preeminence of growth and the contemporary strategy of structural adjustment and economic reform in the development process. Both positions reflect a notion of poverty which ignores issues of power and powerlessness. They result from the basic misunderstanding of the causal relationship between globalisation and poverty and between poverty and the environment and sustainability. The preoccupation with growth has dictated an 'indirect' rather than 'direct' strategy of poverty alleviation assistance which has been criticised as being 'at the expense of poverty focused development cooperation which could really achieve improved living standards' (Barrett 1996:29). Finally, the commitment to orthodox structural adjustment and stabilisation as the basis of broader domestic policy has undoubtedly contributed to the ordering of priorities between humanitarian concern and Australian commercial interests.

The commercialisation of Australian aid since 1980 is evidence of the weak defence of humanitarian concerns (see Burch 1996). The steady growth of an aid-trade nexus since the creation of DIFF has seen the permeation of commercial criteria into the aid programme, and raises questions about Australia's commitment to poverty alleviation strategies. The Jackson Report argued - and successive Australian governments have maintained - that there is no conflict between the pursuit of Australia's commercial interests and a poverty alleviation focus. Others have concluded differently. Nevertheless and notwithstanding the 'greening' of DIFF after ACFOA's campaign in 1992, by the mid-1990s Australia's growing use of the aid programme to support trade and commercial interests in East and Southeast Asia seemed to have legitimised a set of priorities that clearly subordinated aid to trade.

It is in this context, if the perceived gap between rhetoric and reality is to be reduced, that the 'DIFF debate' of mid-1996 constitutes a significant turning point for the Australian aid programme. The debate was provoked by the Minister of Foreign Affairs' decision to abandon the DIFF programme in a budget that claimed, inter alia, to have a sharper humanitarian focus and which included a new policy on education and training, and increased attention to basic education and to women's health. The response from both business and NGOs highlighted the limitations of DIFF aid as a strategy for poverty alleviation, but it also introduced the notion of 'good' or 'bad' DIFF aid defined in relation to the reduction of poverty.

What is required is a new philosophy of aid, rooted in the realities of a globalised world. Ultimately the reduction of poverty requires a reassessment of the philosophy of development and the economic rationalism that dominates Australian macropolicy. This cannot be expected in the short-term and certainly not without a stronger political defence of a directly poverty-focused aid philosophy. What is required is something more than altruism. As a starting point this means expanding the narrow (and popular) technical definition of humanitarian aid to include not only refugees and relief, but poverty and poverty alleviation as well. Second, it means giving priority to human development and ordinary people. Third, because commerce can help the poor, it requires clearer guidelines as to when and where aid relates to trade. This means privileging an ethic derived from human rights over the ethics of the market place. Such a distinction also allows for alternatives to the present model of development.

References


October 1996
Increasing the poverty focus of Australian ODA*

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The 1996 review of Australia’s ODA programme will report to the Minister: 'on the overall priorities, objectives and focus of our aid program. Its overarching theme will be to examine how the aid program can best contribute to lasting poverty reduction while also serving Australia's interests.'

Has there ever been a time when a lasting reduction in poverty does not serve Australia's interests? This is a crucial question that challenges the notion that the ODA programme involves net costs to the Australian taxpayer. In fact, the ODA programme ought to be perceived as an 'investment' in Australia's own future. Lasting poverty reduction in the poorest countries is among the best of investments since it delivers a dividend of peace and goodwill. Furthermore and importantly, it is also good business.

Australia invests a paltry A$1.5 billion in ODA annually. Per head, this admits Australia into the 'cappuccino club' since this is all one could buy with what the government discerns that the Australian taxpayer can 'afford'. At such a meagre level of contribution, less than 0.3 per cent of GDP, it is all the more urgent that the ODA vote should be effectively targeted at lasting poverty alleviation. Relative to need, there is none to waste.

The Review Committee must walk a maze of competing claims on the aid budget. In the interests of effective targeting of lasting poverty alleviation, it is time that the programme was reorganised in ways that will harness these competing claims to ensure that the poverty focus of the programme is sharp and unequivocal. How might this be done?

Increasing competition

There are many beneficiaries from ODA expenditures. With one prominent exception, most of these beneficiaries have a mechanism by which they can pursue their own interests. The exception is the poor, who are meant to be the prime beneficiaries. Unless the operation of the ODA programme is organised in ways that will promote the interests of the poor, the other beneficiaries will quickly claim their share and leave little to 'trickle down'.

A simple but effective way to ensure that the poverty focus of the ODA programme is maximised is to devise criteria for the allocation of ODA which favour the poor and address the base causes of poverty. Competing interests would need to substantiate their claims on the budget by specifying the manner in which their proposed expenditures would contribute to 'lasting poverty reduction'.

It is tempting to believe that current practice within the AusAID 'family' - including agencies such as the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), NGOs and international financial institutions - already encourages competition for a share of the aid pie. But the reality is quite another matter: there is no consensus in AusAID as to how one might measure the 'impact' of competing projects, programmes or institutions on lasting poverty alleviation. This is evidence of the difficulty in achieving such a consensus. Yet the apparent difficulty of the task should not prevent AusAID from experimenting or supporting research to clarify the practicality of alternative criteria.

By default, the allocation of ODA across programmes and regions is not driven by criteria that promote the interests of the poor, but by the inertia that comes with the comfort zone of 'existing trends and priorities'. Consequently, change does not come easily, as we have witnessed with the debacle surrounding the scrapping of the DIFF programme, no matter how divorced that programme may have become from the goal of 'lasting poverty alleviation'. Let us hope that the Review Committee will have the courage to challenge AusAID to identify, specify and articulate a set of criteria directed at lasting poverty reduction, and to call for a programme of independent 'evaluations' that will ensure that the criteria are appropriately applied.

Competition goes hand in hand with specialisation. In the Australian ODA arena we have seen some specialisation emerge in the form of ACIAR and the International Development Program, but there must be room for more of the same in major programme areas other than agriculture and education. In the interest of greater competition and an enhanced focus on lasting poverty alleviation, the Review Committee might consider which other 'sectors' might benefit from a similar approach. Health is one sector that suggests itself, but are there others that can facilitate the contribution of Australians to the cause?

The convention is that ODA is government-to-government aid. As a result, the bias is to see ODA as promoting government priorities, not those of an efficient and competitive private sector. The Australian ODA programme has gone some way in redressing this bias through its 'private sector linkages' programme, but is this enough? The Review Committee ought to consider ways in which ODA can foster the interests of the poor through strengthening the efficiency of the markets and institutions that service them. Support for 'collaborative' research between indigenous and Australian policy researchers is a neglected but powerful way to access
information which can assess whether the interests of lasting poverty reduction being pursued can be used in an ever more transparent policy environment.

Long-run or short-run?

ODA officials like to think that all ODA eventually contributes to lasting poverty reduction. Let us hope that the Review Committee will reject this view and reveal it for what it is: an easy escape into the line of least resistance. It is this sort of thinking that has maintained the reality if not the rhetoric of 'trickle down' strategies of poverty alleviation. The legacy of such escapism has been the persistence of hard core poverty, aid fatigue and a subsidy to those in aid-receiving countries who would eschew change, oppose reform and reject the challenge of improving human rights observance in favour of the maintenance of the status quo.

The poor live in the present. Their plight demands more immediate attention than 'trickle down' strategies of development can deliver. The Review Committee might comment on how AusAID should ensure that the benefit of expenditures on the poor are more immediate than in the past. One step worth considering is the formal adoption of a 'poverty framework' which could be made part of the 'culture' of AusAID.

The urgency of the poor is not merely for greater access to more resources, but for ODA programmes which address the root causes of persistent poverty. ODA programmes of this sort would incorporate priorities which do not shy from challenging injustices, racial, ethnic or gender discrimination, or the pursuit of ethical concerns, even where these are in conflict with indigenous cultural norms foreign to Australians. In order to achieve these ends, the Review Committee might consider the need for an independent ODA Ethics Commission with powers to examine projects and cancel those that it finds violate Australian laws, ethical standards or conventions to which Australia has become a signatory.

Celebrate success

Finally, I would hope that the Review Committee pays some attention to the great incentive for 'good' aid that comes from significant recognition of success in the promotion of lasting poverty reduction. The assessment procedures for the award of such recognition could be made a part of the brief of the ODA Ethics Commission, but serious consideration should be given to ensuring that the award or awards created commemorate ideals that are unequivocally tied to the core goal of poverty reduction.

*This paper is dedicated to the memory of Bill Taylor, a friend and colleague, whose passing in late 1995 was a sad loss to the aid community. Bill was the founder of the Brisbane-based Foundation for Development Cooperation, a champion of the poor at home and abroad, and one of Australia's few true philanthropists. He was a self-made man of considerable means, who also succeeded as an international bureaucrat within the UN system. He was instrumental in the creation of the Caribbean Development Bank and long worked to make the private banking sector serve the interests of poor people more effectively. He too would have heralded reforms to AusAID and the operation of the ODA system in Australia that promote a greater commitment to lasting poverty reduction.
Globalisation, poverty eradication and aid

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The topic of poverty eradication is an important one, and is directly linked to the globalisation of capital markets, trade and investment. The domestic impacts of globalisation are made clear to Australians daily through public debates on what appears to be a decline in services and an ever widening gap between rich and poor. Likewise, it is also an international phenomenon: these trends are occurring throughout the world and in particular developing countries. It is the very poor people and very poor countries who are hit hardest by globalisation. Their incomes are falling from what is already a very low base, and they will find it much harder to reap the benefits of free trade and other aspects of globalisation.

This paper will look at the globalisation of capital markets, trade and investment in terms of its impact on developing countries, the decline of government, and the role of aid both in terms of volume and the effect it can have on the globalisation phenomenon. Finally, it makes recommendations for the Simons Review of the aid programme.

Globalisation

The globalisation of capital flows, information, trade and investment is presented as an inevitability and something which should be hurried along on the premise that all will benefit. At the recent G7 Summit in Lyon, the globalisation push was embraced by all except France which said there had to be greater safety nets. In national debates there is very little, if any, analysis of the negative impacts of globalisation and what it may mean for the equitable distribution of, and access to, resources.

In 1994 Robert Kaplan wrote of what he called 'The coming anarchy' (The Atlantic Monthly, February 1994) which elaborated on how nations were threatened by environmental and security crises brought about in part by the weakening of the nation state and rising inequity as a result of globalisation. The replacement of cold war ideology with the new world order may pose even greater risks to global security and the nation state itself.

The globalisation agenda is largely premised on a very simple assumption that growth can be equitable in and of itself. The evidence for this is mixed and the converse can also apply in many cases - rapid growth can lead to greater inequity. Despite a growth rate of more than ten per cent per annum, China, for example, is experiencing the greatest human movement in history as fifty to one hundred million people are on the move seeking work. Despite some initial benefits from opening up the economy both internally and internationally, reports suggest that imbalances have taken hold and are proving intractable. The Chinese themselves have reported that growth has compounded the situation and magnified the misallocation of resources thus impairing social stability.

The example most often cited on the benefits of growth and globalisation is the Asian Tigers, the rapid growth economies of East Asia. The World Bank and others have reported their success as a model for others to follow (eg, the World Bank report The Asian Miracle). Many commentators including the World Bank itself have ignored the caveat put on the East Asian cases: that they all adopted policies aimed at achieving equity, or what the World Bank calls the 'principles of shared growth'. According to the World Bank the main elements of these principles are universal education, equitable land holdings and land reform, support for small business through incentives, targeted housing and working with labour in a labour management cooperative model (it should be noted that often this was after the independent trade unions were crushed). These factors, which define shared growth and are part of the countries' equitable development policies, are frowned upon by neo-liberals as being state interventionist.

The World Bank itself is sceptical of many of these self-same principles, particularly the role of the state in setting development policy and plans.

If we understand that return on investment is a primary motive in globalisation and the free movement of capital, then private capital will not invest in the rural poor, subsistence farmers, women, indigenous peoples or remote areas with no infrastructure; nor can small governments under great pressure to attract investors with lower taxes and subsidies. The 'dry' economic rationalist answer is for these people to move to where growth is occuring. But in China, for example, this means encouraging even more people to be on the move, and this is not socially, politically or environmentally viable.

The decline in government

In Australia the size of government has systematically fallen since the early 1980s, regardless of which political party is in power. With this has come a change in the role of government away from direct service provision. This same pattern is being repeated worldwide and particularly in developing countries which borrow from the World Bank and, as a consequence, have their economies radically reformed. These structural adjustment programmes invariably mean the winding back of the state and its role in the economy. While there are clear inefficiencies and evidence of government involvement in things they should not be, there is also a sense, in the eyes of global policy makers, that people - and that usually means the poor - are getting a free ride. Like their governments, they too require fiscal discipline. This has resulted in user-fees for health and education services, and a consequent fall in their use. This
The argument used to counter the impact of the decline in aid and education services, and those most affected are the poor.

Aid flows

Both in terms of its volume and how it is used, aid plays an important part in this broader process. The average level of aid by the major donor countries as a proportion of their GNP has fallen in the last decade. In Australia the ratio of ODA to GNP has fallen consistently. In 1983 Australia’s ODA/GNP ratio was 0.51 as against a UN target of 0.7. In 1995-96 it was 0.33 and in 1996-97 is predicted to be 0.29. It is worth noting that the latest round of cuts are double the average cuts the Government is seeking from the Federal Budget.

Although the knife is being taken to the aid budget in Australia, it is a more general trend in OECD countries. Canada has cut its aid budget some 30 per cent over the past three years, and 40 per cent over the past seven years. Similarly, the United States is seeking cuts to its international aid commitments. Australia’s unwritten policy over the past decade has been to remain above the OECD average, but it seems that even with the substantial ten per cent cut to the aid programme it will still be above the DAC average.

At the multilateral level the story is even grimmer. The UN agencies are under siege with declines in funding, and there is talk of cutting some agencies completely - such as the ILO, UNIFEM and others - on the grounds that they are not serving broader development interests. The Australian Government has just cut its contributions to the UN substantially, with the most significant cuts to the UNDP and UNFPA.

The Development Banks themselves are moving away from direct poverty alleviation in their lending policy. The debt crisis has meant that nearly half of World Bank loans to very poor countries for poverty alleviation are being used for debt repayment and structural adjustment lending. There is less money available for direct poverty programmes to ameliorate the worst effects of structural adjustment and the debt burden.

This year there is an active push to have debts forgiven for the most indebted countries. After a year of negotiations this proposal has stalled, however, with the IMF preferring to increase the funds available for further loans to keep countries afloat. This would increase debt rather than reducing it, and tighten the bonds to the international financial system. Declining aid flows only exacerbate the situation of the very poor highly indebted countries.

The argument used to counter the impact of the decline in aid is that private flows are absorbing the slack. This is simply not true. While there are massive private flows, three-quarters of them go to as few as 12 countries: only six per cent to Africa where the bulk of the world’s poor are located, and only two per cent to the least developed countries (47 in number). Furthermore, in terms of promoting private investments, only 20 countries have sufficient credit ratings to attract the most common forms of investment. In other words the investment flows are grossly unequal and will only serve to widen the gap between rich and poor countries further. The development needs of Africa, South Asia and the Pacific will continue to grow as countries in these regions are left further behind in the international equity stakes. It could be argued that rather than the investment replacing aid flows, it has led to more unequal development.

The decline in aid and the purposes for which it is used not only reflect a new fiscal stringency among donors which is part of the broader issue of winding back government. It also reflects a new insular view and a less global approach to international issues. While globalised capital and information flows are encouraged, global governance and accountability are not.

The role of aid programmes and globalisation

There is considerable debate both internationally and within Australia on the role of aid and globalisation. On the one hand there is a view that the aid programme should be used to help countries in reforming their economies and become part of the inevitability of globalisation. In short, the aid programme should be used to push things along.

The former Labor Government in Australia took the view that the aid programme should be used to encourage developing countries to grow quickly, and that this growth would provide the space for those countries to pursue equity objectives while providing commercial opportunities for Australia. An analysis of the negative impacts of globalisation was absent, but there were clear hints that aid could be used as part of a carrot and stick approach to globalisation with aid favouring countries undergoing reform. This approach has re-emerged more recently with the Lyon Summit pushing rapid globalisation with equity issues taking an invisible back seat. Australia is taking a similar approach in its aid programme to the Pacific.

So far the new Coalition Government has not indicated how it will address the equity issue beyond its policy which states that the aid programme ‘needs to refocus on its fundamental purposes, namely to assist developing countries to help meet the basic needs of their people and to assist in achieving a more secure and equitable international order.’ Mr Downer, as Foreign Minister, has also made it clear that aid is not a subsidy to business nor a mere extension of foreign policy objectives. He noted in a speech to the Crawford Fund that globalisation is inevitable and that Australia ‘has responsibility to assist developing countries make that transition by helping them learn the rules of the new trading game.’ He then went on to say, however, that Australia has an obligation to help those who are vulnerable in the period of adjustment.

In his speech to ESCAP in Bangkok in May, Mr Downer recognised that there are sectors of the population disadvantaged by globalisation: women and the rural poor.
While not making a direct link to globalisation he does recognise that rural poverty - the most serious, widespread and intractable poverty issue - is a result of social, political and economic factors and 'that rural people are easily disenfranchised from the benefits of economic growth.' Mr Downer also recognises that solutions require more than technical fixes; that is, they require improving the equity of access to basic social and economic infrastructure.

It is most welcome that the aid policy has a direct equity objective but in practice it needs to be linked more explicitly to the analysis of globalisation. The Australian government is a signatory to the Social Summit which explicitly recognises that globalisation has brought about a 'rapid process of change and adjustment which have been accompanied by intensified poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.' Neither of these issues are acknowledged in our own foreign or domestic policy.

The forthcoming Simons Review has the issue of globalisation as one of its terms of reference, and must make the direct link between poverty and globalisation. If the aid programme is to have a direct poverty focus it should ensure that a policy framework is in place and that infrastructure services are available to encourage equitable growth and development as well as help to meet basic needs. Community Aid Abroad's own analysis, which is in line with NGOs in general, is that the aid programme must refocus on poverty alleviation. Poverty alleviation in this sense is not a welfare model which sees the privatisation of welfare as charity. It is understood within a more fundamental analysis of globalisation thus promoting a model of development that is broad-based and equitable.

Part of this process is to recognise that different sectors of society are affected differently and need a particular policy response. To some extent the Coalition Government interprets this as pandering to interest groups. This is a simplistic analysis of something which is more complex. Contrary to the 'economic rationalist' argument, societies cannot be homogenised. The fact is that women, indigenous peoples, peasant and subsistence societies, all have specific needs and are differentially affected by rapid change. The one thing they do have in common is that they are being disenfranchised.

The aid programme has an opportunity to address their needs in a way which they control and in a way which is not marginalising. The challenge is how Australia should respond to meeting these needs.

Australia does have a poverty impact measure of aid effectiveness. In the past AusAID has produced reports on the benefits of aid to Australian industry and has made some general statements of developmental effectiveness but little has been said on direct poverty impact. The geographic distribution still remains skewed away from poor countries and is getting worse. The low income countries of the world have seen their aid fall by seven per cent since 1990.

One reason that a basic needs focus is hard to achieve is that too often aid decisions are made jointly by donor and recipient country bureaucrats, with little or no reference to the people affected. Women, indigenous people, the rural poor and peasants are left out of the equation and, as a result, are disenfranchised. They are invisible to aid planners. If a genuine basic needs approach is to be realised then the direct participation in policy and programmes by affected communities is essential. The Australian aid programme has made some important policy shifts in terms of issues such as gender, population, environment and human rights, but changes on the ground have been slow. There has to be a more active move to 'mainstream' policies into development programmes.

Conclusion

The Simons Review has been given a big challenge in making recommendations to refocus the aid programme. At the same time, the Government is seeking to cut the programme. These cuts are a tragedy not only for people of the developing world but for Australia as a respected international citizen. In the context of a falling aid budget there will be inevitable pressures to ensure that business or political interests are preserved in the aid budget. The real danger is that it will be business as usual with a smaller cake. The Simons Review should resist these pressures and refocus the programme to what Mr Downer calls a basic needs approach. This means that rather than using aid to push the globalisation agenda, aid should be used to promote policies and practices which ensure that the benefits of growth are distributed, that people are not disenfranchised and that equity rather than uncontrolled growth are the driving forces of development.

* This is an edited version of an address given by Patrick Kilby at the joint ACFOA-ACTCOSS Conference on Poverty Eradication, 10 July 1996, Canberra.
In addressing 'the way forward' it is probably worth reminding ourselves why we have an aid programme. There are three simple reasons: because, despite substantial achievements, there remains immense poverty; because we have the resources; and because it is in our own interest to contribute towards a better world for our children to inherit.

As a nation, Australia ranks 18th in the world in GNP per capita. We are in the richest ten per cent of some 200 countries. We have our own poor, but we have the national capacity and resources for policies and programmes to deal with this issue. If we could not, how could we possibly expect others, far less wealthy than us, to do so?

There remain 1.3 billion absolutely poor people in the world, most of whom are women. Most of the world's poor (75 per cent) are in the Asia-Pacific region, although increasingly they are in Africa too (the continent where poverty is growing most rapidly). We live in an era of globalisation in which the rich/poor gap is widening dramatically. Over the past 30 years, the world's poorest 20 per cent of people have seen their share of global income fall from 2.3 to 1.4 per cent, while the share of the richest 20 per cent rose from 70 to 85 per cent of world income.

Eighty-nine countries, only three of which are developed countries, are actually worse off than they were ten years ago; 1.6 billion people are worse off than they were 15 years ago. Infant mortality is on the rise again in some countries. This is simply tragic in human terms. The 1980s debt crisis was called the 'lost decade' for development but shows no sign of ending: will the nineties be lost as well?

ODA is a humane, moral response to global inequity. This is the fundamental humanitarian rationale for aid. It has been restated in the Coalition's aid policy, but needs to be at the forefront of our minds when we think about 'the way ahead'. This is particularly so when we look back at the history of the aid programme as we set the forward course. In terms of the level of aid, we are starting from a history of decline in ODA/GNP ratio. Starting from here means we must take a different path from the one we have been on. This is particularly so given Australia's geographic location - virtually surrounded by developing country neighbours in a way most other donors are not.

Some 60 per cent of Australians think aid should remain at, or increase from, 1995 levels. There is community support, which certainly could be strengthened, but my concern is that there is not sufficient political support on either side. The way ahead requires bipartisan political leadership. Aid should be quarantined from cuts, should be on an agreed path of growth, and should be accepted as a national responsibility by all major political parties. In other words, aid should be taken out of the domestic wrangling over priorities and accepted as Australia's global responsibility in the budget context, with an agreed increase each year as a percentage until we reach 0.7 per cent GNP (which is both major parties' aspiration). Vice Chancellors and diesel-fuel rebate supporters can slog it out for the rest; that is, the 99.3 per cent of our national cake.

Aid to address global poverty is also very much in our enlightened self-interest. In Asia there are potential markets larger than any in Europe. Development is in Australia's long-term economic interest because it enables us to expand our exports. This is an economically virtuous circle; as developing countries gain more prosperity, so do we. It's an investment in our long-term economic security. We don't have to shape our aid programme to this end - it will happen anyway.

It is also in our interest to live in a more stable world, one in which dramatic gaps in wealth and poverty do not cause major political upheavals and instability. The New Security Agenda includes addressing the insecurity caused by social upheaval and disintegration, the expansion of the drug trade and international terrorism. Poverty breeds this type of threat. It is also in our self-interest that global problems of environmental degradation, population growth and population movements, as well as the transboundary spread of diseases are addressed by concerted global cooperation.

Aid is not only the moral thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. It is an investment in the kind of world we want to live in and we want our children to inherit.

The relationship between growth and human development

Australia's aid programme has historically been predicated on the assumption that aid which contributes to broad-based economic growth will benefit the poor. If benefits to the poor mean improvements in their quality of life in terms of access to income, education and good health - three relatively simple measures of well-being and ability to achieve ones' human potential - we know that the quality of that growth is critical.

The latest Human Development Report has made a careful analysis of the relationship between growth and human development. It makes clear that there is no automatic link; economic growth can take place without human development. A number of countries are cited which have achieved growth,
but the benefits of that growth have not flowed on in terms of investment in better quality of life for the people (eg, Pakistan). More importantly, the Report demonstrates that it is likely that such countries will not sustain these rates, simply because they have not invested in developing human capacity. On the other hand, countries which had slow growth in earlier decades, but which invested in human development (education, health and equity in terms of productive assets such as land and credit) have now achieved faster rates of growth and sustained them (eg, South Korea).

Further evidence of the importance of developing peoples' capacity comes from the World Bank, which is currently trialling a new way of measuring a country's wealth. Their valuation methodologies are still being refined, but their preliminary assessment for 192 countries reveals that:

- physical capital accounts for 16 per cent of national wealth;
- natural capital accounts for 20 per cent; and, more importantly,
- human capital accounts for 64 per cent of national wealth.

Investing in people is therefore an end in itself, while at the same time making economic sense in conventional terms.

Future directions

Development cooperation has a specific role. It must assist countries which are not attracting significant private investment as well as promoting equitable human development. Many countries, especially the severely indebted low-income and African countries, cannot attract private capital flows to stimulate growth. Three-quarters of all private investments in the last 25 years went to just ten countries, mostly in East and Southeast Asia and Latin America. Aid must prioritise countries with high levels of poverty and where private flows will not be available. This predominantly means South Asia and Africa, as well as pockets in other regions (eg, the former countries of Indochina, Papua New Guinea).

Development assistance should not be necessary for countries experiencing sound private flows, except perhaps as part of global efforts in a specific sector which would not attract private capital (eg, HIV/AIDS, environment). Limited technical cooperation to help develop policies or trial approaches to equity/human development issues, however, might be useful.

Development cooperation funds should always be targeted to sectors which will not attract private investment. Aid must help countries address equity and human development through the development of policies, institutional arrangements and programmes which will help eradicate poverty, reduce malnutrition and maternal and infant mortality, improve health and education and give people some control over productive resources. The recently agreed OECD/DAC goals are about precisely these objectives, and should be very strongly supported.

Furthermore, development cooperation should be seen as part of Australia's commitment to human rights, both civil and political and economic, social and cultural. The 'right to development', now accepted internationally, links these two types of rights and Australia's aid programme should demonstrably contribute to its attainment.

Coalition policy places great emphasis on human development and poverty reduction. It also strongly supports the promotion of human rights. The key is to translate that policy into practical programmes, building on some of AusAID's earlier initiatives in health, family planning and basic education. There is room for considerable expansion in all these areas.

Such a programme must also address environmental sustainability. Land and marine resources, and fresh water in particular must be used wisely, for example, at rates which can be renewed. Soil degradation, deforestation and overfishing are major threats to long-term food supply. Energy needs must be met in ways which do not conflict with global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Renewable resources must have a high priority.

A future programme must also recognise the relative roles of the state, market and civil society or community sector. Each has an important and complementary role to play. The role of aid should be to help governments set frameworks with adequate community participation to enable people to contribute effectively to, and benefit equitably from, social and economic development. Aid should help communities develop the self-help structures and organisations to make the most of local resources.

Finally, the way forward is to learn more about the effectiveness of what we are all doing. We need to rigorously evaluate not only the outputs or outcomes of our programmes, but their real impact on human development over the longer-term. Then we can move forward on the right track.

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Non government organisations and aid

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NGOs are fast becoming major actors in the field of Third World development. Their expansion during the 1980s and 1990s, in terms of numbers, size, official support and influence, has been dramatic. As northern countries wind down their official agency aid programmes, NGOs are increasingly used as a more cost-effective and arguably sustainable approach to assisting developing countries. According to The Wall Street Journal (1995:A1), governments are using NGOs as 'non profit subcontractors for jobs that either countries can no longer afford or don’t want to do.' Australian government support for NGOs has, however, lagged behind international trends that highlight the impressive growth of NGOs and point to their enormous potential to bring about authentic development (Hellinger et al. 1988).

