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Editors' notes

This issue of the Development Bulletin focuses on the progress made in the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty.

Briefing paper

Judith Shaw critically reviews structural adjustment in Ghana from the inception of the Economic Recovery Program in 1983 to the present.

Viewpoint

Terence Murphy gives a personalised view of impediments and constraints to the successful implementation of poverty programmes.


We have also reprinted extracts from Hillary Rodham Clinton's address to the Women of Australia meeting in Sydney (21 November 1996).

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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 Development Bulletin will focus on 'Environment, population and sustainability'. If you have any queries or would like to contribute please call, fax or e-mail us.

Pamela Thomas, Lucy Tylman and Rafat Hussain
Poverty and development

The international development community designated 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. This wording would seem to signal a fundamental change in global perspectives towards development and the implementation of policies which aim for greater social and economic equity nationally and internationally. However, a review of the 1996 literature, proceedings from development-related conferences, official government development assistance policies for 1996, and the agenda for United Nations and DAC meetings indicate that ODA business remains the same and that a fundamental difference in the meaning of the words alleviation and eradication is either not understood or deliberately ignored. The available data, and the papers presented here, indicate that while very limited progress has been made globally in alleviating poverty, eradication is proving more difficult. For many poverty is deepening.

The figures frequently presented at meetings during 1996 differ only marginally from those of ten years ago. It is estimated that approximately 800 million to 1.3 billion people live in absolute poverty. About one billion to not have access to safe water; and two billion do not have access to sanitation services. Approximately 30 per cent of land in Africa and 20 per cent in Asia is affected by significant degradation. There are around 50 million refugees and displaced persons. During this time, however, the polarisation between rich and poor has increased and an estimated 1.6 billion people are worse off than they were ten years ago.

One of the difficulties in addressing poverty, and probably one of the reasons for not doing so, has been disagreement on exactly how to identify and measure it. Traditional measurement has been in terms of income and expenditure, and major approaches to poverty eradication focused on economic development with little consideration of distribution or social issues. Increasingly, however, the indices used to identify poverty are multi-dimensional and include social data, most particularly that on health and education. This type of measurement provides the opportunity to eradicate poverty by expanding people's capabilities and opportunities - not just attempting to expand their incomes.

A variety of factors in a variety of combinations are considered to be the cause of increasing numbers of poor and growing levels of poverty. These causes include lack of economic growth, lack of public or private investment, civil unrest, warfare, population pressure, land degradation, poor governance, illiteracy and the impact of structural adjustment. In the current economic climate it seems politically incorrect to discuss the impact of global economic policies, international trade agreements, resource extraction and capital flows.

This following papers discuss some of these issues as well as some practical ways of eradicating, rather than merely alleviating, poverty.

Whither the North-South gap?*
Robin Broadt and Christina Melhorn Landi

... the economies of the developing world ... are, in aggregate, growing faster than those of the major industrial countries (World Bank 1994a:5).

During much of the cold war, the central dilemmas of development economics was how to reverse the growing economic gap between the rich and poor countries of the world. In recent years, the World Bank has declared a victory on that front. The Bank asserts that not only is the gap no longer growing, but indeed that it has begun to narrow. Moreover, the Bank claims, the free market policies it has spearheaded are at the core of the developing country turnaround that is closing the North-South gap.

Economic data from the World Bank and other United Nations agencies suggest, however, that the North-South gap continues to widen in all but roughly a dozen Third World countries, and there remains a net flow of resources from most Southern nations to the North.

The Bank bases its claim of a closing gap on two primary assertions: that the economies of the developing countries are growing faster than industrial countries' economies, and that large net capital flows are now flowing into developing countries.

Based on an examination of World Bank and United Nations data, this article refutes both of these assertions. We first compare the growth rates of Northern versus Southern countries. Then we survey the nature and levels of the financial flows between North and South.

As we discover, a major problem with the Bank's gap-closing projections is that they are based on aggregate data and often on the strength of only one to three years of data from the early 1990s. Disaggregating the data presents a vastly different picture of the dynamics and consequences of these economic flows and trends for the majority of developing countries. A closer and longer look at North-South data reveals that, while the gap may be closing between a few developing countries - particularly the 10 "big emerging markers" (BEMs) pointed out by the US Department of Commerce - and the industrial countries, the vast majority of Third World countries are slipping further behind the North.

The gap

The World Bank's assertion that Southern countries are growing faster than Northern ones can be dissected in a number of ways. First, one must consider the time frame in which such an analysis is made. Whether one finds that the aggregate gap between North and South is growing, remaining constant or shrinking is determined, in part, by what time period one chooses to examine. Consider the period 1960-1990: in 1960 developing countries' gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was 18 per cent of the industrial nations; in 1990, at 17 per cent, the gap was almost unchanged (UNDP 1994:143). On the other hand, during the disastrous decade of the 1980s (1980-91), gross national product (GNP) per capita increased only by an average of one per cent in the South (and in Sub-Saharan Africa, it declined by 1.2 per cent), while it increased 2.3 per cent in the North - suggesting a widening gap (World Bank 1993:239).

Recent higher aggregate growth rates for the South in the 1990s - highlighted by the Bank in, for example, its World Atlas 1995 and its Global Economic Prospects 1994 - may help reassure some of the damage these countries suffered in the 1980s, but they do not reverse it. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the Bank's 1994 Global Economic Prospects points out: "Although growth ... is expected to accelerate, per capita incomes until the year 2000 will be well below the level reached in 1980"(World Bank 1994a:5).