The role that Australian NGOs have played in Third World development

Australian NGOs have been noticeably slow in evolving. Until the 1980s Australian NGOs had very little direct involvement in development projects in the Third World. Like NGOs in other regions, Australian NGOs have grown significantly in numbers, size and diversity since the 1970s. Now there are around 120 NGOs of various kinds actively involved in overseas aid development.

By the early 1980s Australian NGOs were becoming concerned with satisfying the 'basic needs' of the poor. A 1982 study, however, revealed that the allocation of aid by NGOs was more influenced by other factors and that NGO aid was more likely to benefit middle income groups (Quinn 1982). The 1984 government-sponsored Jackson Report's recommendation to increase funding to NGOs seemed, according to one review, 'likely to diffuse, without entirely disarming the major potential source of organised opposition to official policies' (Eldridge 1985:27). Dean Forbes (1985:235) saw the Jackson Report's 'perceived greater concern for Australia's political and strategic interests' and support for the 'trickle down' approach as incompatible with the traditional Australian NGO concern for 'aid for the poor'. Much of the criticism of Australian NGOs programmes in the early 1980s is still very relevant.

Some Australian NGOs have been openly critical of the government's foreign aid programme, although the majority have not challenged it. Increased AusAID funding to NGOs, from around A$10 million in 1982-83 to almost A$70 million in 1993-94 (a 100 per cent increase in real terms) and a promised figure of A$100 million in 1995-96, could be a good enough reason to remain silent on the issue of Australia's ODA programme (Remenyi et al. 1996:37). The A$70 million represented only six per cent of Australian ODA that went to NGOs in 1993-94 (AusAID 1995). In the US, in comparison, while foreign assistance is being slashed, the Clinton administration is using NGOs to 'privatise' foreign aid. Vice President Al Gore predicted that 40 per cent of foreign assistance will go to NGOs this year as opposed to 17 per cent in 1993 and 9.6 per cent in 1990 (The Wall Street Journal 1995:A1). The 1993-94 Australian government contribution was below the OECD average of around nine per cent (between 1990 and 1994), and that of many northern countries such as Canada (14 per cent in 1990-91) and Sweden (30 per cent in 1994) (AusAID 1995).

Other sources of funding, mainly fundraising at home, funds from international agencies and funds from other foreign sources remain more important to Australian NGOs than the ODA programme, which contributed 34 per cent of NGO funds in 1993-94. This remains a small percentage of NGO funds if we compare it to government contributions as a percentage of NGO funds in the US (66 percent), Canada (70 percent) and Sweden (85 percent). In an AusAID estimate, the average of the nine First World countries selected was about 50 per cent. The Australian government's contribution to NGO funds is also much less than government support for domestic community welfare organisations, which receive an average of 58 per cent of their funds from the government (Remenyi et al. 1996). Total expenditure by Australian NGOs on their overseas programmes has grown significantly from A$79 million in 1988 to A$211 million in 1993 (AusAID 1995).

A review carried out by AusAID on the effectiveness of NGO programmes found that 'NGO programs had made an effective contribution towards AusAID's goal of sustainable economic and social advancement of the peoples in developing countries' (AusAID 1995:i-iv). This was based on a survey of 216 projects, 26 of which had field assessment. Ninety per cent of these projects were rated as having satisfactorily achieved their objectives or better. Areas where performance could have been better were project sustainability, financial viability and the involvement of women in project planning and implementation.

The impact of NGOs

Recently, thousands of NGOs have become established in Africa, Asia, Latin America and parts of the former Soviet Union. About 200,000 grassroots organisations (GROs) have formed in developing countries to improve the living conditions in their own communities. More than 30,000 grassroots support organisations (GRSOs) work with GROs and channel financial support to them.

It was estimated that in 1985 some 2,200 northern NGOs worked with some 10,000 to 20,000 southern NGOs, which assisted
some 60 million people in Asia, 25 million in Latin America and 12 million in Africa (Hellinger et al. 1988). In 1994, up to 500 million people were estimated to be reached by Third World NGOs alone, close to ten per cent of the Third World population (Fisher 1994). NGOs have increased in number at least three times since the 1980s and probably increased their target population at least five times (Livermash 1992).

The contribution of northern NGOs to Third World development in 1984 was approximately US$4 billion, more than three times the contribution of the mid-1970s (Hellinger et al. 1988). In 1993, total NGO assistance to developing countries was estimated at US$9 billion, a larger contribution than all but the largest bilateral donors, and far more than 10 per cent of all development aid, public and private.

There are many examples of the influence of NGOs on national or regional communities. In Guinea, Tanzania, Kenya and Ghana more people are served by general health and family planning-oriented NGOs than by comparable government services. Probably the most famous example of a credit-based NGO is the Grameen Bank, which provides small-scale loans to between one to two million of the poorest in Bangladesh, nearly all women, and has succeeded in lifting their incomes by 50 per cent or more with a repayment rate of nearly 100 per cent. Mohammed Yunus, who founded the Grameen Bank in 1976 has successfully challenged some of the most basic paradigms in Third World development. The Bank has been able to demonstrate substantial benefits for the poorest, thus contradicting a number of studies concerning NGOs. It has also shown that money can be better spent on women than on men, and that funds are better channelled through NGOs than through state bureaucracies.

A comparative advantage in relief and emergency aid

NGOs and government relief agencies have built up an impressive record during times of emergency - often without self-interest - as attested by American aid to relieve the famine in Communist Ethiopia and disaster in Soviet Armenia in the 1980s (Eberstadt 1990). However, food aid is an option that offers neither dignity nor real salvation. Many poor people can die awaiting food relief. Food aid can also have associated problems and be difficult to handle. It has often been 'expropriated' or stolen by local authorities and does not reach the poor. Relief work that is not backed up by substantial development activity creates a dependency within the target community and often wastes resources.

Curative medicine and food aid are expensive, involve widespread human suffering and are often too late. A preventive approach, represented by preventive medicine or grassroots development, is economical, can avoid suffering and has a promising future for indigenous communities. In El Salvador, where NGOs deliver low-cost preventive healthcare in a USAID-sponsored project, infant deaths were down sharply to 26 per thousand in 1994 compared to 44 per thousand in overall rural El Salvador (Guardian Weekly 1996). There has been a general trend since 1945 for NGOs to shift away from relief activities towards development.

More efficient at grassroots development

Even leaders of northern governments and multilateral agencies recognise that NGOs may be more efficient at helping the poor and disadvantaged. Brian Walker, Director General of Oxfam from 1974 to 1983, correctly points out that 'people will use their own energies and creative powers only if they are fully consulted and participate directly in designing and implementing their own development' (Walker 1986:38).

Local NGOs are more adaptable to local circumstances than government outreach programmes, have links to alternative sources of funding, can form complex and expansive networks and are able to promote and ensure institutional sustainability. The last advantage is a result of giving the poor a vested economic interest in organisations at the community level. Furthermore, they are in a better position to present information on the social realities of the poor and the influence of aid programmes to the public of donor nations, officials of First World NGOs and policy makers in donor countries. Additional advantages these organisations possess are their ability to ascertain local needs and priorities; provide members with enhanced negotiating and financial powers than they would possess as individuals; determine appropriate technology for a given environment; design programmes according to availability of local resources; and organise and strengthen local groups (Livermash 1992; Hellinger et al. 1988). Unfortunately, the term 'grassroots participation' can often be more rhetoric than reality. A study of 75 NGO projects (Livermash 1992) revealed that what was often called 'grassroots participation' was decision making dominated by the NGO staff and local elites.

Should NGOs associate with government or multilateral organisations?

Stephen Hellinger and associates have launched into a lengthy attack on the impact of government and multilateral organisations, particularly USAID, on indigenous people and NGOs. By 1988 USAID had still not recognised popular organisations as key protagonists in development circles. NGOs which associated with USAID, beginning in the 1970s, lost much independence and often became less accountable to the poor. A dependence on limited project grants also makes long-term planning unlikely.

Walker (1986), a proponent of grassroots development, thoroughly commends the work in Africa of USAID, various UN agencies and various NGOs from the First World. Walker, however, does not doubt that Africa's poor development record has a lot to do with development policies adopted by large bilateral and multilateral agencies, which were readily supported by governments. Apart from inappropriate technology, aid on a large scale has been politically-oriented, without an emphasis on self-help, lacking a regard for people's needs or their opinions, and insensitive to the environment and community resources thereby leaving projects.
unsustainable after the departure of aid. Large-scale aid projects have also made communities vulnerable to fluctuations of international markets by directly or indirectly promoting a cash crop economy, and its accompanying lower prices for food have discouraged farmers.

NGOs that collaborate with governments can compromise their freedom in decision making and can become dependent on government funds. GRSOs concerned with the issue of accountability to northern agencies may avoid sensitive issues and stick to basic needs. New collaborative projects with governments sponsored by multilateral institutions may, however, reduce the risk of NGOs being coopted. Governments, in turn, would be influenced by NGO perspectives, and links between both parties - especially in health and family planning - are proving mutually beneficial.

Aid that benefits the donor nation substantially, and the recipient marginally, is not by any means an act of humanity and can often be detrimental to equitable development. If the appropriate institutions or NGOs cannot be funded without having their freedoms limited, the poor will be better off with no aid at all. Overfunding and excessive control on the part of northern NGOs can leave once effective indigenous NGOs as extensions of northern NGOs, and out of touch with the local reality.

Small-scale, community-led development can be better planned and implemented by small local NGOs. In some cases size may increase the likelihood that a NGO will become corrupt, bureaucratic, dependent on outside funds, coopted by the government or too sophisticated and distant to adequately represent the interests of the poor or maintain their trust. In the Harambee (self-help) Movement in Kenya, the move towards larger and more costly social amenity projects led to 'disempowerment at the grassroots level' (Ngau 1987). While service NGOs, which are usually larger, have been effective at reaching poor people with some assets (the middle poor), they are less effective at reaching very poor people who have few or no assets. Grassroots participation, especially by women, in these service NGOs may be limited.

Official funding of NGOs in Australia

The government's overall goal for the development cooperation programme is: 'to promote sustainable economic and social advancement of the peoples of developing countries in response to Australia's humanitarian concerns, as well as Australia's foreign policy and commercial interests' (AusAID 1995:31). Yet many studies have shown sustainable economic and social advancement, not to mention humanitarian concerns, to be incompatible with the political and commercial interests of governments. Australians need to decide whether they are involved in overseas development for these 'interests' or, in the words of former Minister Gordon Bilney, they 'are committed to helping those who are in need and are less fortunate themselves' (Department of Development Cooperation and Pacific Island Affairs 1995:v).

In addition to a general increase in financial support for NGOs, there are at least two other major improvements which can be implemented. Firstly, food aid and emergency activities represented 47 per cent of total expenditures of 2,284 projects under review and supported by AusAID (AusAID 1995). This percentage should be reduced and more emphasis placed on sustainable development. Secondly, the direct funding of indigenous grassroots NGOs should be drastically increased. In 1994-95 the expected official aid to NGOs represented 6.6 per cent of total Australian ODA. The percentage given to non Australian NGOs represented 0.52 per cent. Local NGOs in developing countries would have directly received about 0.3 per cent.

The appropriate development model for AusAID funding is ideally suited to grassroots NGOs. Development needs to take traditional technologies into account, be respectful of local traditions and wisdom and be based on local economies. It should recognise the important role that women can play, offer incentives to the poor and move at a pace which is acceptable to the poor. Local objectives which represent the interest of the poor can be planned in consultation with the poor, and maintained through participatory development practice.

References

Marginalising the poor

As the 1996 Human Development Report (UNDP 1996) underlines, global integration and uneven patterns of growth result in an ever widening gap between rich and poor. The Report recalls that the gap in income ratio between the richest 20 per cent and the poorest 20 per cent of the world population has doubled from 30:1 in 1960 to 61:1 by 1991. The wealth of the world’s 358 billionaires exceeds the income of the poorest countries, home to 45 per cent of the world’s population. There are a variety of underlying factors which prevent people from participating in the market: structural hindrances, cultural values, physical handicaps or lack of knowledge. An underclass of individuals, communities and nations who fall further and further behind is emerging and could get worse without appropriate interventions.

The disparity between rich and poor takes place within and among nations. As the Report highlights, large numbers of people find themselves marginalised from the global economy even if modest progress is made by their own economy. There is a fear that this will be the case for much of Africa, but also for some parts of Latin America and Asia.

These global trends contribute to increasing low level conflicts, sometimes breaking out into major emergencies such as in Rwanda, Liberia and the former Yugoslavia, and also to the increasing movement of people within and between nations, as displaced persons and as refugees. Urbanisation, which continues unabated, is a further consequence of growth differentials within countries, particularly in the developing world.

The weakening control of governments over national economies limits the ability to exercise control, especially with the current emphasis on smaller government. It is in this context that levels of foreign aid are under question in the OECD member states with smaller government outlays. Australian experience confirms that as economic growth occurs, we become ‘meaner’ as a nation. This trend was confirmed in the recent cuts to the 1996-97 ODA budget, as part of the commitment to downsize government and eliminate the deficit.

The financial flows between nations mirror the increasing relative importance of private sector economic activity within nations. The World Bank points out that in 1995 private direct investment in developing countries reached a level of US$170 billion, far exceeding the US$59.8 billion ODA flows. Whilst increased investment flows may be judged as a positive transfer, the pattern of investment tends to follow economic growth. Those developing countries with high rates of economic growth attract increased private investment, further confirming the marginalisation of the least developed countries and contributing to an ever widening gap between rich and poor.

Declining ODA

The OECD reports that 1995 ODA levels represented a 9.3 per cent decline in ODA, a continuing trend of recent years. Levels of ODA reached the lowest level for 20 years in real terms. These cuts have been made at the same time as the international donor community in international fora has renewed the 1970 commitment (at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Development) to give 0.7 per cent of GNP to ODA. This has been a long held bipartisan commitment in Australia that has gone unfulfilled. The target of 0.7 per cent of GNP remains the touchstone of international commitment to the poorest people, but whilst these trends continue the commitment remains one without substance.

It is difficult to ignore the continuing policy commitment of the major political parties to achieve 0.7 per cent GNP as ODA, reiterated in the recent election campaign. Reductions in ODA by the Australian Government give wrong signals to the countries in our region, as was indicated in the reactions to cuts to the DIFF announced in recent months.

Reduced ODA by the Australian Government will counter closer integration with Asia. Australia is uniquely located amongst aid donors, surrounded by nations with developing country status. Our nearest neighbours - Papua New Guinea and Indonesia - are our largest aid recipients. Geographic location and the relationships with those countries and their people cannot be ignored in determining appropriate levels of development assistance and the wider development cooperation programme. In addition, forward estimates released in 1996-97 Budget Paper No.1 show a continuing decline forecast in ODA, even at a time when the budget is expected to be in surplus. A willingness to help those most vulnerable will be interpreted positively in the region and can only assist aspirations for integration in Asia. A commitment to increase the level of ODA will be one way to give assurance. In addition, a growing aid budget will promote flexibility and encourage innovation and a sharper focus on poverty eradication.

The role of aid

What is the place of development aid in the contemporary economic milieu? IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus, speaking to the International Council of Free Trade Unions in Brussels on 26 June, made some relevant
comments in facing the challenges of globalisation. The IMF’s objective, Camdessus said, ‘is to reduce unemployment and poverty and in so doing minimise the risks of globalisation and maximise its positive potential.’ He confirmed that the negative effects of globalisation include the ‘twin evils of exclusion for individuals and marginalisation for countries.’

Camdessus went on to underline the IMF’s general response to global problems - the growing gap between rich and poor, the risks to the environment, cultural difference, corruption and criminality. The IMF’s response, he said, ‘has not been to give the exclusive and final word to the markets. To Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” must be added a second and not so invisible hand - that of justice guaranteed by the state.’ Finally, Camdessus said, ‘there is a third hand - the hand of social solidarity. This hand has a national dimension ... and an international dimension - through monetary cooperation, development aid and aid to countries in transition to market systems.’

The decline in foreign aid in OECD countries is contrary to public opinion, including that of Australian citizens. The reality of aid (Randel and German 1996) reports that surveys within OECD populations favour the level of aid being maintained or increased. The finding of a recent ACFOA survey showed the same results: 58 per cent of respondents felt that aid should be increased or at least maintained at the same levels. The wealthiest countries recognise the responsibility to assist the most vulnerable in today’s world.

Whilst the Australian Government’s commitment to overseas aid dwindles, the commitment of their political constituents does not. Since 1988 contributions from private donors have increased from A$89 million to A$165 million in 1995, an average yearly increase of 9.8 per cent. This significant support for the programme needs to be encouraged through the provision of information about Australia’s programme as well as support for development education in the formal sector and in the wider community. International experience confirms that community support and understanding is indispensable to an effective and contemporary development cooperation programme. Those countries which have reached and maintain this commitment to ODA levels of 0.7 per cent and beyond provide significant resources to information and education programmes. Community education of this kind will contribute also to the task of building understanding within the Australian community of the people and nations of our region with whose future we are inextricably bound.

Globalisation and global action

In response to the process of globalisation and in the space provided by the end of the cold war during the 1990s, the international community has worked to establish standards and plans of action to address some of the global challenges. This international process has been both a product of the process of integration and a reflection of the coming together of the human community through travel, communications and technology.

Global action is also a response to global challenges. Some of these include: environmental degradation across the economic divide of North and South which threatens the livelihood and survival of many people of this and future generations; the increased burden of indebtedness of the poorest nations; the increase in conflicts and emergencies and a growing involvement of people in the search for food, security, water and work; and the challenge of transmissible diseases such as HIV/AIDS which are of pandemic proportions.

It is in the face of these challenges and opportunities that the Decade of Summits and Global Conferences, under the auspices of the United Nations, took place in the 1990s. The range of commitments made, and the values they expressed, reflected a commitment to global solidarity (note Our global neighbourhood, the Report of the Commission on Global Governance chaired by Sir Shidath Ramphal and Ingvar Carlsson). Collectively these commitments give a framework for global action, but also a basis for action by national and local governments as well as regional institutions to protect the global commons and enhance human community.

The World Summit for Children in 1990 was the first in a series of international meetings which set benchmarks for policies and programmes to achieve ecologically and socially sustainable development. The targets set in 1990 have been reinforced and elaborated in subsequent international conferences. The achievement of those goals will be a significant contribution to the reduction of those living in poverty by the year 2000. These goals are also an indicator of progress towards the fulfilment of children’s rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Australia played a significant role in these international meetings and continues to have a responsibility to not only translate those commitments into action in Australia, but also in other places by supporting capacity building and initiatives to implement action plans. Aid can be applied to the protection of those who are vulnerable or marginalised by the processes described earlier.

Australia was one of the signatories to the Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development. A number of commitments were made in that Declaration which could fashion the future development cooperation programme. A commitment to the eradication of poverty by ‘decisive national actions and international cooperation is an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind.’ Australia’s aid programme must be an ongoing response to that imperative.

Following the commitments made in Copenhagen, the Australian Government was a party to the Thirty-Fourth High Level Committee Meeting of the Development Assistance Committee (6-7 May 1996) which, inter alia, identified ‘ambitious but realistic goals’ on which Australia’s efforts in cooperation with donors and actors would be judged in partnership with the principal actors: the people and...
governments of the developing countries themselves. Commitments were made to the following.

1. **Economic well-being:**
   - A reduction by one-half in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

2. **Social development:**
   - Universal primary education in all countries by 2015;
   - Genuine progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005;
   - A reduction by two-thirds of the mortality rates for infants and children under age five and a reduction by three-fourths in maternal mortality, all by 2015; and
   - Access through the primary health care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible and no later than the year 2015.

3. **Environmental sustainability and regeneration:**
   - The current implementation of national strategies for sustainable development in all countries by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015.

**Meeting the commitments**

If these results are to be achieved, priorities for Australia's ODA are clearly indicated. By the achievement of the 20:20 compact in bilateral programmes by the allocation of, on average, 20 per cent of ODA and 20 per cent of national budgets - to basic social programmes in health, education, water supply and sanitation, especially for women and girls - the outcomes can be delivered. The eradication of poverty by those target dates will benefit from development cooperation programmes targeted to those most in need.

The World Bank and IMF Debt Initiative currently under serious consideration would provide significant relief to those countries burdened by massive debts, the servicing of which drains resources and results in negative financial flows. The removal of this burden would have a greater impact on the eradication of poverty than aid flows can guarantee. Australian support for this initiative will be an essential component of Australia's response to the context described. It would free ODA for human development in the poorest countries.

The amount of ODA available for long-term development assistance is also limited by the response to internal conflicts in the context of complex human emergencies which are a feature of the post cold war era. Whilst contributions to UN peacekeeping forces are not ODA, they are a drain on the resources available for international programmes, including ODA. Australia must play its role in these circumstances. The prevention of conflict is preferable to the cost of peacekeeping. Early warning systems can be helpful in identifying the timeliness of conflict prevention interventions. The recent contribution by the Australian Government to the Organisation of African Unity's Peace Fund and to other regional efforts is appropriate initiatives to be encouraged. Regional initiatives are likely to be more successful and will help prevent escalation. Relatively small investments in such operations guarantee a greater return as the funds join with the gifts of others to support indigenous initiatives of that kind.

As mentioned earlier, ODA is but one piece of a comprehensive and effective development cooperation programme. In the late twentieth century, it has been observed that official resource flows are but one component of the total financial flows to the developing world. Bilateral and multilateral institutions' funds are complemented by the flows of private capital and the resources through NGOs. The future programme will reflect the complementary roles of all stakeholders in this process.

Recognition by major official agencies of the role of indigenous and international NGOs in shaping an effective programme has been welcome. The cooperation between different stakeholders continues to evolve and appropriate avenues for cooperation should be recognised in that process.

In the twilight years of the twentieth century enormous challenges remain for the international community. Whilst much has been achieved over the past 30 years through ODA, specific challenges remain. At a time when funds for aid are declining, effective use of funds to support those most in need is vital. In determining priorities, policy makers must read the context carefully and in the process recognise the important hand of social solidarity which the IMF's Camdessus identified as a significant element of the mix required to meet the many challenges faced within and between nations.

**References**

The role of civil society in development

John Scott Murphy, Caritas Australia

If economic growth is the great engine of wealth creation, the state has a role in ensuring that goods and services are fairly distributed, and that all people have access to the opportunities which help them create their own place in the economy. The state must provide protection for all and an orderly system of laws and justice. Civil society is crucial because the state can be easily dominated by individuals or elite groups. It can become oppressive, unstable, and even destructive or an end in itself. It is no accident that the organisations of civil society, particularly trade unions, are often the first to be attacked by dictatorships.

An international consensus has arrived, largely through the United Nations, whereby certain standards of behaviour for state authorities, in relation to their own citizens, are recognised. Human rights standards are now part of public international law. While they may not be strictly enforceable, as national laws are, they have a strong social and political presence in all countries. Human rights have been created by the organisations of civil society to ensure protection for each person as well as to develop standards such as access to education and health facilities, freedom of association and speech and the right to maintain cultures and languages. Increasingly important is the international consensus on democracy.

Working with civil society

Australian NGOs generally work with partner organisations that are part of civil society. They generally do not work with governments, and the reasons for this are important.

Civil society, in this paper, comprises all organisations which enable ordinary people to participate in, and approach, the activities and duties of the state. It has become common to divide society into three 'spheres': the state, the market and civil society. The civil society organisations with whom most development agencies in Northern countries work usually go by the general term of NGOs.

It is the state which sets the parameters for economic growth and well-being, provides essential schooling, healthcare, public infrastructure, physical protection and regulation of individual and group activities with the objective of attaining a common good. In developing countries we find the state underdeveloped in comparison with the industrialised countries. It is either entirely absent (eg, in Somalia) or weak (eg, in Bangladesh or Cambodia). In some cases it is dominated by the military (eg, Burma) or by a single political party (eg, China). We often find, however, that the state is much more powerful than civil society.

The following are some common attributes of organisations of civil society:

- they do not exist for financial profit or gain;
- they are organised independently of the state;
- they are organised along broadly democratic lines;
- they usually have some relationship with the state; and
- they have a constituency rooted in the needs and aspirations of ordinary people.

NGOs working in developing countries recognise the importance of an effective and well-organised civil society to the well-being of all citizens. When we work to develop the capacities of our partner NGOs we are ensuring long-term benefits which will create a stable and productive society. Whether the organisation establishes a childcare cooperative or a human rights group, as long as it leads to the empowerment of the people concerned and increases their ability to participate in their society, the essential elements of building civil society have been accomplished.

‘Development’ is highly dependent on civil society for the absence of effective state structures NGOs must undertake that work directly. They must also ensure that the state does not become captured by special interest groups (eg, military) or elites. It is a dynamic relationship.

Government aid programmes rarely work with civil society directly because, as an arm of the donor state, they relate primarily to their state counterparts in recipient countries. While AusAID has some funding mechanisms for NGOs in developing countries, these are insignificant in the overall picture. The total AusAID funding directed through all NGOs (Australian and overseas) for work which enhances civil society is not easily quantifiable. If we take out emergency assistance, refugees and volunteer programmes from official statistics we find a very low level of AusAID expenditure directed to NGO development work - approximately five per cent. This figure will undoubtedly include local infrastructure and some humanitarian relief undertaken by national NGOs.

We can safely conclude that civil society enhancement receives less than five per cent of AusAID funds.

The Budget Papers for 1995-96, in a sectoral breakdown, show only 1.6 per cent devoted to 'government and civil society'. This is a serious deficiency. It is not an exaggeration to describe AusAID's attitude toward NGOs as something less than admiration - either due to their small size, disorganisation or rhetoric. Yet it should also be recognised that NGOs have paved the way on important issues such as the environment, women and development and human rights.
These issues have reluctantly been adopted by AusAID over the last ten years only after constant badgering by NGOs.

By continually supporting state organisations and failing to support NGOs AusAID contributes to the societal imbalance which occurs in most developing countries. For reasons given above, state organisations need civil society so that ordinary people can have access to the activities of the state, make their views known and have some impact on the activities of the state. It is no accident that states without effective civil society tend to be repressive, and/or have distorted economies.

There appears to be an assumption within AusAID that building up state organisations towards similar levels of Australian expertise will make them 'more like us'. It is a mistake to simply graft a public sector model which works in Australia onto another culture, however, without taking into account the local cultural norms and mores, or even problems of corruption. In such situations NGOs provide a vital role; their skills and resources should be increased commensurately to enable both the state and NGOs to work for a common good.

An example: Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is characterised by an underdeveloped civil society. NGOs are relatively new in PNG and the most active ones have an uneasy, sometimes confrontational relationship with government. Australian aid has historically been provided almost exclusively to the PNG government as budget support. This helped to produce a top heavy and ineffective administration, a fact now recognised by the Australian government. The change to programme funding has been forced by this realisation.

In PNG it is the NGOs, along with the media, which provide the only real opposition to government policies and actions. They have been created not by outside organisations, such as Australian NGOs, but by PNG citizens wanting to make changes in their country. This is, in fact, the same process which occurred in industrialising countries in the West. Trade unions, organisations such as the Anti-Slavery Society and slum organisations, were created to undertake direct assistance work and to campaign and fight for changes in state activities.

The failure of Australian government assistance to PNG may have some severe consequences. An underdeveloped civil society is in a weak position to work for better environmental standards, law and order, to fight government corruption or ensure a fair distribution of goods and services. Tension is rising rapidly in PNG, with the Bougainville situation a possible taste of future rebellions.

Human rights

One way of better understanding the role of civil society in the development process is to look at the processes associated with human rights. Human rights are primarily standards of behaviour for state authorities in their dealings with individuals and groups in society. They are comparatively new to the international community, only having been developed since World War II with the creation of the United Nations. The experience of war and of genocide drove governments to seek international standards which could be agreed by consensus and applied on a global basis. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, written in 1948, was the first major international statement of human rights.

Some recent debates initiated by governments such as China, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, have made a concerted attack on the universality of human rights standards. They regularly speak of Asian values, and paint human rights as a western neocolonial imposition. This is not, however, the voice of the common people. The issue is seen in a different light when consulting Asian people at the bottom of the social scale. There one finds support for so-called western values such as democracy, freedom of speech, rights to education, health and government accountability. Exceptions, of course, occur: traditional values often oppose the rights of women, for example. But the general statement that human rights have massive support throughout the developing world still holds. The Bangkok NGO Declaration of March 1993 is the most succinct statement of Asian NGOs on this issue. It unambiguously supports the universality and indivisibility of human rights in Asia.

Human rights and development

The human rights link with development occurs in at least five ways:

1. Through the creation of stability in social and political structures. The rule of law is an essential element of human rights, in particular the need for an independent judiciary, a civil police force and limitations on the use of state force against ordinary citizens. This is directly relevant to the creation of an orderly and stable business environment where investment is unrestricted by corruption and political influence.

2. Through strengthening civil society, so that ordinary people are able to organise themselves freely and to improve their living conditions without the threat of violence or discrimination (either by state actors or non state actors).

3. Through establishing standards for state administration, such as access to education and primary health care, ensuring that state authorities give these aspects of development top priority.

4. Through encouraging an effective international cooperative environment of states built on common standards, which can combine efforts against common problems (eg, environment issues, refugees).

5. Through better understanding of the mechanisms of discrimination and repression which prevent isolated or marginalised groups from participation in development.
Human rights issues are resisted by most governments of developing countries. They often claim interference in their state sovereignty when other governments, or NGOs, make direct criticisms of their performance. This is entirely to be expected. As a consequence the ability of official aid organisations to effectively pursue human rights issues can be limited. State sovereignty is becoming something of a legal fiction, however, since national borders are breached every day by such things as international financial transactions, global communications, global culture, environmental pollution, diseases (such as HIV/AIDS) and the need for more liberal international trade regimes.

AusAID has taken some steps towards bringing human rights concerns directly into the policy framework of its work. But it has not taken the next step of including these considerations into operational work. Very few NGOs have taken this step either, for they too face similar difficulties. Many NGOs face expulsion from the country in which they are operating or, worse, arrest and violence by annoyed state authorities if they raise such issues publicly.

This should not be taken to mean that it is all too difficult. Consultation with local partners usually reveals the best and most effective way of going about sensitive human rights issues in situations of repression. Despite the difficulties, human rights can be introduced into the design objectives of programmes and projects as well as be part of the evaluation process. When this has not happened, all too often human rights are actually violated by large-scale development work (eg, displacement of indigenous peoples or slum dwellers, or the importation of migrant labour). Identification of these processes is essential to lessening the negative effects of much official development work as well as enhancing the positive.

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In 1996-97 Australia’s aid budget declined by A$114.4 million in nominal terms (or A$160.3 million in 1995-96 prices) to A$1,450 million, while at the same time emphasising a sharper humanitarian focus. This paper examines the motivations for Australia’s bilateral aid to Papua New Guinea (PNG) within this context, noting changes in the aid programme for the period 1970-71 to 1993-94. There is a unique aid relationship between Australia and PNG due to colonial history, and PNG is a major recipient of Australian aid. Moreover, PNG is heavily dependent on Australian aid to meet its resource needs.

An issue that arises within this broad perspective is the allocation of aid to countries in relation to their basic human needs. In other words, developing countries need ‘useful’ ODA to meet the basic human needs on sustainable bases. High-income donors give foreign aid to some countries and not to others, and these patterns change over time. What are the motivations of donor countries in providing such aid? The existence of tied aid provisions imposed by various countries suggests that the objective of Overseas aid is not a unidimensional concern for the development of recipient countries. Political and foreign policy concerns are not irrelevant to donors’ behaviour, and general statements from donor countries indicate multiple objectives. In Australia, for example, the objective of the aid programme is to promote economic and social progress in developing countries, as well as serve Australia’s political-strategic and commercial interests.

Australia’s aid to PNG

Papua New Guinea’s former colonial status is an important factor in explaining Australian aid to PNG. Australia’s special relationship with PNG began in 1905 for Papua, and after World War I for New Guinea - when Australian troops occupied the Territory of New Guinea which had previously been administered by Germany. Furthermore, following World War II Australia was appointed by the United Nations to administer the two territories of New Guinea and Papua. Although PNG became an independent nation in 1975, a strong relationship continues. As pointed out in the 1981 foreign policy White Paper: ‘Australia was first among those countries with which relations have developed significantly beyond the formal’ (cited in the Jackson Report 1984:146). Relationships developed in trade, commerce, defence, foreign affairs, education, health, technology, banking, transport and so on, and Australia sought to make up for past neglect by providing assistance.

The size and scope of Australia’s ODA to PNG shows the significance of the relationship between these two countries. PNG has been the only recipient of budget support in the Australian aid programme, and such aid consists of direct grants to the PNG national budget. Aid to PNG, however, shows a long-term decline from 1970-71 (Gounder 1995a). The first five-year agreement (1976-77 to 1980-81) to reduce aid came into effect in March 1976. The second five-year agreement provided for continued untied budget grant assistance, allowing for a five per cent annual decline. The third five-year agreement in 1985 provided for further real cuts in grant aid of three per cent a year, and a decline of five per cent in budgetary support towards defined programmed activities. Aid in 1986-87 fell from A$333.4 million to A$306 million in 1987-88 (from 43 to 38 per cent of total bilateral aid), and in 1988-89 it declined further to 35 per cent of total aid.

More recently, it has been agreed that aid to PNG will increasingly move to programmed activities and that budget support will be ‘phased out’ by the end of the decade. Programmed activities indicate a substantial increase which focus on the following sectors prioritised by the PNG Government: transport and communication, education, health, upgrading of basic service delivery, women and children. Although growth in income to achieve economic development is a necessary condition, a link with human development is crucial.

Overall, PNG’s economic performance has been disappointing. Social indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality and literacy rates are among those of the poorest countries in the world. Economic indicators show that per capita income has declined from US$900 in 1989 to US$800 in 1993 (World Bank 1995). Some of the main constraints are the decline in public investment, high wages, law and order problems, poor workforce skills, problems of access to land and inadequate infrastructure. These also affect the development of the private sector. Although PNG has entered structural adjustment programmes with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, major socio-economic problems remain.

Aid motivation models

The academic literature on aid motivation is concerned with articulating and testing two models of aid motivation viz. recipient need (RN) and donor interest (DI). Since the mid-
1950s, many economists have tried to explain the factors that underlie the aid allocation policies of various donors and multilateral institutions (see Gounder 1995a). McGillivray and Oczkowski (1991) and Gounder (1994, 1995b) have modelled Australian aid motivation, and in explaining the distribution of aid to developing countries a number of quantifiable factors are considered.

Generally, different motives are tested: recipient countries' needs, commercial motives and the political and strategic interests of donors. The concern for recipient need, on the part of the donor, is to promote development, alleviate poverty and lessen the income inequalities between the developing and the developed countries. Donor interest is explained as the pursuit of the donor's self-interest, in terms of trade, security and investment objectives.

Recipient need model: Variables included to explain recipient need relate to gross domestic product (GDP) and its rate of growth to determine if slow-growing countries tend, ceteris paribus, to attract more aid per head than faster growing ones. Developing countries also face the problem of shortfalls in either domestic resources or foreign exchange availability. The need for foreign exchange can be considered in a number of different ways: there could be a large deficit either because the country is 'bankable', i.e., donors are willing to lend, or because the country is in financial difficulties. Moreover, some developing countries wish to emphasise the external financing gap (EFG) as a 'need'. Since the EFG reflects issues such as domestic fiscal and monetary policy, however, whether it is a 'need' becomes debatable. Furthermore, a population variable is included as a control, and a lagged dependent variable is included to determine if Australian aid to PNG is subject to institutional constraints, whether they be of administrative convenience, inertia or the result of long-term commitments.

Donor interest model: The hypothesis underlying donor interest is that the amount of aid received by the recipient country is proportional to its level of interest to the donor. Australia's interests could be categorised as overseas economic interests and security and political interests, and can be measured by various variables. Political and security interests can be represented by the existence of a defence treaty or of some lesser form of political or military association. Generally, the political interests of a donor are manifest in their desire for a sphere of influence. Australia's security interests, for example, are in the Asia-Pacific region - especially PNG, the South Pacific and Southeast Asia - through cooperative defence activities in these regions. Thus aid is provided for security interests and is measured by Australia's military aid to PNG. Commercial interests are measured by Australia's investment in, and exports to PNG, while Australia's investment interests are explained in terms of 'promoting economic growth' or in 'alleviating economic difficulties' in countries where Australia has substantial investment interests.

Empirical results for aid motivation

There are two competing hypotheses regarding nation states' aid motivations viz. RN and DI. The econometric results of estimating these two models on Australian bilateral aid to PNG are presented below. The models are estimated on time series data from 1970-71 to 1993-94, using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) multiple regression. The two competing models employ the following variables:

- PCAIDAp,t: per capita bilateral aid by Australia to PNG
- PCYPt,t-2: per capita income of PNG in period t-2
- BOPpt-2: PNG's ratio of the current account deficit to GDP in period t-2
- POPpt-2: PNG's population in period t-2
- PCAIDAp,t-1: Australia's per capita aid to PNG in period t-1
- MAApt-1: per capita military aid by Australia to PNG in period t-1
- INVAp,t-1: Australia's investment in PNG in period t-1
- EXPAp,t-1: Australia's exports to PNG in period t-1

Results: RN model

The models have been tested for time series properties; thus, the results presented are not spurious and the model diagnostics indicate no econometric 'pathologies'. At an overall level the equation for the RN model has a statistically significant F statistic at the five per cent level and a high adjusted $R^2$ value of 0.34 (Table 1).

The RN model indicates a mixture of results in terms of the signs of the coefficients. The expected sign for the income variable is negative, indicating that Australian aid is preferentially allocated to countries with relatively low per capita income. The coefficient estimated for the income variable (PCY) is positive but not statistically significant. The expected sign for the growth rate of per capita GDP (GRC) is negative, and the estimated growth rate coefficient is positive and significant. This indicates that PNG attracts more aid per capita as it grows faster. The positive sign also suggests that Australia's aid tends to favour the construction of infrastructure, and thus, at higher levels of economic development, PNG will use aid more effectively.

The BOP variable has the expected negative sign and is also statistically significant. This suggest that Australia's aid increased as the deficit in the balance of payments in PNG increased. Alleviating foreign exchange constraints to economic growth has therefore been a factor in the aid allocation process. The population variable (POP) indicates
the expected negative sign, but the coefficient is not significant. The lagged dependent variable employed to measure inertia is not significant for the period estimated. This may suggest that psychological factors (e.g., inertia and/or administrative convenience) do not impact on Australia’s aid allocation decisions due to its special relationship. The insignificance of the coefficient is explained by the provision of aid on the basis of mutual agreements under the PNG-Australia Treaty on Development Cooperation. The major conclusion emerging from these econometric results is support for the RN model. In other words, the results indicate that humanitarian concerns are applicable as an explanation of the allocation of Australia’s bilateral aid to PNG.

Results: DI model

The results reported in Table 2 indicate a good fit to the data and the model diagnostics exhibited no econometric pathologies. The adjusted $R^2$ value is 0.30 and the $F$ statistic is statistically significant. Thus, there is support for the DI model.

First, political and strategic interests are measured in terms of financial data on military aid. The expected sign is positive for the military aid variable (MA). Although the coefficient is negative, it is significant for the period analysed here. This provides support for the view that Australia’s aid is allocated preferentially to PNG, especially since it is said that Australia’s military cooperation programme is to promote Australia’s security interest. The negative sign, however, indicates a decline in aid. Second, investment interests are measured by Australia’s investment (INV) abroad. If this motivation is relevant, then more aid would be given to PNG where Australia has investment interests. While the investment coefficient exhibits the expected positive sign, the coefficient is not statistically significant. Interestingly, the export variable (EXP), measured by the ratio of Australia’s exports to all exports to PNG, is not significant over the period analysed. It could be argued that the insignificance of export and investment variables may be because Australia tends to trade and invest in high income countries (e.g., trade with Japan and invest in the United Kingdom and United States). The lagged dependent variable once again is not significant indicating no effect on inertia (or habit) in the aid allocation process to PNG.

Table 1: Australia’s bilateral aid to PNG - RN model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>$t$ ratio</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>[.80]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta PCY_{t-2}$</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>[.66]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta GRC_{t}$</td>
<td>86.87</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>[.04]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta BOP_{t-2}$</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-1.98</td>
<td>[.05]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta POP_{t-2}$</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>[.70]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta PCA_{t-1}$</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>[.13]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECM$_{t-1}$</td>
<td>-1.48</td>
<td>-2.84</td>
<td>[.01]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adj. $R^2 = .34$ $F(6,15) = 2.81$ $SEE = .06$ $DW = 2.34$

The results discussed above provide support for the DI model. Overall, the results for both models are successful in terms of conventional discrimination criteria. Some of the coefficients estimated have the theoretically correct signs, the $t$ ratios are statistically significant and each model has a relatively high explanatory power. Thus it can be said that the empirical results analysed here indicate that Australia’s bilateral aid programme is characterised by both RN and DI concerns, and both models of aid motivation can be said ‘to succeed’. Therefore, it is necessary to consider which model dominates, using an econometric analysis of non nested models.

Non nested tests for RN and DI models

The general principle of non nested tests involves estimating an hypothesis under ‘null’ and then comparing its performance under the ‘alternative’. Thus, these tests select the hypothesis that best describes the motivation of Australia’s bilateral aid. The non nested tests reported here are the $W$ test, the $NT$ test and the encompassing $F$ test, since they have greater power and size properties than others.

The results for the alternative tests for the RN and DI models are presented in Table 3. The structure of this table is a manifestation of the procedure adopted in undertaking non nested tests; that is, that the null hypothesis ($H_0$) is arbitrarily chosen thus indicating that the alternative hypothesis ($H_1$) is also arbitrarily specified. This arbitrariness is recognised by then reversing the null and the alternative hypotheses. This procedure of reversal explains why the RN and DI models appear in both the columns and rows of Table 3.

The first point to note about the four non nested tests is that all lead to the same conclusion, irrespective of which model is specified as the null (and the alternative). The $W$, $NT$ and $JA$ tests are asymptotic non nested tests which have produced consistent results reported here. For the period 1970-71 to 1993-94 the tests produce strong (or decisive) results which do not fluctuate when the models are reversed in terms of the null and alternative hypotheses. When the RN model is assumed to be the null, the tests indicate that the RN model should be accepted, and when reversed (i.e., the DI model is assumed to be the null), all tests indicate rejection of the DI model. Thus the results provide evidence against the DI model, indicating that the RN model dominates Australia’s

Table 2: Australia’s bilateral aid to PNG - DI model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>$t$-Ratio</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-4.07</td>
<td>-0.78</td>
<td>[.44]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta MA_{t-1}$</td>
<td>-1.97</td>
<td>-2.34</td>
<td>[.03]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta INV_{t-1}$</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>[.91]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta EXP_{t-1}$</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>[.30]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta PCA_{t-1}$</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>[.51]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECM$_{t-1}$</td>
<td>-1.04</td>
<td>-1.75</td>
<td>[.09]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adj. $R^2 = .30$ $F(5,16) = 2.73$ $SEE = .06$ $DW = 1.60$
Table 3: Non nested models of Australia's bilateral aid to PNG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative Model (H_2)</th>
<th>Recipient Need</th>
<th>Maintained Model (Ho)</th>
<th>Donor Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>(iii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient Need</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>JA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor Interest</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reject</td>
<td>Reject</td>
<td>Reject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australia's aid programme has a three-fold objective in providing aid: humanitarian concerns, as well as strategic and commercial interests. What motivates Australia's provision of overseas aid to PNG? The RN and DI models have been estimated on time series data for the period 1970-71 to 1993-94, and the general conclusion for these two separate models is that both models fit the data. This necessitates the application of non nested tests.

Conclusion

This paper highlights Australia's special relationship with PNG and the aid motive of the bilateral programme. Although Australia provides the largest share of ODA to PNG, aid to PNG has declined over the period. PNG is the only country in Australia's aid programme that receives budget support, however, aid has been increased under programmed activities (ie, project form) that has emphasised social and economic development sectors.

Generally it is claimed that aid has no effect in the recipient country. A way to comprehend the issue of aid allocation depends on the various dimensions of the aid programme such as the relative size of the aid programme, grant or loan forms, tied and untied aid and the delivery of the aid programme. To achieve some of the goals of development in the recipient country, donors may need to supplement those categories of public expenditure. In the case of PNG, Australia's aid has a sectoral focus. Targeting the sectors of need may assist the PNG government to implement appropriate fiscal policy to alleviate the social and economic constraints to development.

The Coalition Government has commissioned a review of Australia's aid programme - the Simons Committee Review. Australia should target aid to remove social and economic constraints in targeted sectors, thus supporting the recipient country to implement relevant policies. Although it can be said that Australia's aid to PNG is a special case, and the humanitarian model may not fit in the case of other countries, a potential use of targeted aid as a necessary supplement to recipient countries' expenditure in those sectors could stress the development motif of aid as an important element of donor assistance.

References


October 1996
Results of an opinion poll on overseas aid

The Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) arranged to have two questions about overseas aid included in Frank Small and Associates' April 'omnibus' survey. The survey included the views of 1,230 adult Australians from the five mainland capital cities. Respondents were interviewed face-to-face. The results were as follows.

Q1. The United Nations recommends that wealthy countries allocate 0.7 per cent of their GNP as overseas aid to developing countries.

Based on 1994 figures, for Australia this would amount to about A$3,000 million. Do you think Australia currently spends:

- More than this on overseas aid 14%
- About this amount 23%
- Less than this 40%
- Don't know 23%

Since A$3,000 million is approximately double the actual amount spent on overseas aid, the results show that 60 per cent of Australian's don't know, even approximately, how much is spent on aid. Thirty-seven (37) per cent thought that the amount spent on aid is double or more than double the actual amount spent. A further 23 per cent claimed they did not know how much was spent.

Q2. When told how much Australia actually spent on overseas aid to developing countries, 19 per cent of Australian's believed we should give more. A further 39 per cent thought it to be 'about right'. Thus, 58 per cent of Australians felt Australia should maintain or increase the amount of aid given. Thirty (30) per cent thought that we gave too much, and 6 per cent stated Australia should not provide any overseas aid at all.

Gender trends:

There were no significant differences in the attitudes of men and women.

Age trends:

People aged 55 and above were more likely (38 per cent) than younger age groups (25-29 per cent) to feel that Australia spent too much on aid.

Younger people were more likely to say we don't spend enough, with 24 per cent of 18-39 year olds and 21 per cent of 40-54 year olds holding this view, while only 9 per cent of those aged 55 and above thought Australia did not spend enough.

Similarly, the older age group was more likely than those under 55 to think that we should not give any aid (9 per cent of those aged 55 and above, compared to 5 to 6 per cent of younger age groups).
Recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

On 31 July 1996, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, in conjunction with Community Aid Abroad, World Vision and the Australian Council For Overseas Aid (ACFOA), conducted a one day seminar in Parliament House, Canberra, on the Australian aid programme. Below are the recommendations from that meeting.

The Committee recommended that:

1. The Simons inquiry into the Australian aid programme consider further the issue of the relationship between economic growth and the alleviation of poverty with specific reference to the dangers of polarisation of the rich and the poor within the growth model.

2. The Australian Government use its influence in all relevant UN organisations to press for greater policy coherence between agencies of the United Nations involved in development assistance and that the UN assume a coordinating role to improve such coherence.

3. As a member of the DAC, the Government reaffirm its commitment to achieving the ODA/GNP target of 0.7 per cent.

4. In the current discussions on reform of the UN, the Australian Government urge UN agencies to include development assistance and reconstruction programmes in any peacekeeping operation organised by the UN.

5. In negotiations on aid programmes with recipient countries, the Government continue to stress the importance of good governance and participation as priorities in the aims, design and outcomes of projects.

6. The Government give priority in the aid programme to areas of greatest poverty and places which could not attract private flows of capital.

7. Relevant government departments, AusAID, Austrade, Treasury and the Department of Industry, Science and Tourism promote contact with industry associations for the dissemination of information about pending contracts with the multilateral development agencies; and

8. Industry associations in conjunction with Austrade and AusAID seek to provide assistance and information to small business as to the processes necessary to bid for such contracts.

9. (a) AusAID, in the initial stages, facilitate regular liaison between development NGOs and business associations with a view to establishing more permanent linkages to promote discussion, disseminate information and encourage the involvement of business in the development process; and

(b) NGOs and business associations be encouraged to maintain ongoing dialogue in recognition of the contribution that each can make to the others performance.

10. (a) The Australian Government should actively encourage Australian business to act at all times in a manner consistent with Australian law and human rights objectives; and

(b) that, consistent with a whole-of-government approach to human rights and the need to provide business with practical assistance, the Australian Government should ensure that those government departments, agencies and services, such as Austrade, which routinely deal with and/ or advise Australian companies:

(i) are fully appraised and routinely updated on Australia’s human rights objectives and relevant human rights intelligence;

(ii) provide appropriate advice to companies on human rights matters; and

(iii) establish in cooperation with business organisations a human rights code of practice; and

(c) the Australian Government should pursue at the ILO the development of a convention to require the application of consistent health and safety standards for workers in multinational enterprises, ensuring that the same high standards apply to workers in developing countries as to those in the country of origin of the enterprise.
Terms of reference for the review of Australia’s aid programme

**Objective**

The objective of the review is to present a report to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the overall priorities, objectives and focus of the aid programme. It will examine how the aid programme can best contribute to lasting poverty reduction, while also serving Australia’s interests.

**Issues to be addressed**

*Policy context:* The review will need to take into account the current international trends which are influencing the nature of development cooperation. It will need to pay attention to overall government directions to ensure coherence between aid and foreign, trade and domestic policies. More particularly, the review will consider:

- the appropriate role for the aid programme, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region;
- how the aid programme should respond to economic globalisation and the opportunities and challenges that trend provides for developing countries;
- the instabilities generated by the post cold war period, which have increased the demand for humanitarian and emergency assistance and international peacekeeping and placed additional pressure on aid budgets;
- the role of other donors, including multilateral institutions, and the impact on Australia’s aid programme of their changing priorities, for example, the withdrawal of many donors from the South Pacific; and
- the role of the aid programme in addressing global issues such as environmental degradation and climate change, refugees and the spread of preventable diseases.

*Geographic focus:*

- Australia’s aid programme will continue to focus on the Asia-Pacific region. The review should:
  - assess Australia’s aid priorities within this region;
  - consider the nature of the future of the aid relationship with Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific Island states; and
- consider the scope for Australian assistance outside the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in Africa and in the Central Asian Republics.

*Programme focus:* The review should examine the appropriate programme focus and the balance between sectors within the aid programme. This will require considering:

- good governance and policy dialogue issues (including economic reform, human rights and equity concerns);
- the appropriate balance of sectoral activities between, for example, education, health, agriculture and infrastructure; and
- the appropriate focus on cross-cutting issues such as gender and the environment.

*Aid delivery:* The review will need to consider the most appropriate aid delivery mechanisms - bilateral, multilateral and NGOs.

**Review process**

It will be important for the review to take account of the views of those involved in Australia’s development cooperation, including:

- recipient governments;
- Australian firms;
- Australian tertiary and research institutions;
- government departments; and
- non government organisations (NGOs).

**Timetable**

The Committee will report within six months. This will require a concerted effort on the part of all Committee members and the Secretariat.

**Output**

The Committee’s report will contain recommendations to the Government about how to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the Australian aid programme. The report should also consider the implications, if any, of its recommendations for AusAID’s organisational structure and processes.
October 1996

Black access to electronic research services in South Africa: Problems and prospects of real change*

Peter Limb, University of Western Australia

The democratic changes of 1990 and 1994 ushered in a new political era in South Africa: universal franchise; the end of statutory apartheid; and the start of the Reconstruction and Development Programme with high hopes for better housing, jobs and health. Whether or not the majority gains greater access to services will be influenced by factors such as the nature and rate of transformation and by privatisation and elitisation trends. Access to electronic resources by blacks can be used as one specific indicator to determine whether meaningful change is taking place in South Africa. During a project in Cape Town last year, I was struck by the enormous gap between black and white access to computers. The focus here is on universities and libraries, but such access also has significance in other areas such as business and labour.

Electronic services and research: Skipping the material stage

Today’s hurtling new electronic revolution presents exciting new possibilities to African studies researchers: discussion lists, e-mail and full-text electronic journals. It also offers partial solutions to problems such as illiteracy and rural isolation common in Africa. Recent research shows that some people respond better to computer or image-assisted education than book-based learning, and exposure to the Internet can enrich skills of rural-based professionals. Robert White in Northwestern California, for example, has developed a new course on Africa that will incorporate Internet resources for rural students. In response to a recent survey I received comments from various researchers about the poor state of archives in Africa. One of them commented that ‘it seems skipping the material stage and going straight for electronic news etc. would be more conducive to equality of information access, but of course then the problem is getting a computer, electricity and telephones’ (Robertson and Holzl 1995, 1996). Not to mention that the Internet has real limitations, chaotic arrangement, varying quality of sites, and the relatively small percentage of people who have access to it (DeSeino 1995).

South Africa and electronic services

Some facts and figures:

- Africa, with 12 per cent of the world’s population, has only two per cent of the world’s telephone lines (0.9 phone lines per 100 people, compared to Sweden with 68, US with 51) and over the last decade registered the lowest growth in teledensity of any developing region.

- Ironically, most international traffic on African lines is outside of Africa. International lines are often better than internal ones. In Namibia, South African colonisation produced better links to Johannesburg CBD than to Ovamboland, where most Namibians live. Namibia still accesses Africa via South Africa, complete with South African tolls.

- Despite problems of lack of finance and telecommunication infrastructure, 30 African states have Internet access, 12 with full Internet connectivity (Wresch 1995).

- South Africa has the lion’s share of Internet connectivity in Africa. A 1995 Internet Domain Survey showed rapid growth in South Africa, with a three-year growth to 1995 of 2,800 per cent, though in 1995 it had only 27,000 computer hosts compared to 161,000 in Australia. South African companies also provide the backbone for Zimbabwe’s net users (The Internet Domain Survey 1995; AFRICANET 1996; see also Vella 1995).
Black researchers and access to electronic services/libraries

There are no reliable figures on black ownership of computers in South Africa. Internet guru Arthur Goldstuck estimates that the installed base of PCs in South Africa reached one million in 1995 and is increasing by 16 per cent per year. Racial disproportions in the educational system are clear. In 1990, 65 per cent of current and 75 per cent of capital expenditure in tertiary education was spent on whites (Donaldson 1993). In 1993 student figures at university level were: 135,482 Africans, 153,513 whites, 17,406 ‘coloureds’ and 23,491 Asians. Staff comprised: 9,521 Africans, 17,388 whites, 3,734 ‘coloureds’ and 1,404 Asians (Africa South of Sahara 1996).

The low number of black researchers reflects the impoverishment of the education system under Bantu education, political disruption and deeper causes of black poverty. Though some progress has been made towards developing a democratic library system, with energetic local resource centres increasing community access to information, black access to electronic and library services is severely limited by poverty. In 1994 South Africa’s production of electricity was 167,927 million kWh, with a per capita consumption roughly equal to western Europe. Yet only 37 per cent of the population (15 million people) have home access to electricity. In 1995 illiteracy was estimated at 30 per cent. Africans make up about 76 per cent of the population, but earn only 25 per cent of the income (Africa South of the Sahara 1996: 874, 879, 891, 896). Johannesburg, with 1.7 million people, boasts 37 library service points and a 0.9 book per person ratio, but Soweto, with at least two and perhaps four million people, has only six service points and a 0.16 ratio. In Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Sandton there are 72 service points for one million whites but only 17 for 3.9 million blacks (International Federation of Library Associations 1993; September 1993:75; van Zijil989).

There are also further problems: only limited funds for educational change are available and even these must compete with priority programmes such as basic literacy and outreach schemes; lack of coordination between different library systems in South Africa; lack of awareness of local black needs; and imposition of fees on ‘non residents’ which could lead to denial of services (International Federation of Library Associations 1993; Kistan 1992).

A 1992 report found that school libraries were marginalised and under-resourced; public libraries were concentrated in white urban and industrialised areas; few libraries had been established in African townships; and rural areas had few library resources of any kind. Repeal of the Separate Amenities Act in 1990 has ‘not in itself brought about a more equitable system’ of information provision (Walker 1993; Nassimbeni 1994). More basically, in Africa the nature and form of book culture and libraries often served to benefit the colonial power and not the people of the colonies (Cram 1993; Krynauw 1994). Seth Manaka, of the University of the North, argues that South African library services ‘are greatly biased towards Western culture’ (Manaka 1993:51).

Electronic services offer at best only partial solutions to such problems. But the new generation is somewhat more closely aligned to the changing paradigm of the electronic age. The visual possibilities of computers allow problems of illiteracy to be tackled, and are not very expensive once installed. ‘Mirror sites’, that is, computer sites which reflect or mirror larger, real-time Northern hemisphere sites - if often without real-time interaction - enable Third World users to benefit from reduced off-peak satellite transmission tariffs. Once established, World Wide Web sites are easily accessible to anyone with computer and modem access. The University of Virginia Virtual Library is a good example of how people in isolated mountain homes can view scanned letters of Thomas Jefferson without having physically to visit the archives. Imagine the possibilities this offers to African researchers. It presents an opportunity to democratise the research process, to open up archival resources to black workers and women, and to accelerate the involvement of such groups hitherto ‘hidden from history’ in the writing of their own histories.

There may, of course, be disadvantages in merely mirroring western initiatives. Many fear the mere repetition of western dominance. One US plan envisages a major thrust into African academia, to bring dozens of professors to the US for intensive net-training. To gain US funding organisers have included a simultaneous intensive course in ‘US democracy’. Whether this ‘cultural imperialism’ outweighs projected gains in technical access is open for debate. It is also important to keep in mind that the black elite is likely to monopolise the Internet without effective socioeconomic transformations and political interventions: to democratise access. There is also the problem of the continuation of old patterns of thinking. One young African historian claimed that despite the lifting of official censorship and restrictions on the use of the archives, he remained wary of certain rules of access linked to the ‘old order’.

The possibilities for change, however, still do exist. Lacking funds for expensive books, black communities can use the ‘great electronic leap forward’ to leap-frog the whole paper-bound cultural monolith that prevents them effectively interacting in wider intellectual or commercial arenas. It is perhaps the only alternative to the African ‘book famine’. The Internet is the ultimate interactive technology that enables communities to specify their own needs, publish and communicate, and this can help overcome the bias associated with the imposition of the western book cultures. The public library needs to be reinvented, in a new, user-friendly electronic form. Some librarians in South Africa argue that, given political changes, information provision should focus on communities, with public libraries providing information relevant to the daily needs of grassroots groups (September 1993). That public libraries with Internet access can link people with research resources is evident from the Australian example. But the adoption of commercial charges, as in VICNET in Victoria, can encourage an elite of Net users (Hardy 1996).
Examples of African involvement in the new electronic paradigm of interactivity include the impressive ANC web site and discussion lists such as Nuafica and Swazi-Net, and many South African newspapers. The potential for the effective use of electronic services by researchers is great and improved black access to this information is the key to a genuinely transformed South Africa.


References

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The Internet Domain Survey 1995, July.
Food security, population and development*

Joint statement by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

In this century humankind has experienced an unprecedented scale of population growth. While the rate of population growth has declined due to considerable efforts, both national and international, the number of people in absolute terms continues to increase at an alarming rate leading to large increases in food consumption and powerful pressures on the global environment, including the fragile ecosystems of island nations. We should recognise that our planet has finite resources and no degree of scientific or technological progress will enable us to live beyond its limits. As part of a single community destined to share a common fate within the confines of our planet, we must find ways to ensure our survival in a sustainable manner.

It should also be recognised that food security is world security. It has a direct bearing not only on people’s well-being but also on social stability, regional and world peace. In this century, we have achieved a high degree of increase in food production due to progress of science and technology in general, and to the success of the green revolution in particular. As a result, the rate of food production has exceeded that of the population increase. There are, however, going to be limitations to the availability of new cultivable land, and the shortage of fresh water resources is a serious concern which appears to be worsening every day. Furthermore, due to salinity, overcropping and excessive use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, the soil is losing its integrity, causing marginal productivity to decline. We are also being reminded that the maritime resources, which in the past seemed infinite, are indeed finite, resulting in declining harvest. The earth, which seemed to have tolerated our misbehaviour in the past, is telling us of its limits through environmental deterioration.

It is also important to recognise that global projections on resource availability are too often made by narrow groups of specialists. As a way of ensuring balanced and realistic projections for the future, all countries should make their own assessments of their carrying capacity. This should be done by interdisciplinary groups, including scientists and government officials from different specialised agencies. Parliamentarians have both special responsibilities and special capacities to bring together and listen to these divergent views. While projections of global demand and supply of food and population growth give us cause for optimism in the short-term, there is cause for pessimism over the long-term. We therefore have an obligation to ensure that we hand over the planet in a responsible manner to the future generation. We, therefore, offer the following statement with regard to: population growth and food production; food production and environment; and community development.

Population growth and food production

Despite our commitment and efforts to reduce the rate of population increase, its numbers in absolute terms continue to increase. This implies a continued growth in the demand for food. Thus measures to limit population increase as much as possible are essential if humanity is to continue to survive on the planet. Furthermore, in order to diminish the load and to ensure sustainable food production we must develop agriculture that is in harmony with the environment.

As parliamentarians we stand committed to the population cause by reaffirming: the Cairo Declaration of the International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development; the Copenhagen Statement of the International Meeting of Parliamentarians on Population and Social Development; and the Tokyo Declaration of the International Meeting of Parliamentarians on Gender, Population and
Development. The vision described at Cairo calls for substantial increases in resources for primary health care, family planning and reproductive health services, and primary education. This is especially critical for women and girls, and for those living in rural areas, who are often left behind in development efforts. We believe it is important for parliamentarians to encourage the international community and their own governments to increase resources for these activities.

Food production and environment

For more than half a century, world food output has increased more rapidly than population growth. Social and technological developments and agricultural policies have produced significant green revolutions. These past successes are important, but they can also give a false sense of security. Even with past successes in output, there remain important distribution problems globally, nationally and within communities and households. In ensuring future increases in food output, we must keep in focus the need for environmental protection, so as to ensure that agricultural development is sustainable.

Governments and parliamentarians should examine international agreements, including those with the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and see how such agreements will affect agricultural production in their countries. Similarly, preferential trade agreements made between groups of countries may also negatively affect agricultural production and price structures. Developed countries may often make it difficult for developing countries to export their excess agricultural production. Governments would therefore do well to closely examine the impact of international agreements on agricultural exports. Before signing conventions/agreements, the governments should see to it that the conditions imposed by such agreements do not adversely affect agriculture and the environment in the countries concerned.

We recognise the importance of food production which will be the focus at the World Food Summit. Equal emphasis should be placed on issues of food access and use, especially amongst the most disadvantaged communities and individual producers. The rural and urban poor must have access to sufficient food for sustainable livelihood. Rural producers of food and forest resources, especially women, must have ownership of productive assets such as land and have access to credit and appropriate technologies. Continued efforts should be made to increase food production through processes already well-known, such as increased rural credit, small-scale irrigation schemes and agricultural experimentation and extension services. These are well-known and well-understood processes, which all too often are not sufficiently provided to small producers.

In the context of food production, there are many signals that current agricultural processes are environmentally destructive and thus are not sustainable. For example, the world demand for water is increasing twice as fast as population growth, and there is a host of water-related problems that need addressing, including the pollution of aquifers by chemicals, soil erosion in steep lands caused by deforestation and intensive agriculture, the salinisation of irrigated areas, and receding water tables, among many others. Greater effort must be made, therefore, to reduce environmental degradation, improve groundwater management and develop a more sustainable agriculture.

Environmental limitation varies by economic sector, whether it is agriculture, forestry and fisheries, or manufacturing or services. Agro-forestry-fishery industries are directly impacted by physical and environmental limitations such as availability of crop land, conditions of soil, level of water tables and climate. In this regard, unlike other industrial sectors, it is most important that a pattern of sustainable agriculture is developed taking into full consideration environmental parameters. On the other hand, properly managed agriculture and forestry production can contribute to the preservation of the environment.

As parliamentarians, we acknowledge that no activity will ensure our survival if there were a collapse of the system of the primary production; that is, agro-forestry-fisheries. Many of the primary productive processes we engage in today are environmentally destructive and not sustainable. Hence, all such processes must be reviewed from the perspective of environmental preservation and sustainable development so as to build a fair and reasonable economic and trading system for each section of production.

We have to ensure food security at the global level by expanding regional and international cooperation, while encouraging each nation to produce food based on its environmental conditions and cultural traditions. Equally, we need to find ways to formulate more rational economic policies that will help to build a global trading system essential to preserving the finite global environment and addressing population concerns.

Food relief at times of natural and man-made disasters and emergencies requires regional and global cooperation. In order to build a food security system at the regional, inter-regional and global levels based on mutual cooperation, it is important to expand cooperative relations between food importing and exporting countries and to ensure that food is not used as a form of threat or exploitation.

Another area of concern is the need to continue supporting established agricultural research, particularly adaptive and participatory research, through national and international institutions, especially in developing countries, which has produced such high economic and social returns in the past. In addition, it is necessary to promote new forms of interdisciplinary policy research for the purpose of building a tax system that provides incentives to protect the environment, taking into account the value and cost of environmental protection in economic activity.
Community development

The rural community, which has played a large role in ensuring food and water resources and preserving the environment in the process of modernisation, is under stress as a result of population growth. Accompanying the stress is the population exodus from farming communities to the city, undermining public safety and causing environmental degradation of urban communities and a decrease in land for cultivation.

As a result of the population pressure and mobility, the capacity of the farm community to produce food, manage land and preserve the environment is being eroded. There is an urgent need for community development to curb population growth and realise food production in harmony with the environment.

Governments should develop appropriate legislative frameworks to provide incentives to local producers so as to enable communities to organise themselves for their own interests and benefits. Attention should be paid to such things as an independent judiciary and media to promote the empowerment of local people with particular emphasis on women. No community development can be realised without developing women’s human resources and potential and integrating them fully into the development process.

We recognise that in many societies farmers lack economic, political and social power, and are subject to forces of the elements and decisions by remote governments. While in some developed countries farmers do exercise considerable power, often to resist fundamental changes, this is not so in developing countries. Efforts must be made to enable all farmers to exercise meaningful economic, political and social power, especially through education and training.

Community development also means the need to promote and ensure reproductive rights by making available reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health, as defined in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, to all rural areas and farm communities.

Development of small and medium towns, with emphasis on providing such basic amenities as safe water and electricity, assists in optimising population distribution and building viable communities. Such development may help to prevent over-concentration of population in cities and encourage development of farm communities in harmony with the environment.

Population, sustainable food production, environmental protection and social development are mutually reinforcing and interdependent variables. Success in these areas requires a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach which must link specialised agencies of government and be expeditiously implemented.

People at risk must be involved in identifying appropriate actions to address food insecurity and malnutrition. The World Food Summit, therefore, should examine cases in which popular participation has succeeded in improving food security and population programmes. Improving women’s and girls’ education and enhancing their participation in all aspects of society and development will facilitate improvements in women’s roles in decision making, concerning not only their reproductive health choices but also their access and use of credit, agriculture, technology and nutritional resources.

Commitment to collective action

As stated in the resolutions adopted at past meetings of parliamentarians, peace, participation, coordination and an interdisciplinary approach are essential to solving problems of food security and population. We, parliamentarians from the Asia and the Pacific region offer this statement as testimony to our firm commitment for a collective future, by reaffirming that the only way to meet these common challenges lies in working together. We therefore strongly urge the international community to honour the commitments it made at the recent major international conferences and to translate these commitments into concrete actions. We further urge the international community to make every effort to maintain a close working relationship with all agencies and organisations active in the population and development field, including the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development and its fellow parliamentary groups.

Privatisation has been at the forefront of economic policy debate in all parts of the world, as the key policy instrument in the move to more market-based economic systems. The process of privatisation began slowly in developing countries but the pace has accelerated in the past decade. By the early 1990s there had been 1,500 divestitures in the less developed countries and a further 2,700 in the transition economies of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Many more countries are currently implementing privatisation plans. With more than a decade of experience it is now opportune to take stock of what has been happening, distil the main research findings on the results of privatisation, and draw out on major lessons which can inform future policy formulation.

Why privatise? Policy makers can have a variety of objectives in mind for privatisation, here defined broadly to include private sector involvement in public sector provision of goods and services, as well as transfer of ownership of productive assets to the private sector. First, with widespread evidence of poor economic performance of state-owned enterprises, privatisation is seen as a means of raising economic efficiency, which will be reflected in improvements in consumer prices and product quality. Second, faced with large net financial deficits in the public enterprise sector, privatisation is seen as a means of reducing a fiscal deficit, by increased tax revenues on enterprise output, reduction in transfers to the enterprise sector and privatisation sale receipts. Third, privatisation can be used to shift the balance between the public and private sectors and to promote competition and market forces within the economy and improve delivery of services. The weight attached to each of these objectives will vary between countries and over time in a single country.

Does privatisation work? Privatisation may not always be the most effective means of meeting certain objectives. For example, most researchers agree that ownership is much less important than competition as a determinant of economic efficiency performance. Divestiture of a public monopoly will simply create a highly profitable but economically inefficient private monopoly enterprise, unless an adequate regulatory framework is set up at the same time. Secondly, privatisation may contribute to one objective but at the same time make it more difficult to achieve another. For example, the price that the private sector is willing to pay for the enterprise will depend on expected future profit performance, which in turn varies inversely with the level of competition in the market. In order to maximise the privatisation sales revenue the government may be willing to give the purchaser a guarantee of market protection but this will almost certainly mean a lower efficiency performance by the privatised enterprise. Finally, the contribution that privatisation makes to any particular objective may depend upon other policy measures being implemented simultaneously, to strengthen private sector confidence in the government's commitment to the privatisation programme. Where privatisation is poorly planned or where the sustainability of the reform programme is in doubt, the potential benefits of privatisation are reduced.

What research findings do we have on the results of privatisation and what policy conclusions can be drawn from the evidence that has accumulated? Where the objective of privatisation is to increase the share of the private sector and to 'roll back the boundaries' of the state sector, the act of privatisation itself marks the attainment of the objective in the production sector, though such a simple judgement is not easily made in respect of the service sector. By this measure, privatisation has had a limited impact in developing countries. Despite the sizeable number of individual enterprise privatisation sales, transactions have been concentrated in a smaller number of countries: in 1988-93 just five countries accounted for 60 per cent of the value of enterprises sold. Divestiture has yet to change significantly the balance between state-owned and private sectors in developing countries overall. For evidence of the impact of privatisation on enterprise level performance we can draw on the results of recent World Bank research (World Bank 1995). For a sample of nine developing countries, the 'before and after' performance of state-owned enterprises was assessed in terms of financial and productivity performance and self-financing of investment. Countries were classified in terms of their overall performance. Two main findings emerge. The performance of privatised enterprises improved after privatisation, particularly when the divestiture was in competitive markets, and the most significant improvement in performance occurred in those countries where privatisation was one element in a much wider programme of public enterprise reform. Henley (1996) summarises the measures necessary at the level of the firm for successful restructuring, either prior to or as part of privatisation based on his research in the transition economies of Eastern Europe.

There are both practical and political reasons why the scale of privatisation, in the sense of divestiture, has been much less than is commonly supposed. In a low income economy, where markets are imperfect, the private sector is uncompetitive and underdeveloped and the administrative capacity of the government is limited, the technical and institutional barriers to implementing a privatisation programme are considerable. The political constraints on the adoption of privatisation arise from the distributional impact. The divestiture of enterprises has an immediate impact on the interest groups which currently benefit from the public enterprise sector's inefficiencies, either in terms of excessive workforce levels, uneconomical prices or excessive factor payments. In contrast, the gains from privatisation are diffused throughout the economy and arise

October 1996
after the immediate costs have been incurred. The short-term political costs of privatisation may outweigh the longer-term economic and political benefits and act as a brake on the pace of privatisation in developing countries. Adam (1996) assesses these and other reasons for the slow pace of privatisation programmes in Africa, with special reference to Zambia, drawing attention, in particular, to the factors behind low offer prices for state-owned enterprises. He also suggests how the delay can be turned to advantage.

Divestiture alone, even if it increases in extent, is unlikely to result in a significant reduction in the size of the public enterprise sector 'burden' in developing countries. This is most obviously true in respect of privatisation of services which, as Batley (1996) explains, requires a greater rather than lesser degree of administrative competence and continuing involvement by the public sector. Similarly, in utilities, divestiture on its own is not enough (Freckleton 1996), and demands on government continue albeit in a different form. Measures to regulate newly privatised firms and to improve the performance of the enterprises which remain in the public sector both have an important role to play in an overall reform programme. Broader forms of privatisation, such as management contracts and contracting out, combined with market liberalisation and competition policy and the establishment of a sound regulatory framework, are all needed. The choice of measures to be used and the relative weight which is given to each of them will depend not only on the objectives of the public enterprise reform programme but also on a realistic assessment for any country of the economic, institutional and political constraints on policy design and implementation.

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New Zealand-African relations: The end of an era

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The Africa Information Centre in Wellington has been forced to close due to cuts in recurrent government grants at the end of the 1995-96 financial year. It is a stark comment on the impact of neo-classical economies on government priorities and reassessment of New Zealand-African relations. It begs reflection on the direction of government policies and assumptions not only in New Zealand, but in Australia and more broadly.

From its inception in 1978, the Centre enjoyed a very special relationship with the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tradenz and other government departments. It was autonomous of government, but largely funded by Foreign Affairs as a repository of information and expertise. In many ways it represented a ‘contracting out’ of various functions of government. Over the years it has served an advocacy role with regard to South Africa in particular, and Africa more generally. It was actively involved in policy formulation as well as education and dissemination of information on Africa, and rapidly established a reputation as the main source of information on Africa for New Zealand media, schools and universities, and the corporate sector. In effect, these functions are now being downgraded to voluntary services.

The Centre was established in response to the turmoil surrounding the Springbok tour of New Zealand. The government was taken by surprise, reacted with force to what it took as a direct challenge to its authority, resulting in a deep division in New Zealand society. The Centre was a product of the anti-apartheid movement and deserves much credit for increasingly progressive policies of successive New Zealand governments in their relations with Africa, especially Southern Africa. In part, the demise of the Centre resulted from its close association with an era now deemed to be well and truly gone. The timing was largely dictated by the New Zealand CHOGM meeting - it could hardly be closed on the eve given the prominence accorded Nelson Mandela and the Centre’s prominence in the anti-apartheid movement. Yet its closure is an economy which will leave an institutional void at a time of dynamic change in Southern Africa.

The end of apartheid does not herald a return to former associations. Not only has there been a change of government and political institutions, the new South Africa is a changing and dynamic commercial landscape. The major South African conglomerates remain in place and are rapidly expanding into neighbouring states. The infusion of capital has been from South Africa into its neighbour at the expense of their budding industries and corporate sector. As structural adjustment has pried open investment restrictions and exchange controls in the former Frontline States, South African big business has been the main beneficiary. Moreover the established South African companies are being joined by emergent medium-size Black business.

A workshop conference, ‘New Zealand-African relations: Mapping the road ahead’, was held in August to address the future of New Zealand-African relations in the post-apartheid era, New Zealand’s diplomatic and trade relations with Africa, and to explore avenues for maintaining a number of the Centre’s functions. I was invited to give the keynote address, opening the conference, in part as a result of an article which appeared in the Development Bulletin (Dorward 1996).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has provided a transition grant of NZ$10,000 for a modest and as yet unnamed successor ‘African Forum’, to be maintained by subscription. Given that the new Forum will lack a physical presence, permanent staff and assured funding, it is difficult to see how it will effectively maintain advisory or policy formulation functions.

The resources of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade are modest. With only seven policy officers, of whom one is responsible for the entire Middle East and Africa, the demise of the policy building role of the Centre is likely to have a profound if initially muted impact. The New Zealand government has reopened its High Commission in Pretoria and is maintaining diplomatic representation in Harare - its only diplomatic posts in sub-Saharan Africa - but without any increase in personnel.

New Zealand’s trade and diplomatic presence in Africa are slight. The focus of Tradenz is on Asia and the Pacific. New Zealand trade with Africa is primarily with North Africa. Commercial links with sub-Saharan Africa are primarily with South Africa, almost to the exclusion of other countries. One of the informal functions of the African Information Centre was trade promotion through liaison with experienced New Zealand companies as well as those looking to develop markets in Africa. Such contacts and confidence can only be built and sustained by interpersonal contact, albeit never a particularly successful venture, as reflected in New Zealand African trade statistics.

At a time when the Australian Southern African Business Council extols trade with Southern Africa reaching A$750 million, projected to reach A$1 billion by 2000 (or equivalent to our trade with Indonesia), the New Zealand corporate sector has been slow to react. Australian commercial moves into Southeast Asia, particularly to buy small- and medium-size business, were spearheaded by the Labour Government. The response from New Zealand officials was the familiar one of too distant, too competitive, comparability of exports and...
alternative markets. While articulating policies predicated on economic growth, New Zealand commercial horizons appear to be narrowing as government economies impose greater concentration of trade support into existing markets.

There is a widespread conviction that the Internet will serve as an alternative resource for business seeking markets in, and information on, Africa. The promotion by suppliers and government of the new technology is seductive but naïve. While the large corporations have the contacts and expertise, small and medium-size businesses rarely have the capacity to critically assess the mass of information and misinformation available on the Net. The reduction of Australian and New Zealand government support for trade may be in accord with neo-classical ideology but it runs counter to the policies of our most successful trading neighbours. While it may take the free trade moral high ground, it is a singularly exposed position.

The commercial sector, particularly small and medium business, is influenced by the non African focus reflected in New Zealand aid. While the greater proportion of NZ NGO aid is directed to Africa on the basis of need, most government assistance is focused on Asia and the Pacific, where New Zealand has established commercial interests.

The library of the African Information Centre has been transferred to an expanded and government funded Development Resource Centre. The focus of the Centre is primarily educational and, to the extent that it maintains resource acquisitions and interest in Africa, it can partially fulfill that function. It reflects growing concern with issues of 'development', particularly from NGO perspectives. However, it lacks the expertise and resources to serve as a viable alternative to the development studies programmes with various New Zealand universities. Moreover, the Centre is hardly likely to maintain a New Zealand 'voice' on Africa in the media.

Reference

Engendering eco-timber production in the Solomon Islands

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Literature on gender and development is paying increasing attention to the impacts of environmental degradation on women and the need for women to play an active role in all environmental projects. This is in recognition of three factors: women’s roles, women’s knowledge and women’s interests (Institute of Development Studies 1995).

In the Solomon Islands women are responsible for food production, water and firewood collection and, in many cases, fishing. With specific regard to forestry, women collect food, materials for handicraft manufacture and medicines from the forests, as well as having agricultural systems which rely on forested lands. Concurrently, Melanesian women are often custodians of specific traditional forest knowledge which may include: how, where and when to grow starch crops; where to find wild foods which supplement the local diet by providing vital vitamins; and what plants are associated with fertility and childbirth - 33 such species have been identified in Papua New Guinea (Mogina 1996). Women’s skills and knowledge regarding forest resources are thus one very good reason for involving them in any forest-based project. A further reason for their involvement is equity: women’s interests do not mirror those of men, thus women must be consulted and involved in project management to ensure they benefit from an environmental project.

It would seem, however, that the trend in thinking that women should actively participate in environmental projects is somewhat limited to the ‘gender’ niche of the development studies field, as many environmental projects are still undertaken with scant regard for gender roles and relations. The eco-timber organisation SWIFT (Solomon Western Islands Fair Trade) is attempting to offer rural dwellers in the western part of the Solomon Islands a sustainable alternative to signing with logging companies. This initiative is important because logging in the Solomons is occurring at several times the sustainable rate, meaning the commercially viable resource could be exhausted in ten to fifteen years (AIDAB 1994). To date, however, gender issues have only been considered as a sideline issue in SWIFT. Here it will be suggested that there are pressing practical and equity reasons why this situation should be challenged.

The operations of SWIFT

SWIFT was established as part of the Integrated Human Development Programme (IHDP) of the United Church, which sees protection of nature as being compatible with justice, peace and development concerns (Bishop Philemon Riti, personal communication 1996). SWIFT has both political and economic aims: ‘to enable people to say “no” to logging company offers’ and ‘to promote sustainable timber production for community needs and to facilitate earning a good cash income by selling these sawn timbers to the local and export market’ (SWIFT Netherlands Foundation 1996:1).

Since SWIFT was established in 1994, over 250 producer groups - which are family, clan or tribal-based - have signed up to produce eco-timber to sell to SWIFT. Each producer group decides to put blocks of their land aside for the production of eco-timber and SWIFT foresters help them to draw up forest management plans for these blocks.

SWIFT provides specific services to assist producer groups. Aware that most producers would not be able to afford the chainsaw and frame which are essential tools to fell trees and cut planks to a specified size on site in the forest, SWIFT established a chainsaw loan scheme. The 150 producers who have subscribed to this only start repaying the loan once they sell timber to SWIFT. SWIFT also provides transport facilities, periodically chartering boats to travel around the dispersed islands of the western Solomons to collect the sawn timber. Another service available to producers is training courses in forest management, timber grading and chainsaw maintenance.
The reason SWIFT has been very successful in attracting producers is the relatively high price it can pay for their timber. SWIFT offers up to SBD$1,200 per cubic metre for sawn timber, compared to around only SBD$35 per cubic metre which the logging companies pay for round logs (A$1 was approximately SBD$2.70 in April 1996). SWIFT can offer good prices largely because it has already established an effective marketing structure through setting up a subsidiary company in the Netherlands (SWIFT Hout bv.) to purchase all of the timber SWIFT exports to Europe and to sell the timber on the European market. Thus by providing marketing and transport facilities and accessible chainsaw loans, SWIFT enables people to cut and sell their own timber, at a controlled and sustainable rate, for a high price.

A crucial issue in determining SWIFT’s success is its visibility as an eco-timber producer, because the environmental sustainability of production methods can secure a high demand and an associated high price for their timber in Europe. Certification of the environmental sustainability of SWIFT’s timber is thus being carried out by SGS (Societe Generale de Surveillance), based on the standards set by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The FSC’s certification system aims to strengthen community control over resources and bring direct financial benefits to the resource owners, in addition to improving forest management and protecting the environment (The Independent 1996:16).

To be eligible for FSC certification, SWIFT was required to establish and implement a comprehensive Forest Management Plan (FMP). The FMP involves drawing up an inventory documenting the land and its resources, noting dominant tree species and calculating how many trees may be cut in a one hectare block over a five year period. It also lists forest regrowth monitoring details, silviculture measures for producers and areas which the producers are supposed to look after, including sacred sites and buffer zones around waterways.

From the above discussion it is apparent that SWIFT has the potential to significantly contribute to development. By enforcing strict sustainability criteria based on the need to preserve the forests, SWIFT provides people with the means to continue to meet their basic subsistence needs, unlike other development projects which rely on unsustainable practices of natural resource extraction or exploitation which undermine people’s ability to meet their basic living requirements. In addition, SWIFT gives people the option of earning money from timber extraction from their own land without having to sign with logging companies whose activities devastate the natural resource base and who repatriate most of the profits from timber sales. Through SWIFT a producer can, for example, earn SBD$5,000 a year by felling only two trees. To achieve the same income from logging royalties, 70 to 100 trees would need to be felled and the producer would have to wait around 200 years for the forest to regenerate (SWIFT Netherlands Foundation 1996:3).

In the process of improving people’s lives in this way, SWIFT has stopped logging in a number of areas, including parts of Choiseul, Marovo Lagoon, the Shortland Islands and Vella Lavella. An estimated 20,000 cubic metres of timber has thus been saved from logging companies. SWIFT has also achieved much in terms of building awareness among villagers about alternatives to logging and by working directly with producer groups at grassroots level.

Despite these achievements and noble intentions on the part of management, SWIFT has had several problems in ensuring sustainable production of eco-timber. Some landowners are primarily concerned with immediate financial rewards rather than forest preservation, which they see as an overseas ideal that is being imposed upon them. Evidence of this includes producers cutting trees which have not been marked out by the SWIFT foresters, leaving large parts of felled trees to rot (rather than cutting up the timber for local sale or home use), and failing to disperse sawdust, which can prevent regrowth. A lack of skills (such as literacy and numeracy) and a lack of understanding of the FMP are a further reasons why some producers are not practising sustainable forest management.

Women’s involvement in SWIFT

SWIFT’s efforts to improve women’s development focus on a project which attempts to establish separate initiatives for women, such as producing vegetables for sale. Other options the WID adviser is considering include: starting up nurseries for tropical trees; helping women to intensify their gardening techniques, both to alleviate the burden of women’s work and to make better use of existing land; carrying out research into alternative uses for old coconut plantations; agro-forestry; and ngali nut harvesting. Sideline projects such as this one, however, tend to be under-resourced and, on their own, often have the effect of marginalising women. While a separate project could complement a gender sensitised eco-timber project, it should not be seen as an alternative to this.

The general operations of SWIFT are likely to have more effect on women’s lives than the separate, small-scale initiatives set up to help them gain some cash. Yet very few women play an active role in the eco-timber operations. Indeed, when people heard I was interested in women’s participation in SWIFT, they told me that, except for two women who attended a timber milling and forest management course in 1995, women were not involved at all.

Although women have not had a direct influence on the design or directions taken by SWIFT, and only a few are producers, it is erroneous to suggest that women are not actually involved in the project. Many women support their husbands or other male relatives who work for SWIFT. Some bring men lunch or help them to carry the sawn timber down to the seashore when the ship is due. Others periodically take on their husband’s work around the village when he is working at a distant forest block. Some women are indirectly involved because communally held land is being allocated to the
project without appropriate consultation, or because of the ways men have chosen to spend their earnings.

The majority of women have little control over proceeds from eco-timber sales. One woman commented that her husband’s logic was that his body needed to feel good before he started sawing trees, so he bought beer and cigarettes to help him to achieve this effect. Another said she had seen no material improvements in people’s houses since they had started selling the timber. There was general consensus that if one had a husband who came home with the money he earned, used it to buy household goods and things for the children and gave a little to his wife to buy food, she was rather lucky.

Thus women’s involvement in the eco-timber project is as providers of free labour or as wives who have to deal with the consequences of the way their husbands choose to spend their earnings. Due to their general lack of control over project activities, they have little access to the benefits which derive from it. Rather than suggesting that women are not involved with SWIFT, however, it is more accurate to state that many women are involved with SWIFT and are affected by SWIFT’s activities, but have been marginalised from roles of power and influence associated with the project.

**Why SWIFT should be engendered**

Despite the roles, knowledge and interests of women concerning the natural environment, both the men and women with whom I spoke continually expressed the belief that forestry is not an appropriate activity for women. People feel this way because they think of ‘forestry’ as work involved with felling large trees - a task which has traditionally been men’s responsibility. In addition, despite any environmental labels which may be tagged onto them, forestry projects are perceived as cash earning opportunities or bisnis (business), which is, in rural areas at least, a domain almost always occupied by men. This perception is unfortunate since it means that women are missing out on an opportunity to earn money, gain new skills and knowledge and apply their existing knowledge in the utilisation and management of an important resource: the forests.

My research revealed that by engendering the project, SWIFT could solve some of its concerns about the practices of its producers concerning environmental sustainability as well as achieving gender equity in the project. Reasons for this conclusion include:

- Both men and women in the Solomon Islands felt that women were generally more concerned about the sustainable use of the natural environment than men. Whether this is because women rely on the natural environment to fulfil their roles or, as some suggested, because women have a greater concern for the future of their children or are simply ‘less greedy’ than men, it would seem logical that those managing environmental projects such as SWIFT should actively seek out women’s involvement.

- Research in other developing countries has revealed that if women are not benefiting economically from a project, they have no incentive to act in environmentally sustainable ways (Jackson 1994).

- Many women want to be more actively involved in SWIFT. Some, for example, desire involvement in the forest management aspects of SWIFT, from drawing up forest inventories to learning silviculture techniques or monitoring practices to ensure that sustainable harvesting is occurring. A number of women specifically stated their annoyance with the wastage caused by the felling practices men were using. While training women in the above areas would take time and resources, it could be very empowering, giving them new knowledge and greater confidence in their own abilities.

An example of how promoting a more active role for women in SWIFT could enhance environmental sustainability is that by involving women in monitoring, women could gain knowledge about, and control over, resource management associated with the project. At the same time they could ensure that environmental practices are followed. Women could also enhance the economic returns from forestry by encouraging men not to waste any parts of the trees they fell. A stronger role in the project could also give women more status within their communities, helping them to join in discussions with foresters and male relatives about what land is put aside for the project, and with their husbands to determine how the proceeds from selling timber to SWIFT will be spent. It is apparent that both women and the project could benefit from efforts to engender SWIFT.

The aim, therefore, is not to force women to join in with SWIFT, but to respond to the interest they have expressed. A first step would be to raise their awareness about SWIFT and inform them of their options. Thereafter it would be up to them to decide whether to participate in SWIFT, or how to negotiate with men for a better share of the benefits which they realise the project brings. It is also likely that women will need to be specifically targeted in terms of training opportunities and support services. At the same time, men need to be made aware of the ways in which women’s involvement could benefit the project, as well as understanding that women are entitled to benefit from the project equally with men. Raising men’s awareness is particularly important because of the numerous cultural constraints, including childcare obligations and the unacceptability of a woman being alone with a male forester, which could otherwise impede women’s greater involvement in SWIFT.

Despite SWIFT’s present weaknesses in terms of gender equity, there is hope that SWIFT could be engendered in the future. Reasons for this include: the strength and leadership of the United Church, which could be involved in awareness raising with producers on matters of justice and equity; the introspective nature of SWIFT managers, who are already reflecting on the project’s strengths and weaknesses and
making appropriate changes; and, significantly, the attitudes of both SWIFT staff and male producers, who are generally open to women playing a more active role in the project. One producer, for example, acknowledged that women could be useful in drawing up inventories and undertaking forest management because 'women are intelligent'. SWIFT foresters, likewise, noted that women had good technical ability when it came to recognising trees and non timber forest products and knowing their uses and value.

Conclusion

Melanesian women's roles, knowledge, skills and interests are to some degree unique. To foster both a sustainable development process and greater gender equity, issues pertaining to women require greater consideration than most development models allow.

This research has examined the management, operations and impacts of an eco-timber project established as an alternative to logging operations which are having a devastating effect on the environment and social fabric in the Solomon Islands. In many respects, the eco-timber project has been remarkably successful. Through an internationally recognised accreditation system, the extension of chainsaw loans, the ability to offer a very competitive price for the timber and the provision of a transportation service, SWIFT has presented a sustainable development alternative that also meets the desire of villagers for greater cash earning opportunities.

Nonetheless, aspects of SWIFT's management and operations, specifically its commitment to gender equity, have potential for improvement. While SWIFT staff have not intentionally marginalised women from the eco-timber project, by failing to acknowledge the disadvantages facing women who may wish to participate, women have effectively been marginalised. When considering the extent to which women are involved in a project, managers should ask themselves:

- do women have control over aspects of the project (for example, are they involved in decision making and project implementation)?
- are women sharing in the benefits of the project?

SWIFT's managers have simply tagged a 'women's project' onto the environmental project, thus taking the easy option: they do not have to challenge gender relations and roles, property rights or access to productive resources. This approach seems incompatible with the justice and equity concerns of the United Church, from which SWIFT emerged.

In support of the views expressed by women (and some men) in the study area, this paper advocates an engendered approach to eco-timber production. A combination of conscientising women about the project, affirming their talents and raising awareness amongst men about the need to support women's expanding roles, followed by skills training for women, could result in women gaining control within the project and a greater share of project benefits.

It is hoped that other agencies seeking to support community-based sustainable development initiatives in Melanesian countries will realise that their projects will have a greater likelihood of success if women's involvement is targeted from the outset, based on the understanding that gender equity and environmental sustainability can be complementary goals.

* Regina Scheyvens carried out independent research on the operations of SWIFT in April 1996, visiting several field sites in Western and Choiseul provinces and interviewing SWIFT personnel, eco-timber producers and groups of women.

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Pre-departure briefing for aid workers: Benefits for NGOs

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Pre-departure briefing (PDB) can have a significant impact on the capacity of NGOs and aid workers involved in the delivery of Australia's overseas aid programme. The emerging practice of preparing employees for overseas service in a developing country is a desirable technique to enhance the professionalism, productivity, and personnel effectiveness of NGOs through improved human resource management. Additionally, PDB enables employers to fulfil their contractual obligations with employees.

The concept of appropriate skills acquisition by staff within organisations has figured in theories proposed by classical, human relations and need theorists, and by proponents of contingency and open systems models. From Taylor (1947) to more recent authors of high speed management concepts (Cushman and King 1993), the preparation of workers, training for the job or updating the employee's professional capacity to suit the operating environment are recurring themes. Furthermore, Peters and Austin (1985:346) claim that 'when conditions change, new standards must be set, new skills learned, new roles taken, and old records broken.'

Briefing aid workers is preparation for life and survival in a new environment - an environment in which they have limited experience. It is assumed that workers have professional expertise which will be utilised upon arrival in a developing country. The focus of briefing, however, is on preparing for the change of environment that will be experienced in their host country since anxiety reduces productivity and 'an adequate orientation reduces anxiety' (Peters and Austin 1985:343).

During the past 30 years a more sophisticated appreciation of the dangers for aid workers who work in developing countries without PDB has emerged. If NGOs made full use of available briefing mechanisms, opportunities for organisations to display a more professional approach, and for employees in developing countries to perform more efficiently and effectively, are possible. It also reduces the limitations which arise from external environmental factors.

Pre-departure briefing

A review of the literature dealing with managing human resources and the practice of PDB highlights a number of themes which have a contemporary practical application for NGOs. These themes centre on the need to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of both NGOs and individual workers. They also focus on the psychological benefit to workers who have a high level of organisational support and backup, including a clarity of roles and an adequate preparation to fulfil them. The need to prepare aid workers to encounter changing and unpredictable circumstances in a developing country has been established. The literature also highlights the fact that PDB enables the aid worker to prepare for, and deal with, the anticipated stress of working in an environment where there is a lack of sociocultural support mechanisms available. A review of a wide range of surveys on the effectiveness of PDB suggests, with a high degree of confidence, that cross-cultural training can have a positive impact on the ability of aid workers to satisfactorily adjust to the cross-cultural environment.

Literature on, and studies of, PDB have included: expectations and experiences of temporary residents abroad (Weissman and Furnham 1987); intercultural communication effectiveness (Kealey 1989); stress (Walton 1990); the premature return of expatriate managers (Black and Gregersen 1990); quality of life (Windham International 1994); and the psychological adjustment of expatriates (Burns 1994). These studies reveal a wide acceptance by industry and other major providers of expatriate staff of the need for, and benefit from, PDB. However, within the Australian context, NGOs still do not fully utilise the process of PDB in order to benefit the organisation, the personnel or the communities to whom they send aid workers. Australian NGOs involved in overseas development, with a few notable exceptions - including the Overseas Service Bureau - have not devoted significant attention to the PDB needs of aid workers.

Many NGOs in Australia have noted, however, that the work of Australians engaged in aid projects overseas could be enhanced through the provision of an improved system of PDB. It has also been noted that consultants and aid workers often arrive in developing countries with little or no understanding of the local culture, and that although many people within Australia have considerable experience working overseas this experience is not being fully utilised upon their return.

One of the main stated objectives of most Australian development NGOs is to build bridges between Australians and the people of developing countries. In order to achieve that objective, NGOs should ensure that aid workers are adequately briefed. Cross-cultural awareness, language, living and social training, and political, economic and environmental issues are intrinsic parts of that briefing. Research indicates, however, that NGOs do not have adequate strategies for providing PDB. NGOs often rely on the motivation and initiative of aid workers who read about their future host country, and who undertake their own preparation. Additionally, research indicates that the reasons for the difference between strategies employed by organisations might lie in their origins. The primary interest of some NGOs lies in the placement of technical experts in communities (a developmental focus), whereas some church-based NGOs...
have origins which lie in the evangelical expression of Christianity through relief of poverty and welfare services.

A survey of past and present overseas aid workers was conducted in order to identify the constraints which influenced the effectiveness of NGO workers. Another purpose of this questionnaire was to seek information on subjects and issues which aid workers felt should be included in PDB. Of 135 questionnaires distributed throughout 22 countries to aid workers from one NGO, 90 responses were received.

The questionnaire was designed in four sections to solicit information in the following areas:

- receipt and adequacy of PDB;
- difficulties experienced in host countries and strategies to overcome those difficulties;
- level of satisfaction/sense of achievement felt by aid workers; and
- elements recommended for inclusion in a PDB programme for future aid workers.

**Questionnaire results**

Only 20 per cent of respondents felt they had received any form of PDB, and only seven per cent felt that it was adequate. Language was rated as the most difficult factor by one-third of the respondents; this was followed by relationships (16 per cent). Work and culture, each with 10 per cent, were ranked third, whilst other factors were health (9 per cent); isolation (8 per cent); climate (7 per cent); family (6 per cent); social issues (3 per cent); and lastly, transport (2 per cent). Three-quarters of respondents described the effect of these factors as detrimental, with 63 per cent indicating they were able to implement a strategy to overcome the factor which they determined to be most difficult.

A high level of work satisfaction was recorded by over 80 per cent of respondents, whilst only 17 per cent gave a low level assessment. Cross-cultural ease also recorded a high proportion of satisfied respondents, with 72 per cent indicating a high level of satisfaction and only 28 per cent deriving a low level of satisfaction. Suggestions for future PDB content generated wide-ranging responses, some of which were very surprising; job description, for example, was mentioned by 26 per cent of respondents. Frequently mentioned subjects included cultural information (56 per cent); language training (38 per cent); job description (26 per cent); how to adjust (23 per cent); and frustrations with not achieving goals (23 per cent).

**Conclusion**

These findings, if extrapolated to cover the wide range of NGOs in Australia, suggest that NGOs have not adopted a professional approach to the preparation and training of their aid workers. Likewise, they have not made full use of the human resource management (HRM) techniques within their organisations. It is widely accepted that training and briefing will enhance the motivation and capacity of staff, thereby enhancing the productivity of the organisation. The findings of this research have highlighted the need for NGOs to adopt a more professional approach to PDB in order to enhance the productivity of the organisation and provide physical protection and emotional support for employees. The weaknesses in the current system suggest that the employer obligations to provide security and protection in a physical and psychological sense are not being met. In addition, the concept of a supportive work environment, and a lack of understanding by management of the benefits for HRM within the organisation - for the organisation, the aid worker and the community in which the aid worker is placed - have not been fully acknowledged.

An improved HRM strategy will protect NGO investments in employees, project an improved image of Australian NGOs in developing countries and provide better accountability for donor funds. PDB undertaken by NGO aid workers can contribute to their ability to effectively counter culture shock and changed work environment conditions, thereby enabling a more productive, professional and accountable output. There is evidence that this theme will enrich the effectiveness of Australia's overseas aid programme, and this area of study could provide a rich and fertile ground for further research opportunities on the long-term effectiveness of PDB.

**References**


Training as a component of community economic development in rural Vietnam

Kathryn Gow, Queensland University of Technology and Australian Veteran’s Vietnam Reconstruction Group

At this stage of monitoring doi moi many foreign companies have pulled their investments out of Vietnam because of the lack of financial return. This could be extremely short-sighted in terms of future international trade - a point recently noted by Australia’s Ambassador in Hanoi, Susan Boyd (Boyd 1996). Some of the problems could be rectified by training the Vietnamese to become better producers of quality products and more efficient at international business.

As export markets open up for Vietnam, quality control and an understanding of international competition (in terms of pricing) from countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, India and China is crucial. Without these elements the Vietnamese will continue to lose business internationally. Training in international business is an urgent necessity for rural and urban Vietnamese.

While anyone with innate business sense and some training can establish a small business and sell products, goods or services, a training programme or structured apprenticeship usually assists the person to become more productive. Skills training is needed in management, accounting, small business, entrepreneurship, planning quality control and auditing. Training in marketing, public relations, advertising and cross-cultural communication is essential for rural Vietnam’s economic development.

No training without tools

Before we can implement training in, for example, garment making, embroidery, knitting, word processing or data input, trainees must have access to machinery (preferably electrically driven) and updated technology, and these are in short supply. From a practical viewpoint, in a training needs analysis, trainers must be aware of the lack of material goods and basic utilities in rural Vietnam. There is no point in training people to use computers or how to machine embroider unless they can continue to have access to the equipment in order to make a living. The unstated assumption is that as training is provided, the lack of equipment will become apparent and be provided free of charge. Yet even if trainers are prepared to bring equipment with them, there is generally no-one to assist or repair that equipment should it break down.

Apart from the provision of training, a massive injection of cash or goods into the economy where the training is being conducted is needed. This should be sufficient cash and equipment to enable the individuals to produce material goods for sale.

No tools without training

During my recent visit to Vietnamese rural areas, I found some equipment lying idle (e.g., computers, printers and medical equipment). No-one had the skills to connect, operate or repair this equipment. Any instructions for their use was in a language other than Vietnamese. While some Vietnamese are learning English (indeed many young people attend classes three nights a week), generally speaking their understanding of English is at a low proficiency level.

The young doctors at the local hospital requested that they be given training in some of the more technologically complex equipment, such as CAT scans. Regardless of their trade or profession, the Vietnamese need training in technology and to be given written instructions and guidelines, in Vietnamese as well as English, on how to use that technology. All foreign language training materials, be they in English, French or Russian, need to be provided with Vietnamese translations. Technical books, training magazines and dictionaries should be included as part of the package.

Developmental issues

Other developmental issues are at play here. We need to be aware of Vietnam’s stage of development as well as levels of sociocultural, environmental, socioeconomic and technological development.

Visioning the future: In exploring the training needs in one rural area in the south of Vietnam, it became evident that opportunities for different occupations and small business were not being considered. While rural areas are very poor, there are people who buy motorbikes, televisions, refrigerators and washing machines. While increased purchasing of these items depends on the availability of electricity, it is obvious that with improvements in the local economy, more rural people will purchase such items. Vietnamese officials, however, appeared unaware of the potential training needs of small businesses in rural areas.

In discussing the projected training needs of the local people with government officials, it was difficult to persuade them to recognise the need to train people for opportunities in the next one to five years; that is, opportunities to work in the electrical, electronic and technological industries or in small business work such as plumbing or carpentry. Government officials were more concerned with what had worked in the past, and this lack of planning is a major concern to western trainers and educators. It can also been seen, however, as a pragmatic approach to address the more urgent, present problems.

Training managers and professionals in visioning skills may be difficult in a society where Buddhist beliefs hold that it is necessary to be focused on the present in order to achieve enlightenment. This lack of visioning for the future, however, may be a developmental, rather than a philosophical choice.
Philosophical beliefs and learning: According to Wase (1994:11), the three principles of Buddhism are: nature and law of nature; harmony with nature, happiness and freedom; and education and training as a way of life. If we are to train in a country where 80 per cent of people adhere in some way to Buddhist principles, then it is imperative that we understand that 'the key strategy toward ecologically sustainable society is Low Consumption (LC)/High Quality of Life (HQ). LC/HQ is possible through education and training' (Wase 1994:13). Whether or not economic development in Vietnam can be achieved with an ecological balance is debatable. The concept of educating for sustainable and ecologically sound economic development has only recently been introduced in the western world. How likely is it to occur in a country which does not have the benefit of a reasonably high standard of living? Education about ecological sustainable society seems imperative in the Vietnamese experience.

As trainers, we are there to assist the Vietnamese in fulfilling one of the three principles of Buddhism - that of education and training as a way of life. We are not there to encourage high levels of consumption or to convert them to what some people see as the greed of western materialism. The Lord Buddha preached in favour of a learning people in a learning community, and these principles are not at odds with education and training.

Socioeconomic factors: Conditions we tend to take for granted in the West are absent in rural Vietnam, for example: refrigeration, air conditioning or telecommunications. Sewage disposal, free education, adequate healthcare, safe and protected transport, building and vehicle maintenance and environmental preservation are also not prevalent in rural Vietnam. It is debatable to what extent the absence of those factors impedes economic development. There is, however, no doubt that the absence of most of these factors hinders training programmes.

From experience of our own technological and socioeconomic development, we can project what type of training the Vietnamese will need in electrical, technical, engineering, electronic, information technology and computerisation arenas. Those with existing skills in building, electrical and plumbing trades need retraining to include aspects of the quality control of materials, workmanship, maintenance and repairs. In terms of technological maturity, Vietnam, like Thailand, will be forced to leap past the industrialisation of its society and move directly into a technologically literate society in order to compete economically in the international business market. This is difficult, however, due to the lack of equipment and sufficient trainers to meet demand.

Expectations and assumptions

In Vietnam people perceive westerners as very wealthy, regardless of their status/income. As an educator, health practitioner or trainer, when we conduct training needs analysis we tacitly agree to provide that training without cost (or sometimes to provide wages for trainees to undertake the programme). Additionally, it is expected that the tools of training (eg, equipment) will be provided.

The Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement signed between the Vietnamese officials and western training providers carries implicit assumptions about continuing friendships between the countries. Thus, we are not just dealing with a business transaction or establishing a long-term relationship - as is the norm in most Asian countries - we are dealing with the unstated assumption that we will help them economically in many ways.

By merely asking questions about needs, we make unspoken promises. Trainers (as well as business people) need to remember that just by being in their country (not as a tourist) and by showing interest in the people, we are making a commitment. We may consider our training as a short-term encounter, but the Vietnamese view it as a long-term commitment.

Training the trainers

Linh (1995:27) suggests that training people to train will have a longer lasting and more beneficial effect than conducting training programmes and then leaving the country. This is particularly important in healthcare training where health workers work under decentralised district medical services (Hull and Hull 1995).

One way in which we can assist in community economic development is to introduce more dynamic training techniques for existing teachers and trainers in Vietnam. While it may be appropriate to export our training sessions to the country, we must also ensure that the training is sustained after we have left. We need to promote the transition of training skills to the Vietnamese trainers, so that the skills and processes can become part of the sustainable development of Vietnam.

There is no point being foreign 'experts' who come and go if we are genuinely interested in assisting the Vietnamese in community economic development. As is the case with good managers, we know we have been successful at our jobs when we make ourselves redundant.

References

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Japanese aid for third country training programmes

The Government of Japan will support a five-year training programme on 'Participatory planning and management of integrated rural development for poverty alleviation'. Developed by CIRDAP (Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific), the training programme consists of a series of training courses, each of 14 weeks duration, and will be conducted up to 2001. The first course is expected to commence in 1997 and will be held in Dhaka and Comilla, Bangladesh.

CIRDAP Newsletter, No. 63, March 1996, p.1

Asia-Pacific human rights forum

AusAID will provide A$75,000 annually for three years to support an Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. The funds will go to the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to provide secretariat support for the Forum. Participants in the first Asia-Pacific workshop of National Human Rights Institutions, held in Darwin in July, agreed to establish the Forum as a means of promoting and protecting human rights in the Asia-Pacific region, and encouraging greater regional cooperation on human rights. AusAID also provided A$30,000 towards the cost of running the workshop. The Forum will foster the development of national human rights institutions in countries throughout the region. It will also assist those countries in the process of establishing their own human rights institutions.


Should husbands and fathers do housework

A proposal to introduce a law that would compel husbands to do a share of the housework caused heated discussions in Austria recently. Yes, say some. Women are disadvantaged through the double burden of home and job, their earning capacity is diminished and their accumulation of pension benefits curtailed. No, say others. Such a law could not be enforced. It would poison the atmosphere within families and reduce the chances of conflict resolution. Family Minister Bartenstein suggests voluntary marriage contracts and the possibility of obligatory participation in marriage seminars that deal with these issues. He also envisages the right to a state pension for childraising years for women. The debate should not be seen as 'who would do the dishes', but one about pension rights, alimony payments in case of divorce and other financial and psychological aspects.

NGO Families International, No. 23, June 1996, p.15
Lake Victoria cleanup to begin

The ecosystem of Africa’s largest freshwater body, Lake Victoria, is being threatened by rapid and alarming changes, which have accelerated over the past three decades. Overfishing and oxygen depletion threaten fish stocks and biodiversity. Over 200 indigenous species face possible extinction. The Lake’s fisheries, with an estimated export value of US$320 million a year, face potential collapse. Waterborne diseases are on the rise, and water hyacinth has begun to choke the important waterways and now costs local economies an estimated US$10 million annually.

To help fight the degradation of Lake Victoria, the World Bank in July approved a US$35 million credit from the International Development Association (IDA) for a project that will help the three riparian countries - Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda - conserve the Lake’s biodiversity and genetic resources, generate food and provide jobs and safe water in a disease-free environment. The project has an estimated total cost of US$77.6 million and will receive a US$35 million grant from the Global Environment Facility. The three governments will provide the remaining US$7.6 million. The project will involve community participation at every level. It includes funding for micro-projects, community training and workshops and community participation in scientific studies, water hyacinth control, fisheries research and soil conservation.

World Bank News, XV(29), 1 August 1996, pp.1-2

Female Asian migrants

Female Asian migrants make up the fastest growing category of the world’s 35 million plus population of migrant workers. They provide contract labour to some of the world’s wealthiest and most dynamic economies, often at a high human cost. Approximately 1.5 million Asian women, both legal and illegal, are working abroad. In the 1980s about 25 per cent of overseas contract workers were women but today that number equals or outnumber men. Major sending countries are Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The main receiving countries are the Gulf States, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei. While most female migrant workers are employed as domestic aides, many are in the ‘entertainment’ industry, a euphemism for prostitution, often arranged by well-organised underground syndicates. Large wage differentials between sending and recipient countries, the increasing burden on women as male unemployment levels rise and the existence of large overseas social networks facilitate migration. Source countries are reluctant to interfere due to economic benefits from remittance income and reduced domestic unemployment.

Food for thought

If we could shrink the Earth’s population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios intact, it would have: 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the western hemisphere (north and south) and 8 Africans; 51 would be female and 49 male; 70 would be non white and 30 white; 70 would be non Christian and 30 Christian; 50 per cent of the entire world’s wealth would be in the hands of only 6 people all of whom would be the citizens of the United States; 80 would live in substandard housing; 70 would be unable to read; 50 would suffer malnutrition; only one would have college education; and no-one would own a computer. When one considers our world from such an incredibly compressed perspective, the need for both tolerance and understanding becomes glaringly apparent.


Top ten IBRD/IDA borrowers for 1996

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Total 12,318.5

World Bank News, XV (27), 18 July 1996, p.2
October 1996

Conference reports

Communications with/in Asia

Melbourne, 8-11 July 1996

The 20th anniversary conference of the Australian Studies Association of Australia attracted a large number of domestic and international participants. The conference offered panels, plenary sessions and round table discussions on a number of themes focusing on contemporary issues in Central and West Asia, China and Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines, Japan, Mainland Southeast Asia and South Asia. In an attempt to do justice to the somewhat gigantic task of addressing all regions and major issues confronting Asia, several concurrent sessions were organised over the five day period. A few common themes that were evident in most streams were issues of state structure and control, human rights, the rising tide of religious fundamentalism, the biases of western media images and the impact of satellite technology as a mass media tool.

A number of papers across various streams discussed the controversies surrounding the 'perceived/real myth' of Islamic fundamentalism, in addition to two special panel sessions on Islam. The level and the depth of the debate provided much food for thought. The sessions on Central Asia provided an interesting insight into the problems confronting the newly independent states of the former USSR as well as some scholarly work on Iran. It was also one of the few streams that had a substantial number of papers dealing with gender issues. It was surprising and encouraging to find such a substantial body of research work currently underway in Australia on issues such as religious and cultural identity, ethnicity and nationalism.

The sessions on South Asia were led by renowned historians such as Francis Robinson and Gyanendra Pandey. The scars and consequences of the partition of the Indian subcontinent, the diminishing interest in secularism in the world’s largest democracy, India, as well as population pressures, poverty and the impact of economic liberalisation on Indian masses were discussed within the historical and cultural context of South Asia. In contrast, the papers presented at the Indonesia and Philippines stream were relatively apolitical. The focus of most papers was communication issues - cultural and technological - press freedom/censorship and the role of Australian media. The large number of papers and themes meant truncating some of the issues into more than one panel sessions. Quite a few of the topical and more controversial issues confronting Southeast Asian countries today were presented in the 'economic and comparative' stream rather than in the main country/region themes.

Overall the conference was extremely well organised. The array of book/journal displays at times drew bigger crowds
Feminist geography and the geography of gender research methodologies

Nottingham, UK, 9 March 1996

The conference was organised by the Women and Geography Study Group (WGSG) of the Royal Geographical Society and the Institute of British Geographers. The opening address was delivered by Professor Kahari, Director of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, and the conference dinner address on Australian-African affairs was delivered by Matthew Neuhaus, Director, UN Political and Trade. The convenors intend to publish papers from the conference.

Among the main innovations at this year's conference was a special day-long section organised by, and devoted to, papers on African Studies by honours and postgraduate students from across Australia, including a large contingent from Western Australia. The quality of papers was outstanding and bodes well for the future of African Studies in Australia. It is hoped that a number of the papers will appear in the intended publication of this year's conference. As a result of their success and enthusiasm, two postgraduates have been elected onto the executive committee to assist in organising a similar honours and postgraduate forum at next year's conference in Canberra. David Lucas and Christine McMurray are co-convenors of the 1997 Canberra conference.

There was also a special panel of NGO representatives which served as a forum for discussion of the impact of government policy and international trends on Australian foreign aid. Problems, policies and philosophies of various NGO agencies were also addressed.

The other major initiative at the conference was an agreement to incorporate the African Studies Review and Newsletter into an expanded, twice-yearly refereed journal to be launched by the end of 1997 in conjunction with a New York publisher. Associate Professor Paul Nursey-Bray and Dr Paul Ahluwalia are to serve as general editors, with special editors commissioned from within the Association for thematically focused issues.

David Dorward, African Research Institute, La Trobe University

The second paper by Ann Varley was an excellent journey through the recent literature around gender, feminism and doing research, which identified the current mood of self-reflection and subsequent paralysis afflicting many of those attempting to do emancipatory 'feminist' research proposed in the mode by Maria Mies and others in the early 1990s. The paper recognised parallels with the 'crisis of representation' in development studies, as identified by Sidaway and others, but reflected on why feminiss seemed particularly afflicted by paralysis when faced with ethical dilemmas and the power relations intrinsic to research on 'others'. Proposed explanations included slipping into old models of women as nurturers and mothers as factors contributing to female/feminist researchers' reluctance to abandon research subjects following a research encounter.

Ann Varley's identification of fieldwork as 'bodywork' struck particular resonances for those who do fieldwork in developing countries. Experiences of such fieldwork often involve acute awareness of the body. Physical sensations of awkwardness and discomfort may accompany dilemmas about clothing, bodily appearance and acceptance/refusal of food. She concluded that researchers would do well by avoiding patronising ('matronising') those among whom we carry out research by not portraying them as dependent and powerless in the face of 'betrayals' by researchers who intrude into and disrupt other people's lives, 'stealing' data and 'abandoning' the individuals or community. Considering the ethics of research encounter in the academic sphere, researchers are both the accused and the judge - thereby denying space and voice to the 'other'.

The final paper by Jo Rowland and Janet Townsend 'Searching for empowerment' related the successes and failures of a research project carried out with academic and NGO women in Mexico into understandings of empowerment.
Some of the difficulties of organising 'empowering' research in a developing country that were emphasised included finding appropriate partners for cooperation, the delicate handling of financial matters and issues of language and translation.

In the final plenary session Clare Madge and Parvati Raghuram put forward some questions for discussion in small groups. These included: Bodies - how and why bodies matter in feminist methodologies; body markers - attire, dress, hair; relations of fieldwork and bodywork; and how do/should we prioritise the feminist political project. Discussion was lively but unfortunately it was not possible to cover all the enticing issues of the debate. My overall feeling was that the day conference only began to scratch the surface of questions of what is feminist research and how do we do it?

As with all WGSG meetings the prevailing atmosphere of the day conference was refreshingly welcome making it a very pleasant occasion to network amongst old friends and new faces. The large number of postgraduate students was also encouraging.

Reprinted from DARG Newsletter, No. 25, Spring 1996, pp.15-16
Conference calendar

Development Dilemmas in the Mekong Subregion
Melbourne, 1-2 October 1996

The themes and subthemes of this workshop include: managing the Mekong; subregional economic development; Vietnam - development dilemmas now; and developing natural resources - options, impacts and constraints. In addition there will be a Mekong expert panel and roundtable discussion.

For more information contact:
Monash Asia Institute
Monash University
Clayton, VIC 3168
Australia
Tel (03) 9905 5280
Fax (03) 9905 5370
E-mail robert.stensholt@arts.monash.edu.au
or Rhonda.Lyons@arts.monash.edu.au

Workshop on Southeast Asian Women
Melbourne, 4 October 1996

This is the third such annual workshop being organised by the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at Monash University. It is intended to promote research in the area of Southeast Asian women and to facilitate the exchange of ideas among scholars.

For more information contact:
Monash Asia Institute
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Tel (03) 9905 5280
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E-mail secmai@arts.cc.monash.edu.au

Sustainability and Environmental Change
London, 16 October 1996

The theme of this one day seminar is Environmental Transformations in Developing Countries. The meeting is aimed at academics, NGOs and policy makers interested in human aspects of environment in developing countries. Following the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, much attention has been focused on increasing pressures on environment resulting from industrialisation and agricultural change. However, the perception of change, and the needs and aims of environmental policy and management have also changed. The conference will aim to assess recent progress in understanding human impacts on the environment, yet also consider social, political and methodological priorities for sustainable development.

For more information contact:
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E-mail T.Forsyth@LSE.AC.UK

Energy Management: Opportunities in Changing Energy Markets
Sydney, 29-30 October 1996

The utility environment is changing rapidly. It is important that customers and energy service providers understand the issues associated with energy efficiency and demand side management in the new energy markets, and that they are able to identify opportunities arising from those issues. The aim of this conference is to assist in achieving these outcomes. The conference format, with its social as well as business activities, is designed to give delegates ample opportunity to meet with the International Energy Agency's Demand Side Management Programme (IEA DSM); to hear expert speakers from business and utilities engaged in energy management in today's marketplace; to network with other participants; and to discuss the many issues facing today's energy industry.

For more information contact:
Conference Organiser
The Meetings Manager Pty Ltd
2nd Floor 81 1/4 George Street
The Rocks
Sydney, NSW 2000
Australia
Tel (02) 9241 2955
Fax (02) 9241 5354

Governance Issues and Sustainable Development in the Indian Ocean Rim Countries
Perth, 28-30 October 1996

This conference is organised by the Centre for Migration and Development Studies of the University of Western Australia. It is intended to draw attention to human rights issues, administrative and bureaucratic efficiency, the need for improvement in law and order, efficient management of resources with special reference to the environment and gender issues.

Countries of the Indian Ocean region are emerging as a significant political and economic force, with South Africa, India and Australia as major regional powers. What happens to the region in the future has obvious implications for the long-term geopolitical interests of every country in the region.

For more information contact:
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Director
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University of Western Australia
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Australia
Tel (09) 380 2941
Fax (09) 380 1016
E-mail asiddiqu@ecel.uwa.edu.au
The Media and Ethnic Conflict

Melbourne, 1-2 November 1996

This conference will examine the media's role with a national and international focus and look at areas of general interest including the family, sport, education, crime, the arts and war. Some of the issues to be discussed include: what role for the media in Australia as a multicultural society in the 1990s and beyond? What do we mean by ethnicity? What is conflict? Can the media actually create ethnic conflict?

For more information contact:
Paulyne Pogorelske
Int. Conflict Resolution Centre
University of Melbourne
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Social Sciences and AIDS in Africa: Review and Prospects

Saly Portudal, Senegal, 4-8 November 1996

The symposium is expected to highlight gains and shortcomings in existing knowledge on HIV/AIDS and indicate new research areas. It also aims to enhance the analytic capacity and knowledge base of social science researchers, and open up new opportunities for cooperation with researchers in medical and biomedical sciences working on issues related to HIV/AIDS in Africa. It is hoped that such collaboration would lead to the development of new research programmes that can be taken on by existing AIDS networks in Africa.

For more information contact:
CODSERIA
PO Box 3304
Dakar
Senegal
Tel (221) 25 9281
Fax (221) 24 1289

7th International Congress on Women's Health Issues

Khon Kaen, Thailand, 5-8 November 1996

The theme of this conference is Women in Development, and topics for discussion include: women in work; women in the developing world; gender issues; reproductive health; women and HIV/AIDS; women in transition; women in minority groups; women as health advocates; and population and sociocultural health issues.

For more information contact:
The Seventh International Congress on Women's Health Issues
c/- Associate Professor
Earmporn Thongkrajai, RN MA
Faculty of Nursing
Khon Kaen University
Khon Kaen 40002
Thailand
Fax (66 43) 237 606

Future Directions in Health Care Management

Sydney, 6-8 November 1996

The federal budget provided an indication of the direction of federal policy for restructuring national health funding. Both financial and structural changes have also been advocated including medicare, managed care, medical savings accounts, amendments to the health insurance legislation, case-mix funding, etc. The conference provides a timely opportunity to discuss these issues from the perspective of: industry groups, private hospitals, insurance companies, doctors and others.

For more information contact:
Reply Paid 402
IIR Conferences
PO Box 2133
North Sydney, NSW 2059
Australia
Tel (02) 9954 5844
Fax (02) 9959 4684
E-mail iir@ozemail.com.au
Homepage http://www.iir.com.au

Integrating Family in Social Progress and Development

Vienna, 11-12 November 1996

The theme of this conference is Implementing Family-Specific Recommendations of Global Conferences of the 1990s. It is planned as an expert meeting, and will include participation by government and non government organisations (NGOs), UN agencies, researchers and others.

The conference is based on implementation of the last General Assembly Resolution on 'Follow-up to IYF' and the need to develop NGO and government action to put into practice family-specific provisions adopted by recent World Conferences.

For more information contact:
Vienna NGO Committee on the Family
NGO-IYF Executive Secretariat
An der Hulben 1/15
A-1010 Vienna
Austria
Tel (43 1) 513 8687
Fax (43 1) 512 163875

World Food Summit

Rome, 13-17 November 1996

The General Assembly welcomes the decision of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) to convene a World Food Summit at the level of heads of state or government. The Assembly invites all UN organisations, other intergovernmental organisations, as well as non governmental organisations and the private sector to cooperate actively with FAO in preparing for the summit.

For more information contact:
World Food Summit Secretariat
FAO Headquarters
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome
Italy
Tel (39 6) 5225 2932
Fax (39 6) 5225 5249
E-mail food-summit@fao.org
Preventing Transmission - Promoting Health

Sydney, 14-17 November 1996

This is the eight annual conference of the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine. The conference is being cosponsored by The Three National Centres in HIV Research, The Australian and New Zealand Association of Nurses in AIDS Care and The Social Workers in AIDS.

For more information contact:
Australasian Society for HIV Medicine
Conference Secretariat
GPO Box 2609
Sydney, NSW 2001
Australia
Tel (02) 241 1478
Fax (02) 251 3552

Human Adaptability: Future Trends and Lessons From the Past

Canberra, 2-4 December 1996

This is the tenth annual conference of the Australasian Society for Human Biology. The conference will focus on issues in human ecology and social change; health and nutrition; and anatomy and sports science.

For more information contact:
Kayt Watts
ASHB Conference Secretariat
PO Box 3182
Manuka, ACT 2603
Australia
Tel (06) 295 8282
Fax (06) 239 7948
E-mail kayt@ingenue.net.au

Changing Journalism in a Changing World

Geelong, 2-6 December 1996

This is the annual conference of the Journalism Education Association (JEA). As the twentieth century comes to an end, the pace of change seems to be speeding up - not only technological change but changes to the laws under which we work and changes in the ethical and political climate. This year's JEA conference hopes to provide a forum for discussion about these important changes. In addition, members will be presenting papers on a wide range of issues from journalistic ethics and the failure of self-regulation, and the next generation of television news room systems, to environment reporters - their background and their work practices.

For more information contact:
Noreen Nicholson
Conference Manager
Campus and Student Services Division
Deakin University
Geelong, VIC 3217
Australia
Tel (052) 272 062
Fax (052) 272 031
E-mail noreen@deakin.edu.au

Pacific Islands Political Studies Association (PIPSA) Conference

Republic of Palau, 8-11 December 1996

This PIPSA conference will have the theme Leadership and Political Change in the Pacific.

For more information contact:
Co-Convenors
Bellendorf/Shuster
5th PIPSA Conference
Micronesia Area Research Centre
University of Guam
UOG Station
Guam 96923
Fax (671) 734 7403

WABA Global Forum: Children's Health and Children's Rights

Thailand, 2-6 December 1996

This conference is organised by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding (WABA) with the aim to develop a strategic plan of action to meet challenges of the 21st century; to evaluate progress in efforts to date; to share experiences of successful interventions; and to improve skills.

For more information contact:
WABA
PO Box 1200
10850 Penang
Malaysia
Fax (60 4) 6572 655

Getting Out? Decolonisation in the Pacific Islands

Canberra, 13-15 December 1996

Pacific Islands historians will be meeting this December at the Australian National University. The workshop theme will be Decolonisation. Globally, the literature assumes that anticolonial nationalism is the most important
engine of decolonisation. This paradigm seems inapt in the Pacific, where the most substantial anti-colonial movements have been contained, and where independence has been achieved, it has commonly followed from metropolitan agency.

For more information contact:
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Division of Pacific and Asian History
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
Australian National University
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Australia
Tel (06) 249 2298
Fax (06) 249 5525
E-mail dxd@coombs.anu.edu.au

Microcredit Summit
Washington, 2-4 February 1997

Leading institutions from both the public and private sectors are joining together in an effort to improve the quality of life for the world's poorest families by participating in the first global Microcredit Summit. Microcredit programmes offer tiny loans to very poor people for self-employment ventures. With incomes earned in these 'micro' businesses people are able to feed, clothe, shelter and educate their families. Microcredit institutions can be found on every continent, but serve only a fraction of people in need of their services. The Summit will be the first step of a decade-long campaign seeking to ensure that 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially women of these families, will be receiving credit for employment by 2005.

For more information contact:
Microcredit Summit
c/- RESULTS Educational Fund
236 Mass. Ave NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002
USA
Tel (1 202) 546 1900
Fax (1 202) 546 3228
E-mail microcredit@igc.apc.org

Institute of Australian Geographers/New Zealand Geographical Society
Hobart, 28-31 January 1997

The theme of the conference will be Islands - Culture, Economy and Environment, and will be jointly sponsored by The Institute of Australian Geographers and The New Zealand Geographical Society. A special session on Development Geography will include sessions on islands and migration, islands and development, and islands and Southeast Asia.

For more information contact:
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
University of Tasmania
GPO Box 252C
Hobart, TAS 7001
Australia
Tel (002) 202 463
Fax (002) 202 989
E-mail iAG97@geog.utas.edu.au
web http://www.geog.utas.edu.au/iag97

Fertility Decline in the Third World
Exeter, 7-10 January 1996

This one day conference is part of the larger three day conference of the Royal Geographical Society and the Institute of British Geographers. The seminar aims to look at the national and international patterns of recent trends in fertility: what data are being used and how are they being collected (scale and sample issues), especially by the DHS? how reliable are they?

For more information contact:
Prof. Bill Gould
Department of Geography
University of Liverpool
PO Box 147
Liverpool L69 3BX
United Kingdom
Tel (44 151) 794 2853
Fax (44 151) 794 2866
E-mail wtsg@liv.ac.uk

Second International Meeting of Women Innovators and Inventors
Cuba, 4-8 March 1997

The objectives of the conference are: to facilitate the exchange of experiences between empirical and professional women innovators and inventors who contribute towards improving the quality of life, sustainable development of the community and communication within the family and with the community; to demonstrate the role of women in sustainable growth in Cuba; and to establish cooperative links with different associations and groups of women innovators and inventors. The major conference themes are: alternatives for the sustainable production of food; renewable energy and sustained development of the community; development of biotechnology and other technologies for the production of medicine; and environment and sustainable development.

For more information contact:
Lic. Esperanza Gonzalez Arcia
General Coordinator
Calle 40, No. 518 - Miramar
Playa Ciudad la Habana
Cuba
Tel (537) 296670/234418
Fax (537) 335408

October 1996
This book will be of assistance to development workers wishing to introduce an element of literacy education within the context of a more all-encompassing development project, written within the framework of 'people-centred' development. It is not for the director of a mass literacy campaign but rather for those who wish to further the empowerment of so-called 'recipients' or 'target groups' of a small-scale aid project in the field of agriculture, small-scale industry or credit provision. It discusses the role of literacy (including numeracy) within a broad context of development, pointing out that while there are great advantages to be had from being able to read, write and calculate, it should not be assumed that those without these skills cannot lead fulfilled lives and be leaders in their communities.

Four questions are posed throughout the book: Who needs literacy? What do they need it for? What kind of literacy do they need? How will the programme be planned and implemented? The way these questions are answered, the authors argue, will ensure that the literacy programme developed will be appropriate to the needs of the learners.

For too long adult literacy programmes, and adult education in general, have followed the general schooling model. While reading primers are appropriate for young children learning to read as part of their initial education, their use has been hotly debated among adult literacy practitioners and strongly opposed by Paulo Freire who believes they impose an alien set of priorities on adult learners and demotivate them. However, most large-scale adult literacy projects, even those implemented by those who purport to follow Freire's ideas, have ended up using them. This is partly because it is much easier to do so and when there are large numbers of people concerned, and the teachers involved are not highly experienced facilitators. The authors of this book do not have a firm position on the use of primers or other specially designed materials such as the readers produced by UNESCO's Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, but they do emphasise the advantages of getting the learners to assist with producing their own materials. Nor do they have a clear position on the relative merits of 'top down' (i.e., recognising sentences and phrases first, then moving on to words and letters) versus 'bottom up' (learning the alphabet first) methods, since these partly depend on the language being studied.

Two methodologies which the authors of this book advocate both involve learners in the production of their own learning materials.
The first is the REFLECT (Regenerated Freireian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) model, developed by ACTIONAID of the UK. REFLECT seeks to build on Freireian theory by providing a structured methodology and assisting learners to organise their existing knowledge in areas such as agriculture, health, village planning and other fields by drawing maps, calendars, diagrams and learning the words associated with them. This method builds on the so-called participatory rural appraisal (PRA) method used by a number of non governmental organisations. The other technique they advocate is the Language Experience Approach, which has its origins in the experience of the Workers Educational Associations in the UK and the work of Sylvia Ashton-Warner with Maori students in New Zealand. With this approach, according to the authors, learners are given power right from the beginning, they are the 'creators' as well as the 'decoders' of the written work. Students decide what they want to learn and how to write, and thus a close connection between the written and spoken word is established. Rather than having a reading primer to gauge progress, they need to read all sorts of other literature between classes: street signs, maps, Bills, leaflets, mail order catalogues, instruction booklets for machinery or agricultural chemicals and similar materials.

The issue of where to go after the first stages of literacy have been achieved is also an important one. Without plenty of reading material and opportunities to write, new literates will often forget what they have learnt. Community newspapers and comics produced by new learners themselves are an excellent way of meeting this need but are often difficult and expensive to produce.

In addition to being useful for practitioners, this book is useful in giving readers an idea of how various concepts of literacy link to other development issues. For example, it squarely knocks on the head the idea that literacy is something one either has or does not have and that the teaching of literacy can be a simple and mechanical task unrelated to motivation. It is similarly critical of those who talk about the eradication of illiteracy as though it were a 'disease'. There is also some analysis of the early forays into the concepts of 'functional' literacy and how the concept of functionality has changed over the last two decades. The authors believe that there is always an optimal timing for the introduction of a literacy programme in a particular situation. The history of failures of many literacy campaigns may relate to problems in timing.

This book is not a handbook in the sense of being a step-by-step cookbook for running literacy classes, or even a facilitators manual such as that produced by ACTIONAID for the REFLECT programme. It is, however, a very concise and accessible way to get an appreciation of the many issues one needs to address in setting up a small-scale literacy programme, one which does not require massive recruitment of volunteer staff and where the designers of the programme will themselves remain involved in it. Its chapter on general principles of adult learning and adult learning styles is rather brief and would best be supplemented by some more general text such as Alan Rogers Adults learning for development. Indeed, Rogers - founder of the British NGO Education for Development - writes the introduction. The many examples and case studies used are predominantly from volunteer workers with the British NGO Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) in countries such as Nepal, Kenya, Uganda, El Salvador, Bangladesh and Namibia. Australian development-oriented NGOs have not focused on adult literacy to anything like the extent of their counterparts in the UK, but with needs as great as those in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, I would envisage that this book would have a ready audience in Australia and in some of the countries where Australian aid is delivered.

Helen Hill, Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Technology

**Australians and the environment**


Australians and the environment is the second Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publication to explicitly address a broad range of Australia's environmental 'facts and figures', and provides a wealth of information which should be both interesting and valuable for many organisations and individuals. By welding data from a wide range of secondary sources with some primary data derived from surveys conducted by the ABS, the book not only demonstrates the breadth of current knowledge on issues such as pollution, land degradation and ecotourism, but also provides a basis for more analytical consideration of the future implications. Such analysis is not its primary function and, for me at least, this is at times frustrating. But since, as the introduction suggests, this volume is designed as a companion to Australia's 1996 State of the Environment Report, analytical approaches are considered elsewhere.

The book focuses on a Canadian-based sustainable development model, the Population-Environment-Process (PEP) model, which examines linkages between population, natural assets and economic processes. Components of this useful model provide the frameworks for the major sections of the book: From the environment to people and the economy which includes elements such as natural resource attributes (water, soils, etc.) and environmental pressures and benefits to individuals and to the economy (Part 2); People and their impact on the environment which includes a population overview and pressures exerted on the environment by people (Part 3); The economy and its impact on the environment which includes an economic activity overview, and pressures exerted on the environment by the economy (Part 4). Since all these elements are inextricably linked this tripartite division is somewhat artificial; however, given the information available, it is probably the best way of disentangling the complexities of these relationships. I would have liked a brief
The scholarship of Third World studies has grown progressively barren. The enthusiasm which launched developmental studies under the commanding scholarship of the legions of economists, sociologists and political scientists is growing silent. Perhaps the silence can be attributed to the disdain and disappointment felt against the dereliction of the less developed countries to heal themselves. What benefits can be gained by studying failed systems?

The developmental school inaugurated the liberal perspective with exuberance, but soon compromised their credibility by politicising developmental theory. They allowed themselves to be coopted to the mobilisational pressures of the cold war. They were seduced to pose as defenders of western liberalism against the assaults by communism. Once they were coopted, their theoretical attention shifted from secular to ideological as a tool for articulating the worth of liberalism. The developmental school fell short of making the transition to Third World concerns such as administration, internal economic distribution and intergroup relations. ‘Be like the West and providence will take care of the rest’ seemed to have become the concluding theme of the developmental school.

The dependencistas which carried the task forward to the 1970s, did not cover any grounds. As cold war politics intensified, they grew defensive under the combined assault of imperialist propaganda dutifully supported by liberal intellectualism. They too became advocates of the leftist philosophy, mainly communism, even though they were not as intimate with their ideological mentors as the liberals were with the capitalist/imperialist camp. Thus Tony Smith, who also expressed disquiet about the founding fathers of developmental theory, would call dependency theory an ‘ideological vehicle’ for communism (Smith 1979:247-88).

By the 1980s, the dependencistas reached a dead-end as a result of their failure to offer alternative solutions to conditions of poverty and political turmoil. Third World studies is a moribund in need of resurrection.

A few works have shown up of late, perhaps to fill in the gap for texts at colleges and universities. One such volume is Developing Areas. The text is an edited volume constituting the contributions of 41 scholars from the US, Europe, Asia and Africa. It is divided into 13 chapters with a total of 43 contributions. The content is eclectic in that areas of sociology, political science and economics are covered. However, the majority of the contributions are from economists.

From the point of political science, Tony Smith gives the opening for Chapter I. He highlights developmental studies to argue that their value was overstated. He also summarily dismisses the dependency scholars as idealogues whose approach and recommendations did not merit any billing for practical considerations. What the dependencistas offered has been marketed by the communists and nowhere appreciated.

The role of the state is defined not in structural terms, but in historical profiles focusing on the undoing of traditional societies by colonialism. In general, the contributions are mostly written in the 1980s. Some are even from the 1960s. Only four are written in the 1990s. The subject areas covered are the role of the state, process of economic development, population growth, the role of women, national debt and environmental challenges. The tone of analysis is solicitous (Caldwell), speculative (Morris, Adelman) imputative (Perim, Potekhin, Watts), prescriptive (Baker, Wray) and analytical and pedagogic (Hicks and Streeten, Bratton, Simon, Olson). Problems encountered by the developing countries and the absence of mitigating gestures from the affluent West is implied over and over, while the political systems and methods of the Third World as contributing to economic poverty and political degeneration are overlooked.

So what’s new? Nothing. The book is a missed opportunity for the editors. They chose the easy task of assembling major articles of yesteryears, but failed to give account of recent developments on the area of political and economic development. The proliferation of democratisation has provided new opportunities for the study of the Third World. The editors of this volume decided to look back to the past three decades instead of facing the eve of the 21st century with new insights.

Tseggai Isaac, Reprinted from Third World Quarterly, 17(1), March 1996
The Development Studies Electronic Forum

This Forum was established by the Australian National University (ANU) to provide a world-wide communications vehicle and a central electronic archive for anyone working on, or interested in, the study of social and economic development, with a particular focus on Third World countries. It was established on the 7 July 1994 on the joint initiative of the Coombs Computing Unit, Research Schools of Social Sciences & Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, and The Australian Development Studies Network, National Centre for Development Studies, RSPAS, ANU.

How to join

To join (subscribe to) the forum send e-mail

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It will be helpful for all members of the Forum to provide a brief introductory note, as their first communication with the Forum: who you are, your institution or affiliation, your general and specific interests in development studies research. Such note should be labelled in the subject line: 'M.Y. Surname biographical details' (eg, A.B. Charles biographical details). Most email systems permit the appending of a signature block to a message; please use one if possible.

Participants are free to join and leave the Forum at any time. English is the preferred language of communication of this Forum.

Contributions

To contribute, you must have subscribed and been approved as a member of the list of contributors. Approval to join the Forum is a 'proforma' operation, but subscription does permit some basic control of the contents of submissions by the list owner. Any submission to the forum is immediately broadcast to all subscribed members, and a copy automatically archived.

Anyone, whether a registered member or not, can electronically view and retrieve the communications to the forum using a database 'ANU-Development-Studies-L' accessible through the standard WAIS software and through the ANU's COOMBSQUEST Social Sciences and Humanities Information Facility gopher running on the coombs.anu.edu.au as well as on the cheops.anu.edu.au machines.

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to: Development-Studies-L@coombs.anu.edu.au
message: [the body of your contribution comes here]

If you are reporting findings or research results, treat the text as if it were a short note/abstract to professional journal. Bibliographic information is always welcome and such contributions, if submitted, will be archived on in the Coombspapers Social Sciences Research Data Bank at ANU available by ftp/gopher/www access on the coombs.anu.edu.au system.

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New Books

Autonomous development - Humanising the landscape: An excursion into radical thinking and practice


At a time of widespread disillusion as to what development has in practice done to the lives of hundreds of millions of marginalised people over the past 40 years, this book seeks to reclaim development as a project of people's own autonomous agency. Born out of three decades of fieldwork and working with 'Third World' students, it revisits the primary question of what development ought really to be about. The author starts from the conviction that development is too important to be left to the developers. He critically examines what has gone on in its name, finding it wanting both as an epistemological category and a sound operational practice. Instead, he presents a counter-view of development as an act of creation whereby people exercise their inalienable right 'to invent their own future' as authors of an ongoing process of transforming and humanising the landscapes they inhabit.

Development ethics: A guide to theory and practice


Those engaged in the development process are becoming ever more aware of the difficult social issues and ethical questions involved. The present book is a major work of reflection and synthesis by one of the pioneers of development ethics. The author sets out the contours of the new discipline. He formulates general principles underlying ethical strategies in development and then illustrates their potential for application in a number of key issue areas including technology, the environment, culture and aid policy.

Elusive development


This book is a thoughtful exploration, growing out of the author's lifelong involvement, of the very difficult questions thrown up by the development process. The author looks at what has been said and done in the name of development and seeks to identify those elements that seem to offer the best hope of advancing human welfare and social justice. Among the many areas explored are competing views of what development can mean; the quest for, and very different approaches that have existed to, a unified approach to development; the crisis of the state and the roles of the various social groups as agents of development; problems of communication and participation; poverty as the central issue of development policy; the impact of environmental concerns; and future directions in how development is conceived and the strategies to be employed.

Strengthening the family: Implications for international development


The family is presented as the smallest unit of analysis for sustainable development. Analysing the characteristics that strengthen the family unit and promote the development of individual members, the authors examine how family social health improves the well-being of children and how family functioning interacts with national and international development.

Shadows beyond the screen: Economic restructuring and Asian women

Maggie Peterson (ed) 1995, ARENA/CIIR, ISSN 0256 7520, £9.95

This book explains how preoccupation with economic growth rates in Asia's newly industrialised countries has obscured the social costs for women, the main labour force in the region's light export industries. The book combines personal experiences of economic change in the region with an analysis of the broader impact of these changes on women in South China, Hong Kong, South Korea, India and Vietnam.

Non governmental organisations: Performance and accountability - beyond the magic bullet


This is a collection of papers from a conference held in 1995 to discuss NGO performance. Contributors from a range of organisations explore alternative methods and approaches to increase NGO effectiveness, and especially how they can demonstrate and account for their successes and weaknesses.

When corporations rule the world


In this book the author documents the devastating human and environmental consequences of economic globalisation. He also reveals why - and how - millions of people are acting to reclaim their political and economic power from these elitist forces, and presents a policy agenda for restoring democracy and rooting economic power in people and communities.
Conceiving the new world order: The global politics of reproduction


In this book international feminist scholars and activists discuss topics such as the impact of AIDS on reproduction in the United States, the after effects of Chernobyl, and the impact of totalitarian abortion and birth control policies in Romania and China.

Women's work in East and West: The dual burden of employment and family life


This is a comparative study of the roles of women at home and at work in four industrialised societies - urban China, Japan, Great Britain and the United States. The book considers the historical, cultural, organisational and political factors that have led to women's different experiences.

The international politics of Asia-Pacific


In recent years the Asia-Pacific has emerged as a force in international politics. The book analyses the evolution of international politics in this area from 1945 to 1995, focusing particularly on the impact of the cold war and the interaction between international, regional and local politics, charting the shifting balance of power within the area. This volume provides an accessible introduction to the complex political history of a region that until recently was an intersection between the competing interests of the two superpowers.

Political change in South East Asia: Trimming the banyan tree


This book takes up the debate between those who resist the pressure for democracy and point to 'unchanging' Asian values, and those who believe that the appeal of democracy is universal.

The author examines the case of both sides and concludes that the strong state will be a fixture of Southeast Asian politics for some considerable time to come. Increasingly close links between the ten states of Southeast Asia are likely to reinforce perceptions of a common culture and in the end put up more effective defences against external cultural influences.

The new rich in Asia: Mobile phones, McDonald's and middle-class revolution


The book introduces a new series examining the social, political and economic construction of the new rich in East and Southeast Asia. It raises central issues about the nature of the new rich, including their social, economic and political impact on the region. Will they bring with them the institutions of liberalism, democracy, rule of law and new institutional freedom? Or is Asia's new rich quite different? The contributors are acknowledged experts on the social and political systems they dissect. Each study, based on detailed research, combines theoretical and empirical material. This volume provides valuable insight into the composition and global economic impact of these newly emerging classes and highlights a common inheritance of rapid economic growth.

Productive performance in Chinese enterprise: An empirical study

Yanrui Wu 1996, Macmillan, ISBN 0 333 63385 7, 190 pp., £40.00

As the rural township, village and private enterprises are becoming more and more significant in the Chinese economy, this book focuses on the comparison of the rural (non state) and state firms in terms of performance. This analysis is based on the empirical results from estimating various production functions applied to cross-sectional and panel data. Both aggregate and firm specific efficiencies are examined in the case studies, exploring potential sources of efficiency differentials such as ownership, scale, factor intensity, location and economic reforms.

Special attention is also paid to regional comparison of industrial development and performance. The implications of the findings in this book for economic and reform policy are also highlighted.

Non-governmental organisations and rural poverty alleviation

Roger Riddle et al. 1995, ODI Publications and Oxford University Press, ISBN 0 19 823330 2, 303 pp., £35.00

There has been considerable interest in recent years in the ability of non government organisations (NGOs) to work with the rural poor in developing countries in order to improve their quality of life and economic status through the provision of credit, skills training and other inputs for income generation programmes. This book brings together the results of 16 evaluations in four countries (Bangladesh, India, Uganda and Zimbabwe) to provide a detailed assessment of the contribution that NGOs make to rural poverty alleviation.
Democracy in contemporary Japan

Gavan McCormack and Yoshio Sugiomoto (eds) 1996, Hale and Iremonger, ISBN 0 86806 203 0, 272pp., A$24.95

In this book 14 Australian and Japanese experts examine Japan’s economic achievements and changes since World War II, and their effect upon Japanese attitudes to life, work, education, civil rights and the role of women.

Japanese business into the 21st century: Strategies for success


Based on interviews with a number of leading industrialists, this book analyses the strategies they have employed to sustain their success through the current period of economic difficulty and onwards into the 21st century. The companies include the East Japan Railway, Toyota, Yaohan International Holdings, Seven-Eleven and Nintendo.

IMF programmes in developing countries: Design and impact


Do IMF policies help developing countries? As linchpin of the global financial system, the IMF provides balance of payment support, chiefly to developing countries, conditional on strict remedial policy measures. Its approach to policy remains highly controversial, however. While the Fund claims it has adapted, critics allege its policies are harshly doctrinaire, imposing hardships on already poor people. For the critics, the half-century of its existence is ‘fifty years too long’ and radical change is essential. This book examines the arguments, tracing the extent of Fund adaptation, presenting major new evidence on the consequences of Fund programmes, and considering its future role.

Ethnicity and power in the contemporary world


Violent internal conflicts are the predominant form of warfare in the world today, and there is an urgent need to understand their causes and find ways for their prevention or resolution. The 15 essays collected here present a variety of perspectives, conceptions, arguments and conclusions regarding ethnicity, power and conflict in the contemporary world. Scholars from Africa, Europe, Asia and North America explore conflicts and conflict resolution approaches in the regions of the former Soviet Union, the Horn of Africa, India, the Basque region of Spain, the former Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland and the United States.

Project appraisal and valuation of the environment: General principles and six case studies in developing countries


This book is intended to be a practical and readable guide to valuing the environment and the implications for public investment and policy. The following issues and concepts are introduced: the nature and magnitude of environmental problems; the cost-benefit method of evaluation; and detailed methods for valuing the environment. It contains six case studies including water quality in China; the supply of electricity in Bangladesh; slum improvements in India; mass transit in Nigeria; forest conservation in Kenya; and soil quality in Bolivia. The book is expected to be valuable to professional and student economists, policy makers, engineers and environmental and social planners both in developed and developing countries.

China in the 1990s


Although the scars of the urban protests of 1989 remain, China has moved on - dramatically so. Attention has focused on the rapid development of its socialist market economy but every aspect of Chinese life is also in a state of rapid change. The book is a comprehensive survey of a nation in transition. Experts from Britain, the United States, Europe, Australia and Hong Kong introduce the economic, political, military, cultural and social achievements and difficulties to the student and general reader.

Aid and power: The World Bank and policy-based lending, Vol.1


This second edition of Aid and power updates readers on the heated debate on aid conditionality in the context of the changes of the World Bank policy in relation to its policy-based lending to the formerly socialist economies of eastern and central Europe. The critique of the Bank is delivered in reasoned and considered essays which will hopefully be read and noted by shareholder governments and Bank policy makers. The volume is a constructive assessment of the World Bank’s policy lending in a highly volatile political area in development politics.
The alms bazaar: Altruism under fire - non profit organisations and international development


Written by an insider, this study of international development agencies ranges from Biafra to Rwanda, from administrative costs to participatory development, from the bright hopes of the 1960s to the implications of the latest Mexican financial crisis. The author attempts to demystify the world of the NGOs whose projects, as well as their fundraising, research and advocacy networks stretch from Harare to Oslo, from Delhi to Washington. This is a story about bungling and luck and failure - and of achievements that have improved the lives of millions.

Meeting needs: NGO coordination in practice

Jon Bennett 1995, Earthscan, ISBN 1853832359, A$40.00

This book looks at the way NGO collaboration is developing, and brings together the experiences of various coordinating bodies. Eight detailed case studies, drawn mainly from recent disaster areas, illustrate the different approaches to coordination and reveal ways in which NGOs can work better together, both at international level and on the ground.

Arms to fight arms to protect: Women speak about conflict

Olivia Bennett et al. 1995, Panos, ISBN 1870670361, A$37.95

While the impact of armed conflict around the world have a shocking familiarity, women's experiences are not uniform. These testimonies reveal the views and experiences of women as fighters, participants, refugees, victims caught between warring factions, organisers for peace and rehabilitation, carers, and mothers, relatives and partners of the dead and disappeared. The testimonies are powerful, varied and often harrowing, yet the dominant impression is one of individuals surviving with strength and ingenuity. This is a book for anyone who is interested in conflict, women's studies and oral history, as well as for those involved in relief and development.

The twelve who survive: Strengthening programmes of early childhood development in the Third World


Today, 12 out of every 13 children born will live to celebrate their first birthday. This figure is expected to improve still further by the year 2000. Yet many international organisations, and some governments, continue to place almost exclusive emphasis on further reducing mortality, with little attention to the development and welfare of the survivors.

Drawing on extensive research studies and on numerous specific programme experiences in the Third World, the author emphasises the importance of participation and partnership among agencies, government and families. He reviews the needs and successes of programmes aimed at enhancing the growth and development of children to help them realise their individual and social potential, and concludes by considering priorities for the next decade and beyond.

The above four books are available from: World Vision Australia Information Centre PO Box 399C Melbourne VIC 3001 Australia Fax (03) 9287 2427

Management for privatisation: Lessons from industry and public service


This highly topical book traces the impact of privatisation and deregulation on management practices and strategies, and on manager's skill profiles. Based on studies in former Eastern Europe, Canada, Guyana, Jamaica, Sri Lanka and Sweden, the analysis offered is a guide to how to build management development capacity in order to meet the challenge of privatisation in today's competitive environment.

Managing sustainable development in South Africa

Patrick Fitzgerald et al. (eds) 1995, Oxford University Press, ISBN 019570 9802, A$95.00

This book explores many key issues now facing South Africa. It gives some pointers towards the mechanisms that can be employed to try to resolve the potential conflicts that may exist inside sectors, between sectors, within the state and civil society and between the state and civil society. The test of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which guides the development policy process in South Africa, will be how far it succeeds in making the development process sustainable.

Dimension of development with emphasis on Africa

Tekeste Negash and Lars Rudebeck (eds) 1995, Uppsala University, ISBN 1 91 7106 378 1

Made up of papers given at a Forum on Development Studies in Uppsala in late 1994, the book brings together researchers from all disciplines. Beginning with a theoretical and cultural discussion of the issues, the
papers explore the dynamics and constraints of African society focusing on issues of democracy, environment, migration and conflict. This is a scholarly and timely collection of papers on Africa written largely by Scandinavian experts.

The development practitioners handbook


This practical handbook will prove an invaluable source of knowledge and inspiration to those actively engaged in development work. By examining development from various viewpoints, the author demonstrates that the discipline of fieldwork is an art which demands imagination and flexibility and provides suggestions on how western trained workers should think about themselves and their work.

Power, process and participation: Tools for change

Rachel Slocum et al. 1995, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 272pp., US$17.50

This book explores participatory approaches to development and offers tools for working with local groups and communities focusing on capacity-building in ways that address the practical needs and strategic interests of the disadvantaged and the disempowered.

Australian Journal of Human Rights

This is the first academic journal in Australia exclusively devoted to the publication of articles, commentary, case notes and book reviews about human rights issues in Australia and overseas. The journal deals not only with the legal aspects of human rights, but also with philosophical, historical, sociological, economic and political issues as they relate to human rights in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Each August issue will focus on recent developments. Each February issue will contain a symposium on a topical issue, such as racial vilification laws.

For more information contact:
International Business Communications Pty Ltd
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55-63 Elizabeth St
Sydney, NSW 2000
Australia
Tel (02) 221 6199
Fax (02) 221 5923

October 1996
Pacifica Review

This is a new journal which seeks to make sense of a rapidly transforming world. Its primary focus is peace, security and global change. It brings together the perspectives of leading scholars and practitioners from around the world, and particularly from the Asia-Pacific region. The journal replaces the Interdisciplinary Peace Research. By cultivating a multidisciplinary perspective it aims to establish connections between local, national, international and transnational levels of organisation and between the social, economic and geopolitical dimensions of contemporary change. It will provide a forum for normative, analytical and empirical approaches to the study of peace and security. The journal will be internationally refereed and published twice a year. In addition to major research articles it also publishes shorter pieces, including communications (of 4,000 words or less), research reports, replies to articles, review articles and book reviews.

For more information contact:
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c/- School of Politics
La Trobe University
Bundoora, VIC 3083
Australia

Disasters

This is the only journal that brings together research on disasters, vulnerability and relief and emergency management. The scope of the journal extends from disasters associated with natural hazards such as earthquakes and drought through to complex, conflict-related emergencies. It also contains conference reports and book reviews and welcomes correspondence and discussion.

For more information contact:
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Interadio

This is a newsletter about community radio around the world. It is published three times a year in English, French and Spanish by the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters.

For more information contact:
AMARC Secretariat
3575 St-Laurent No. 704
Montreal, Quebec H2X 2T7
Canada
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The Asia-Pacific Magazine

This quarterly magazine brings together exclusive and thoroughly researched information on the Asia-Pacific region. It explores the areas of politics, culture and history, and the more controversial issues such as security and the environment. The magazine provides important information for business leaders, politicians, commentators, public servants and academics who need to understand the Asia-Pacific region, the background to events and its cultural diversity.

For more information contact:
The Asia-Pacific Magazine
GPO Box 55A
Melbourne, VIC 3001
Australia
Fax (03) 9670 4328

Australian Journal of International Affairs

Established in 1946 (as Australian Outlook) this journal is the journal of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. It aims to publish high quality scholarly research on international political, social, economic and legal issues, especially (but not exclusively) within the Asia-Pacific region. The journal also publishes research notes, book reviews, review essays, notes and news from the Institute and a review of Australian foreign policy.

Social Identities

Recent years have witnessed considerable worldwide changes concerning social identities such as race, nation and ethnicity, as well as the emergence of new forms of racism and nationalism as discriminatory exclusions. Focusing on these changes is a new body of academic work appearing in a wide range of journals.

Social Identities aims to furnish an interdisciplinary and international focal point for theorising issues at the interface of social identities. The journal is especially concerned to address these issues in the context of transforming political economies and cultures of postmodern and postcolonial conditions.

It is intended as a forum for contesting ideas and debates concerning the formations of, and transformations in, socially significant identities, their attendant forms of material exclusion and power, as well as political and cultural possibilities opened up by these identifications.

Nationalities Papers

This journal, published on behalf of the Association for the Study of Nationalities of Eastern Europe and Eurasia (ASN), deals exclusively with all non Russian nationalities of the former USSR and national minorities in Eastern and Central European countries. The problems of over 140 million people are treated within the disciplinary and methodological contexts of post-Soviet and Europe-Asia studies. Of central concern is the fate of the Balts, Ukrainians, Jews and peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Included in each issue are in-depth updates on the latest developments, some original documents, lists from the most recent publications from throughout the world and book reviews.
Gender and Development

This journal (formerly known as Focus on Gender) focuses on gender and development issues internationally, exploring the links between gender and development initiatives, and making links between theoretical and practical work in this field. Launched in 1993, the journal has become essential reading for all development practitioners and policy makers, and offers articles drawing on Oxfam’s strength and experience as a leading NGO working in the gender field.

For more information on the above four journals contact:
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Cammeray, NSW 2062
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E-mail carfax@ibm.net

Asian Studies Review

In recent issues leading Asianists have examined economic liberalisation in Asia, women and the state in Asia, democracy in Asia, Australia’s future in the Asia-Pacific region, ‘culture’ and Asian studies, China after Tiananmen, ecology and the economic history of Asia and language learning. The journal’s area reports, communications, conference news and reviews and an extensive book, film and video section provides up-to-date information on current events and the latest books and movies in Asia. The Review is published thrice yearly.

Monographs and Reports

The Asia-Australia survey 1996-97

Russell Trood and Deborah McNamara (eds) 1996, Macmillan, ISBN 0 7329 4079 6, 600pp., A$95.00

This comprehensive reference book provides the only detailed survey of Australia’s relations with the countries of Asia. Updated annually, and now in its third year, it provides a more detailed coverage of our special relationship with each country in Asia through a mix of facts, figures and empirical analysis.

Regional outlook: Southeast Asia 1995-96

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies 1995, 96pp., US$25.00 (pb)

Countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar are seeking their riches in the emerging opportunities and constraints that characterise today’s international economic and political scene. This, coupled with the dynamism of the member states of ASEAN, makes Southeast Asia a particularly promising and exciting area at a turning point in world history and human affairs. Written in a format and style that is unencumbered by lengthy analyses or commentaries, this Report provides succinct yet substantive and easily readable overviews and insights into the current geopolitical and economic situations in the individual countries and the region as a whole, together with the likely trends over the next year or so. The review serves as a useful and handy guide to the region’s aspirations and prospects each year, in addition to casting a look ahead.

On our feet: Taking steps to challenge women’s oppression

Liz Mackenzie 1995, CACE/UWC, A$29.95

This handbook is mainly for women who are taking the leading steps to examine and change women’s subordinate position. The book will help readers to think about women’s oppression and how to challenge it actively, using a popular education approach. It can be used as a guide to organising and running a workshop on gender and popular education.

The state of the environment in Southern Africa

Munyaradzi Chenje and Phyllis Johnson (eds) 1995, South African Research and Documentation Centre, 332pp., US$47.50

An understanding of the environmental concerns will be a key factor in the future prosperity and development of the Southern African region. This new research work challenges governments, organisations, researchers and the media to tackle environmental problems and strive for the sustainable utilisation of resources in Southern Africa. It is the result of an extensive collaborative process between three partners of Communicating the Environment Programme: the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, The World Conservation Union and the Southern African Development Community Environment and Land Management Sector, with contributions from regional experts. Fourteen chapters provide an overview of issues such as the state of soils and agriculture, forests and woodlands, marine resources, wildlife and protected areas, pollution, armed conflict and the environment, the climate factor and global changes. Maps, tables, photographs and illustrations highlight the information which aims to inform and empower Southern Africans to achieve sustainable development.
World investment report 1995: Transnational corporations and competitiveness


Part One of the 1995 Report examines global and regional trends in foreign direct investment (FDI), with a special emphasis on the emergence of transnational corporations (TNCs) from developing countries and on changing forms of international transactions. Part Two focuses on the role of FDI in increasing the competitiveness of TNCs, especially through access to such assets as capital, technology, skills, organisational and managerial practices, as well as access to markets and the implications this has for the economic performance of countries. The policy issues arising therefrom are discussed in Part Three, which pays special attention to policies meant to attract competitiveness and performance-enhancing FDI and the importance of outward FDI policies. Special attention is given to the role of incentives in attracting FDI and policy options for governments wishing to liberalise their outward FDI regimes.

PIALA '95 Proceedings

The Pacific Islands Association of Libraries and Archives (PIALA) has recently published the proceedings of the 5th annual PIALA conference held in 1995. The theme of the conference was 'Preservation of culture through archives and libraries'. The proceedings include several papers presented by local Yapese experts and by participants from the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, University of California at Los Angeles, the State Library of South Australia and other Micronesian islands.

Mozambique - Rising from the ashes

Rachel Waterhouse 1996, Oxfam, ISBN 0 85598 341 8, 64pp., £5.95

The civil war in Mozambique finally came to an end in 1992. Yet for its 16 million people, another struggle was just beginning: to repair the shattered fabric of their lives and to forge a truly Mozambican nation. This monograph explains the background to the conflict, and examines its impact on the lives of Mozambican citizens. The author finds signs of hope emerging all over the country, despite the nation's ruinous debts and legacy of colonial neglect.

Sudan - A nation in the balance

Chris Peters 1996, Oxfam, ISBN 0 85598 316 7 64 pp., £5.95

Very few people from the West visit Sudan, and those who do generally work for the UN or an international charity and are concerned with the logistics of humanitarian relief and development. So most of what is written about Sudan is buried deep in the specialist journals or academic conference papers. This monograph tries to fill that gap by giving an overview of that country's history, geography and political and social economy, seen from the perspective of ordinary Sudanese people. Drawing on Oxfam's experience of working with groups affected on all sides of the civil war, the monograph illustrates the tenacity and resourcefulness of the Sudanese people and explains the background to one of the least understood conflicts in modern Africa.

For more information on Oxfam's publications please contact:
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United Kingdom
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Fax (44 1865) 313 925
E-mail publish@oxfam.org.uk

Best practice of banking with the poor


This report is a study of 'best practice' in the field of banking with the poor, drawing on evidence from eight Asian countries. It discusses best practices, policies and institutional arrangements for banking with the poor, presenting principles which have been endorsed by practitioners from many countries. These give a much-needed practical guide to providing credit for the economic activities of the poor on a sustainable basis.

Transaction costs of lending to the poor: A case study of two Philippine NGOs


This report focuses on the credit programmes of two Philippine NGOs which target the poor using self-help groups as delivery channels. Both NGOs are involved in contractual relationships with commercial banks, thus providing the link for a flow of bank loan capital to the self-help groups whose members are the ultimate borrowers. The authors of this study have quantified the transaction costs incurred by both the NGOs and their borrowers, and analysed the productivity improvements necessary to assure the longer-term sustainability of such lending operations. Their recommendations are applicable to microfinance institutions more generally, and have significant implications for the commercial viability of microlending. They also suggest areas where banks can assist NGOs to strengthen their capabilities, and indicate priorities for strategic assistance by governments and donor agencies.
South Pacific and Caribbean Island economies: A comparative study
Te'o I.J. Fairbairn and DeLeslie Worrell 1996, Foundation for Development Cooperation, ISBN 0 9586728 0 6, 137pp., A$15.00

Is it true that the small island economies of the Caribbean have performed significantly better than the comparable small island economies in the South Pacific? How accurate is talk of a 'Pacific paradox', with indifferent economic performance despite high levels of external assistance and favourable natural resources? And if there is truth in these generalisations, what can the South Pacific learn from the experience of the Caribbean and vice versa? These questions are addressed in this report. The authors examine economic policies and performance in both regions, identifying important differences in their circumstances as well as obvious similarities. The report concludes with a series of strong recommendations for new initiatives for regional cooperation, strategies for private sector development and other measures to improve economic growth and welfare in the South Pacific.

How to build self-help groups for successful banking with the poor (rural model)
Foundation for Development Cooperation 1996, 16pp., A$1.00

This booklet draws attention to the key role of self-help groups and NGOs in providing better access to credit for the poor in rural areas in developing countries. It also provides NGOs and self-help groups with practical guidelines and estimated costings for the formation, training and operation of self-help credit management groups. The booklet draws on both the Banking With the Poor project and the work of the NGO MYRADA which has formed over 2,000 self-help groups in Southern India.

Transaction costs of lending to the rural poor: NGOs and self-help groups as intermediaries for banks in India
V. Puhazhendhi 1995, Foundation for Development Cooperation, ISBN 0 646 25939 3, 89pp., A$12.00

Recent evidence indicates that by using NGOs and self-help groups as a channel for low cost delivery, commercial sources can supply credit to the poor on a sustainable basis. Such innovative banking programmes are being implemented by commercial banks in South Indian states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. This monograph aims to quantify the cost savings banks can achieve through such methods of lending to the poor. Results indicate savings in transactions costs between 21 and 41 per cent, lower costs for borrowers and improved loan recovery rates. These results have significant implications for the commercial viability of micro-lending as well as poverty alleviation.

How to build self-help groups for successful banking with the poor (urban model)
Foundation for Development Cooperation 1996, 20pp., A$1.00

This is a companion booklet to the rural model and the information is based generally upon the detailed country studies carried out within the Banking With the Poor project, and also draws heavily on the experience of the NGO KMVI, which is implementing a self-help group credit management programme in the northern fringe of Metro Manila in the Philippines.

For more information contact:
The Foundation for Development Cooperation
232 Adelaide Street
Brisbane, QLD 4000
Australia
Tel (07) 3236 4633
Fax (07) 3236 4696
E-mail fdc@ozemail.com.au

The State of the World’s Children 1996

Founded in the aftermath of world war II, UNICEF’s original mission was to alleviate the suffering of children in wars. Fifty year’s later, children’s lives are still being shattered by conflict. The 1996 Report is a special anniversary edition. It sets out an anti-war agenda - a series of realistic and practical steps the world can take to redress the shocking violence against children. War has taken a terrible toll on children. In the past decade, some two million people have been killed, four to five million disabled, 12 million left homeless, more than one million orphaned or separated from their parents and some 10 million psychologically traumatised. The Report argues that respect for children and commitment to their welfare are key to humanitarian and political progress.

Poverty, children and policy: Responses for a brighter future

This report is the third in a series published by UNICEF which monitors public policy and social conditions in Eastern Europe and proposes a series of policy guidelines for 'a transition with a human face'. The series makes suggestions for macroeconomic policy, privatisation leading to widespread shareholding and efficient markets, the promotion of an employment and self-employment based anti-poverty strategy and a number of important measures in health, education and childcare.

Order from:
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CH-1211 Geneva 10
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Fax (41 22) 791 0822

October 1996
Global education: Integrating curriculum and professional development

Global Learning Centre 1996, set of three monographs, A$30.00 (including postage)

Global education opportunities in Australian curriculum documents: This monograph identifies opportunities for global education that were mapped in the National Statement and Profile for the key learning areas of Studies of Society and Environment.

Action research and professional development for global education: This is the second monograph in the series and provides a series of teacher case studies. These case studies document the efforts of a small group of teachers who identified and built opportunities for successfully incorporating global perspectives into their teaching and school procedures.

Global education project: Integrating curriculum and professional development - evaluation: The last monograph in the series identifies the need to redefine the aims and objectives of certain key learning areas so as to open them to global education perspectives. It also discusses the concept of globalisation and suggests that curriculum policies and education programmes should be looked at in the global context to determine what will benefit students in this era of dramatic globalisation.

Available from:
Global Learning Centre
102 McDonald Road
Windsor, QLD 4030
Australia
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Fax (07) 857 2173

Gender, population and development: The role of UNFPA

This report is published by the Gender, Development and Population Branch of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). It provides a global summary of progress towards gender equity and equality and a region-by-region survey of UNFPA's role in promoting it. The report outlines the International Conference on Population and Development's recommendations and UNFPA's response to date. It is available in English, French and Spanish.

For more information contact:
UNFPA
200 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017
United States
Tel (1 212) 297 5141
Fax (1 212) 297 4915

Illustrated encyclopaedia of Maori myth and legend


The author has collected many previously unpublished myths and legends to present an all embracing book which presents the myths and legends as living heritage. The collection covers the earliest events as well as more recent ancestors, such as the crews of the mythological canoes from Hawaiki. The book contains over 240 colour, and black and white illustrations.

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October 1996
University of Adelaide

New graduate programme in international economics

The rapid increase in the internationalisation of national economies and the growth in importance and complexity of the World Trade Organisation have expanded substantially the demand for graduates specialising in international economics and closely related fields. The Economics Department of the University of Adelaide offers a number of courses at graduate level to cater for a wide range of backgrounds and interests and to allow numerous entry and exit points. The courses include a one-semester Graduate Certificate in International Economics and a two-semester Graduate Diploma in International Economics. A four-semester (16 months) Master of Economics and a three-year PhD programme are also offered to qualified graduates.

In addition to core subjects in intermediate and advanced microeconomics, macroeconomics and econometrics, the Department offers a wide range of optional subjects in numerous fields but especially international economics. The list includes: investment and trade policy; international trade (intermediate and advanced); international finance (intermediate and advanced); the global trading system; international economic history; long-run economic growth; and development economics.

For more information contact:
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E-mail egeddes@economics.adelaide.edu.au

University of Melbourne

Postgraduate courses in Women's Studies

The Women's Studies Programme at the University of Melbourne offers the following courses in women's studies including the new Master of Arts in Gender and Development.

Graduate Diploma: For those with a bachelor's degree or its equivalent who wish to become acquainted with recent developments in women's studies and feminist theory, in order to upgrade professional qualifications or as preparation for a Masters qualifying programme.

Postgraduate Diploma: For graduates who have undertaken significant study in women's studies and wish to become acquainted with recent developments in women's studies and feminist theory, as a further professional qualification or as a preparation for postgraduate research in women's studies.
Master of Arts: This programme centres on an interdisciplinary study of recent developments in feminist theory and on feminist critiques of existing disciplines, with an emphasis on a critical feminist engagement with Eurocentrism in women's studies. The programme has a particular focus on the Asia-Pacific region and includes research/coursework and minor thesis.

Master of Arts (Gender and Development): This programme, by coursework electives and minor thesis, includes theories of development, feminist critiques of development theory, qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, social impact analysis and gender policy and planning.

Doctorate of Philosophy: Suitable qualified candidates may undertake a PhD in Women's Studies on a topic approved by the Programme Director.

For more information contact:
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E-mail Erica_Mehrtens.HISTORY@muwayf.unimelb.edu.au

Australian National University

Academic and research skills: Preparing for postgraduate studies in Australia

This course will be offered twice in 1997 from 20 January to 14 February, and 16 June to 11 July. Postgraduate preparatory courses are taught at the National Centre for Development Studies (NCDS) of the Australian National University in recognition that many students have not studied in an Australian university before, do not have English as a first language and may have been away from formal studies for a significant period of time. Students who undertake preparatory courses in academic skills begin their postgraduate study aware of the demands that will be placed on them and with an enhanced ability to perform the necessary written and oral exercises with confidence. This course is of particular value to overseas students contemplating study at any Australian university.

The discipline-related content of this course is tailored to the areas of NCDS postgraduate teaching. Students whose disciplinary area is not in development administration or environmental management and development can undertake core units in academic and research skills, computing, mathematics and statistics as well as general introductory sessions.

Human resources management

This course aims to provide participants with an introduction to the most recent developments in human resources management and enable participants to develop constructive proposals for improving human resources management in their own organisations. The course uses an interactive teaching approach to make participants aware of the human resources management techniques essential to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector organisations. It is particularly relevant in those nations undergoing a process of economic development and market transition because of the urgent need for reform of bureaucracies and improvement in productivity. The course will be offered from 3 to 28 March 1997.

Other short courses offered in 1997 include:

Managing public utilities: Developing efficient infrastructure delivery (16 May - 13 June)

Offshore course - Introduction to management organisational change (16 June - 11 July, Thailand)

Macroeconomic policy and implementation (14 July - 8 August)

Introduction to management organisational change (22 August - 19 September)

Women, gender and development (3-31 October)

Participation, decentralisation and local area development (3-31 October)

Trade policy and structural adjustment (10 October - 7 November)

For more information contact:
The Outreach Coordinator
National Centre for Development Studies
Australian National University
Canberra, ACT 0200
Australia
Tel (06) 249 4351
Fax (06) 248 8805

University of London

Geography of Third World Development

This Masters level course provides advanced level introduction to some of the most challenging problems facing the Third World. A strong emphasis is placed on the contributions of geographers - both human and physical - to the understanding of development and underdevelopment in Third World nations. The course emphasises both conceptual frameworks and techniques for the analysis of development,
focusing in particular on the development-environment interface and questions of sustainability. All students follow a core course entitled ‘Geographical perspectives on development’ in which these themes are developed.

The course extends over one calendar year for full-time students and two calendar years for part-time students. A feature of the course is the flexibility it offers. In addition to the core course students have the option to choose any two from the following list of optional courses: Agrarian change and rural development; Demographic and social change in developing countries; Transport and development; Urbanisation and development in the Third World; Gender and development; Environmental processes and land management; and Ecology and land management in tropical Latin America. Candidates also prepare a 10,000 word dissertation on the topic of their choice.

Deakin University

Master and Graduate Diploma of Development Studies

The Masters and Graduate Diploma courses are designed to enhance skills of analysis and interpretation of development issues and to promote knowledge of the complexities of socioeconomic, political and cultural contexts of developing countries. They enable those who have already graduated in a wide range of fields, including those with practical experience, to develop their academic background in the area. The courses contain a mixture of empirical and theoretical analyses, with opportunities to examine contemporary and historical issues and events which affect developing countries and their inhabitants.

The Master of Development Studies is a degree by coursework and comprises elective units to the value of eight credit points including an optional research project. Students can choose from the following units: Non government organisations and development; Agriculture and Third World development; Aid, trade and development; Analysis and research in development studies; Gender and development; Human rights in the international system; International political economy; Refugees in global politics; Australian perceptions of Asia; and a Development studies research project.

The Graduate Diploma of Development Studies is a coursework qualification and consists of core and elective units. The core units are ‘Development experience in the Third World’ and a ‘Developing country case study’. The courses offered for electives include: Empire, race and power - the new imperialism; Dimensions of change - anthropology and the Third World; The colonial experience - gender, power and social change; Industrial revolution and society - beyond Europe, Australia and Asia; and Community development theory and practice.

For more information contact:
Reply Paid AAA
Postgraduate International Development Studies Program
Academic Administrative Services Division
Deakin University, VIC 3217
Australia
or
Marion Hansen
Tel (052) 27 1328
Fax (052) 27 2017
E-mail tod@deakin.edu.au
Homepage http://www.deakin.edu.au
Organisational profiles

The World Development Tea Cooperative

This is a not-for-profit community development cooperative. Its objectives are to promote the idea of fair trade between communities and countries. It seeks to improve the conditions of producers and their communities, and to educate Australians about the link between the trading activities of multinationals and poverty in developing countries. The Cooperative grew out of a group in the 1970s who were concerned about the links between unfair trade practices and poverty in the developing world.

In 1978, the Cooperative began importing tea from Sri Lanka because its members believed it was the most practical way for Australians to explore the difficulties that postcolonial countries have in asserting their political and economic independence. Tea is Sri Lanka's main industry and chief export. The tea trade is controlled by multinationals who bulk buy tea cheaply at auction and ship it to their overseas plants for blending, packing and distribution. The tea imported by the Coop was blended, packed and shipped by Sri Lankans, who kept the profit that otherwise went to tea conglomerates.

Ten years later, the Coop began importing organically grown coffee from Papua New Guinea. The coffee is grown by farmers in their subsistence gardens. They sell it at premium price to a small roaster who process it for export. The villagers get cash income which reduces the pressure on them to seek work on plantations or in cities. Trade Winds is the Cooperative's registered trademark. The Coop established Trade Winds Tea and Coffee Pty Ltd to import and distribute its products. All profits from the Company go to the Coop to further its education and advocacy work. The Cooperative also publishes pamphlets relating to fair trade, discussion papers and a teaching manual, Learning for a fairer future. It organises talks for schools, church and community groups, and conduct workshops and training days for educators.

For more information contact:
The World Development Tea Cooperative
PO Box 63
Revesby North, NSW 2212
Australia
Tel (02) 792 1094
Fax (02) 792 1086
AID/WATCH

With official development assistance now more than US$55,000 million annually, scrutiny of the aid industry is urgently needed. AID/WATCH is part of a growing international network of organisations committed to ensuring that the development process is realigned to build social and ecological wealth. AID/WATCH, a campaign and advocacy-based non-government organisation, monitors the social and environmental impact of Australia's overseas aid programme. Particular attention is paid to the work of AusAID, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. AID/WATCH works to inform the public where their aid dollar is being directed and to encourage the implementation of true ecologically and socially sustainable reforms.

The organisation works at the policy and project level, and supports the work of partner organisations in low income countries. At the project level, AID/WATCH has organised campaigns on the Narmada Dam in India, Piparwar coal mine in India, the Nam Theun 2 dam in Laos, Mae Moh lignite mine in Thailand, the Arun III dam in Nepal and developments funded by the Asian Development Bank in the Mekong region. In addition to project-oriented campaigns, AID/WATCH has organised activities surrounding the 50th anniversary of the World Bank/IMF, commercialisation of the Australian aid programme, aid funding to the Australian coal industry and the APEC Energy Ministers Meeting. Last year, AID/WATCH organised a major campaign, calling on the World Bank to renegotiate its structural adjustment programme in Papua New Guinea in consultation with local communities. As so many destructive development projects involve power generation, AID/WATCH has been undertaking policy-oriented work to encourage development agencies to fund renewable energy and energy efficiency measures as viable alternatives to traditional large-scale infrastructure projects.

AID/WATCH believes that a fundamental rethinking of the current model of development is required. Official development assistance is not achieving its primary objective of reducing the number of people living in poverty. The latest Human Development Report found that despite dramatic economic growth in the past three decades, 1.6 billion people have been left behind, and are in fact worse off than they were 15 years ago. For this reason, AID/WATCH works to promote participatory development processes that place the highest value on self-determination, ecological sustainability and economic, political, social and gender equity.

For more information and membership details contact:
AID/WATCH
PO Box 652
Woollhara, NSW 2025
Australia
Tel (02) 9264 6090
Fax (02) 9264 6092
E-mail aidwatch@peg.apc.org

Nusatenggara Association

An organisation highly regarded by the Indonesian Government for promoting economic self-help in remote areas of the vast Indonesian archipelago is the Nusatenggara Association (NTA) with headquarters in Canberra and branches in Melbourne and Sydney. It links with local Indonesian non-government organisations, providing some crucial expertise to outlying economically disadvantaged island communities to facilitate better community health and reliable incomes.

While the Indonesian Government has done much to aid the economic progress of the region, it has welcomed the activities of the NTA as appropriate and complimentary. The NTA is a small collection of committed individuals with expertise in development economics or the practical application of very limited strategic funding to seed relatively high return projects in remote villages in the eastern-most region of Indonesia to the benefit of local economies. It assists local NGOs dedicated to improving the local economies of the region.

The NTA helps local communities to achieve better living standards, taking measures which include improving the general health of the community through such simple means as building wells, basic sanitary systems and walls around villages. It provides the local community with the knowledge for self-help and the means to produce sustainable cash crops of higher yield, reliability and financial return to supplement the livelihood and income of the local community. It has provided significant help in training new breeds for animal husbandry in the region, lately concentrating on goats rather than cattle as they are better suited to the largely arid climate, poor soils and limited vegetation of the region.

Projects developed by the NTA have included digging ten successful wells so far, serving some 15 million families apiece - an arduous, risky process of particular benefit to the women and children of the community who otherwise had to carry water over large distances; establishing some 100 toilets to date - partly self-funded with participating families contributing to a revolving fund; improving forages with drought resistant grass and salt bushes; and building walls around villages to prevent crop damage by cattle. The local NTA provides all labour, most of the management and all available local materials for these projects. With its high ratio of local input and commitment, and all funding and administration from Australia at no charge, the NTA projects rate highly for value per dollar compared to most aid schemes.

For more information contact:
Juris Jakovics
Committee Member NTA
3 Bingley Crescent
Fraser, ACT 2615
Australia
Tel (06) 264 4584 / 258 6189
The Asian Harm Reduction Network

The Macfarlane Burnet Centre for Medical Research has secured a small amount of funding to establish an Asian Harm Reduction Network. Based initially in Melbourne, the aim of this Network is to reduce the harms associated with injecting drug use in Asia, especially HIV infection. The objectives are as follows: to establish a sustainable Asian Harm Reduction Network; to establish a more comprehensive understanding of patterns of injecting drug use and associated harm (especially HIV infection) in Asian countries; to provide a forum which will encourage information exchange and communication between individuals, organisations and countries participating in the Network; and to facilitate policy and programme development at non government, government, regional and international levels.

For more information contact:
Paul Deany
International Health
Macfarlane Burnet Centre for Medical Research
PO Box 254
Fairfield, VIC 3078
Australia
Tel (03) 9280 2364
Fax (03) 9482 3123

Rural Development and Youth Training Institute

The Rural Development and Youth Training Institute (RD&YTI) is a voluntary organisation (NGO) in Rajasthan, India. It believes in the strength of the poor landless youth and tribal women, labourers and strives to instil confidence and provide skills training with a view to help them participate effectively in the process of social change through non violent direct action. During its ten year existence, the RD&YTI has organised 40 rural youth camps including 15 tribal women's camps. Through these youth camps, 30 youth organisations have been set up in 20 villages which have been trying to solve their social and economic problems. A number of youth and women's organisations have undertaken literacy, income generation, health prevention and forestry projects.

For more information contact:
Convenor
RD&YTI
1-K-22 Dadabari Kota 324009
Rajasthan
India

Materials

Modelling the costs of HIV prevention:
A resource requirement model for developing countries

This document presents a modelling approach to estimate the resources required to implement a hypothetical package of HIV prevention strategies in developing countries. The aim is to assess the resource implications of 'feasible best practice' in HIV prevention. Information can be used to evaluate current resource allocation patterns, to plan future resource allocation and in advocacy for financial support. A complete bibliography of all current GPA (Global Program on AIDS) documents is available from UNAIDS Documentation Centre at the following address.

Single copy available free of charge from:
GPA Documentation Centre
WHO
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland
Fax (41 22) 791 0317

Primary healthcare database

The database lists 15,000 items held in the AHRTAG resource centre, which now offers a current awareness service, updated each month, and online access to the database.

For more information contact:
AHRTAG
29-35 Farringdon Road
London EC1M 3JB
United Kingdom
Fax (44 171) 242 0041

World Neighbours

World Neighbours publishes low cost materials in various languages, including five recent case studies on a women’s dairy cooperative in India; village health workers in Indonesia; an urban handicraft project in Peru; reproductive health in Nepal; and women farmer's in West Africa.

For more information contact:
World Neighbours
4127 NW 122 Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73120
USA
Fax (1 405) 752 9393
Asia-Pacific Population Information Network Directory

This directory describes the activities of the Asia-Pacific Population Information Network (Asia-Pacific POPIN) which comprises a number of population information centres and networks whose regional networking activities are coordinated by the Regional Population Information Centre of ESCAP. This profile and directory provides an idea of the scope of work carried out by the Network’s individual members and by the ESCAP secretariat in fostering population information development in the Asian and Pacific region.

For more information contact:
Population Information and Communication Section
Population Division
United Nations Building
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200
Thailand

Developing strategies

This 56-minute video looks at three educational projects in science and technology that have succeeded in Africa despite a lack of textbooks and interesting scientific materials. The first, Minds Across in Uganda, encourages children to write booklets and reading materials for each other. The second, Action Magazine in Zimbabwe, is a project that distributes comic-strip magazines on health and the environment to all schools in the country. The third, Kagera Writers Cooperative Union in Tanzania, publishes a newsletter for local farmers and textbooks in science and technology for the local school system. Lastly, it also describes how these projects are working on AIDS education.

Order from:
Development Through Self-Reliance Inc
9111 Guilford Road
Columbia, MD 21046
USA
Tel (1 800) 875 0037
Fax (1 301) 490 4146
E-mail dsr@us.net

Science, technology and society in the Third World: An annotated bibliography

Wesley Shrum et al. 1995, Scarecrow Press, 403pp., US$47.50

This reference source lists and summarises nearly 1,000 English-language articles and books published from the late 1970s to the early 1990s that treat the subject of science and technology in developing countries. These are organised by major topics. Entries are numbered and keywords are provided at the end of each summary. Indexes make it easy for readers to locate entries by keywords, subject or author’s name.

The Penguin atlas of diasporas

Gerard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau 1995, Viking, 182pp., £20.00

This pioneering reference guide to a long-neglected subject will fascinate anyone interested in the history and diversity of cultures, and prove vital to an understanding of today’s refugee crisis. The Atlas includes extended coverage of Jewish diaspora patterns, the history and nature of African, Chinese, Indian, Irish, Greek, Armenian, Gipsy, Lebanese, Palestinian, Vietnamese and Korean diasporas, contributions of early diasporas to globalisation, and the changing and contradictory attitudes of host states and populations. Its text is complemented by full-colour maps and a black and white iconography of synagogues, churches and other cultural markers.
Cancer and the environment

The Women’s Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) has produced a 29-minute radio documentary titled ‘Cancer and the environment’, which is available for airing by public radio stations. The documentary explores scientific evidence on environmental links to the breast cancer epidemic and spotlights the victimisation of women of colour in communities that have above average exposure to toxic chemicals.

For more information contact:
Pamela Ransom
Breast Cancer Prevention Program Director
c/- WEDO
845 Third Avenue
15th Floor
New York, NY 10022
USA
Tel (1 212) 759 7982
Fax (1 212) 759 8647
E-mail wedo@igc.apc.org

Bibliography on gender awareness

The International Planned Parenthood (IPPF) Women’s Unit has produced a bibliography providing an overview of the central concepts, issues and debates about gender in relation to family planning, population and development. The bibliography is designed for fieldworkers and family planning programme managers to help them understand gender issues and integrate a gender perspective into their work. The bibliography includes tools for gender analysis, planning and training, and specific discussion of development in relation to family planning, reproductive health and population.

For more information contact:
IPPF
Regent’s College
Inner Circle, Regent’s Park
London NW1 4NS
United Kingdom

The Oxford dictionary of the world

David Munro (ed) 1996, Oxford University Press, A$39.95

The Dictionary covers: countries (profiles of every nation, dependency and area of special sovereignty in the world); regions; peoples, languages and religions; cities and major towns; natural features; famous buildings, sites and monuments; and ancient sites. Authoritative text and maps reflect the latest political developments.
Electronic Forum

Banaban Web Page

The Banaban homepage has been recently updated to include many new features including aid and development projects, Banaban culture, and a new section on environmental issues including a new rehabilitation forum message board where you can voice your ideas on the subject. The web page can be accessed at:

http://www.ion.com.au/-banaban

For more information contact:
Stacey King
Banaban Heritage Society Inc.
PO Box 536
Mudgeeraba, QLD 4213
Australia
Tel/Fax (07) 5530 5298
E-mail banaban@ion.com.au

UNICEF Gopher Service

The Gopher Service offers information on the work of UNICEF, including its programmes in child survival and development, its advocacy on the rights of the child and its long-term human development efforts as well as its emergency humanitarian role. The Gopher provides access to full-text UNICEF publications, including its State of the World's Children 1996 and the Progress of Nations, plus the UNICEF Annual Report, UNICEF Features, the First Call for Children newsletter, press releases, information notes and other advocacy and information booklets, brochures and pamphlets. The site also provides a gateway to other UN information. The Gopher version allows for easier navigation and downloading, although it is not as graphically-oriented as the Website. The Gopher and web site can be accessed at:

gopher.unicef.org and

http://www.unicef.org

AusAID

AusAID has an official web page which directs the browser to several pages of information on Australia's aid programme and AusAID's role. Current highlights include information on the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, and the announcement of the review of Australia's overseas aid. The homepage can be accessed at:


PNG Virtual Library

This site has been up since January 1996 and has receiving a steady 700 hits since March. The main growth is however not expected in the Papua New Guinea (PNG) content sites but in nearby places and issues sites, eg, Irian Jaya, Freeport, logging New Caledonia etc. The site can be accessed at:


Carolina Population Center

The Carolina Population Center (CPC) recently announced the availability of its new server on the Web. The CPC homepage contains links to information about the Center's faculty fellows, staff and trainees, including research interests and current research projects. In addition, information about the Center's administrative, computer, information, spatial analysis and statistical services are accessible from the homepage. Details on the application process for trainees are also available. Information on datasets collected by CPC researchers will also be available through the web. The URL for the CPC homepage is:

http://www.cpc.unc.edu

INTERNET Australasia

A directory of Australian mailing lists and discussion fora has been complied and can now be accessed through the World Wide Web at:


Namebase Online

For a long time there have been complaints about the huge databanks being held by intelligence agencies on law abiding citizens. Now there is a databank held by law abiding citizens on those intelligence agencies. Namebase Online is a free public access database of over 178,000 citations provided by Blythe Systems. Available over the Internet, the database contains 82,000 names of groups and individuals compiled from over 500 investigative books published since 1962, and thousands of pages of periodicals since 1973. Areas covered include the international intelligence community, political elites from the Right and Left, the US foreign policy establishment, 'assassination theory', Latin America, 'big business' and organised crime. It can be accessed through Telnet by the command:

'telnet ursula.blythe.org' <enter>.

The login is 'namebase' and no password is required.
NARU Publications online

Information about North Australia Research Unit (NARU) publications and publishing services is now available on the Internet. An order form can also be downloaded. The site can be accessed at:

http://online.anu.edu.au/narupub/naru.htrnl

The UN Department for Public Information

The UN Department for Public Information has set up a new homepage on the World Wide Web. The new page, a collaborative effort among many UN offices, can provide more than 30 million Internet users with access to information about the United Nations. It can be accessed at:

http://www.un.org

For those without access to the Web, information on the UN can be obtained through the UNDP Gopher by sending a message to:

gopher@undp.org

Global Childnet (GCNET)

GCNET is an international communications network which offers a range of easily accessible on-line services providing reliable information on issues related to the well-being of children around the world. Its objectives are: to help facilitate access to credible information on child-related issues; to encourage increased communication about these issues across locations, borders, regions and sectors of the economy; and to enhance the capacity of organisations and individuals working on these issues to meet their needs for specific information. GCNET seeks to fulfil its mission by gathering and reviewing information on child-related issues from around the world, providing referrals to existing information sources, distributing information, maintaining several on-line databases, providing electronic discussion fora on key topics, collaborating with other organisations and agencies to ensure global information access, assisting users to join the network and providing customised information services on particular topics and subject areas.

For more information contact:
Global Childnet (GCNET)
990 Beach Avenue, Suite 113
Vancouver, BC V6E 4M2
Canada
Tel (1 604) 682 6008
Fax (1 604) 682 6771
E-mail gcnet@unixg.ubc.ca

The Online Journalist

This is the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism's (ACIJ) Web site. It features information on the work of the Centre and showcases some of the reports, magazines and articles produced by the Centre. The site features a video clip from an ACIJ film on media coverage of Aboriginal and ethnic issues titled Making a Difference. The site also contains a resource guide for all journalists that among other things shows how to look up people's phone numbers and addresses around Australia (using Telstra's site), gives access to dozens of online publications, and provides a starting point for journalists researching countries and issues around the world.

There is also information on the Centre's AusAID-funded project Signposts to Asia and the Pacific, which will be a web-based guide for journalists wanting to find contacts and information about the countries in the immediate region. The ACIJ also runs short courses on the web for those new to the web and for those with advanced skills. The homepage can be accessed at:

http://acij.uts.edu.au

Human Rights and International Law

Columbia University's new web page provides information on human rights issues. It is linked to the US State Department's annual country reports on human rights practices; the Amnesty International gopher; the Hunger Web; Human Rights Watch gopher; DIANA - an international human rights database; and the Institute for Global Communication's five computer networks known as Peacenet, EcoNet, ConflictNet, LaborNet and WomensNet. The web page can be accessed at:


October 1996

For more information contact:
Global Childnet (GCNET)
990 Beach Avenue, Suite 113
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Fax (1 604) 682 6771
E-mail gcnet@unixg.ubc.ca

109
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Manuscripts are normally accepted on the understanding that they are unpublished and not on offer to another publication. However, they may subsequently be republished with acknowledgement of the source (see ‘Copyright’ above). Manuscripts should be double-spaced with ample margins. They should be submitted both in hard copy (2 copies) and, if possible on disk specifying the program used to enter the text. No responsibility can be taken for any damage or loss of manuscripts, and contributors should retain a complete copy of their work.

Style

Quotation marks should be double; single within double.
Spelling: English (OED with ‘-ise’ endings).

Notes

(a) Simple references without accompanying comments to be inserted in brackets at appropriate place in text, eg. (Yung 1989).

(b) References with comments should be kept to a minimum and appear as endnotes, indicated consecutively through the article by numerals in superscript.

Reference list

If references are used, a reference list should appear at the end of the text. It should contain all the works referred to, listed alphabetically by author’s surname (or name of sponsoring body where there is not identifiable author). Authors should make sure that there is a strict correspondence between the names and years in the text and those on the reference list. Book titles and names of journals should be italicised or underlined; titles of articles should be in single inverted commas. Style should follow: author’s surname, forename and or initials, date, title of publication, publisher and place of publication. Journal references should include volume, number (in brackets), date and page numbers. Examples:


Publication/resource listings

An important task of the Network is to keep members up-to-date with the latest literature and other resources dealing with development-related topics. To make it as easy as possible for readers to obtain the publications listed, please include price information (including postage) and the source from which materials can be obtained.