Thus, key to assessing the relative positions of rich and poor countries is not only the time period but also the phrase "in aggregate". The engine of economic growth of the developing countries taken as a whole is not evenly distributed among the roughly 150 countries that now make up the South. (This 150 ballpark number includes the countries of the former Second World.) More precisely, it is only a small number of leading Southern countries that are driving such economic performance: the BEMs of East Asia (especially China) and Latin America. Even the World Bank points out that "about one half of the acceleration of developing-country growth since 1990 is due to East Asia, primarily China, where growth has averaged about 10 per cent a year in the past four years," although it conveniently ignores this crucial caveat in its conclusions (World Bank 1994a:9).

If the data behind the highly touted economic trends of the early 1990s are disaggregated between the BEMs and the rest of the South, then the gap is indeed closing between the BEM developing countries and the industrial countries. As former US Commerce official Jeffrey Garten noted in a speech outlining a US policy towards the BEMs, "of all the world trade growth in the next two decades, almost three-fourths is expected to come from the LDCs. But a small core of these LDCs, the biggest of them, just ten countries, is likely to account for more than half of that growth." The bottom line is that about a dozen countries have been doing well for the past few years, while the vast majority of the South is either slipping backwards, stagnating, or growing slower than the North.

Discussion
Once these big emerging markets are excluded from the picture, the scenario for closing the gap via economic growth appears more troublesome for the majority of countries in the South. Consider the World Bank's projections for growth in Africa and Latin America by 3.9 per cent (with a low projection of 2.4 per cent) from 1994-2003 (with a low projection of 0.8 per cent) (World Bank 1994a:20, Table 1.4) . Let us give the World Bank the benefit of the doubt and assume that Africa does reach the higher projected growth rate of 3.9 per cent a year. Compare this, however, to University of Sussex economist Martin Singer's qualification that Sub-Saharan Africa would actually have to grow by 8.8 per cent a year (for "very much more than a decade") or more than twice the rate of the World Bank's high end projection - to return its average income levels to where they would have been had its growth rates from 1965-66 continued to the present. Latin America and the Caribbean, Singer calculates, would need to grow annually by 10.5 per cent in order to return to their 1965-80 trajectory. As Singer concludes: "In other words, the task is impossible (except perhaps for the upper-middle-income countries)" (Singer 1992:25).

Net private financial flows

During the 'lost decade' of the 1980s, not only did the South grow more slowly than the North, but a dangerous trend emerged: the net financial flow of resources to the South from the North as debtor nations were pressed to service growing debts. From 1985 to 1992, the net negative flow from South to North on debt service alone totalled US$220 billion. This net resource transfer has become a focal point for those arguing that the North-South gap was widening precipitously in the 1980s 'debt crisis', creating a polarised world of Northern winners and Southern losers. The World Bank, noting the "...very heavy debt burden", however, does not believe that there was a "...significant shift in the pattern of finance during this period..." (World Bank 1994b:8). The World Bank also supports FDI as a source of capital because it is considered the least volatile and "...should allow for the transfer of technology in production and management practices, and for the development of export-oriented industries growing, significant role in North-South flows: in the 1990s, over 40 per cent of private capital flows to the South have been in the form of FDI (World Bank 1994b:18). In addition, the percentage of global FDI that went to developing countries reached 37 per cent of the world total in 1993, up from 29 per cent in 1992 (World Bank 1994b:3-4).

However, once again, disaggregation reveals that these unprecedented FDI flows did not spread equally to all developing countries. During 1989-92, 72 per cent of private capital flows went to only 10 countries: China, Mexico, Nigeria, Argentina, Thailand, Indonesia, Brazil, Nigeria, Venezuela and South Korea (UNDP 1994:62). (Note that, of these, six are on the US Commerce Department's BEI list.) On the other hand, the approximately four-dozen least developed countries (a group of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa) received only two per cent (UNDP 1994:62). In addition, global FDI is highly concentrated by region. Sub-Saharan Africa received only two per cent of inflows to the South in the late 1980s. In 1993, East Asia and the Pacific received 55 per cent of all FDI flowing to the South, Latin America and the Caribbean received 24 per cent, and Europe and Central Asia obtained 11 per cent; while the Middle East and North Africa received three per cent, Sub-Saharan Africa received three per cent and South Asia just one per cent (World Bank 1994b:4, Fig. 2). China, by far the largest recipient of these flows (World Bank 1994b:3), completely skews the FDI tables: the annual average growth rate of FDI flows to the World Bank's low income Southern countries (defined by the World Bank as countries with a 1993 GNP per capita less than or equal to $695) in 1990-93 was a staggering 18.1 per cent, while the average was six per cent (World Bank 1994b:160, Table A.5.2).

There is one other component of foreign direct investment that affects the North-South gap to the South's detriment. According to the World Bank, around half of the new FDI into the South in 1992 left those countries as profits. Still more of these earnings are transferred as payment for licensing, a stream of cash that will probably increase with the new trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) rules of the Uruguay Round of GATT.

Other forms of capital flows to the developing countries that have burgeoned in the last few years are portfolio equity and bond issuance. Once again, however, these are highly skewed in terms of who received the flows. Specifically, Latin America and East Asia - the two regions in which the BEIs are located - "...together accounted for more than 90 per cent of the gross portfolio equity flows in developing countries between 1989 and 1993" (World Bank 1994b:14). To be more precise, only 10 countries issued nearly 90 per cent of all developing country bonds in 1993 (World Bank 1994b:12). Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Hong Kong, South Korea, Greece, Turkey, China, Venezuela and Thailand (listed in descending order of the dollar value of bonds issued) (World Bank 1994b:12, Table 1.3). (Note again how the disaggregated list of "winners'" overlay; of six of these are on the Commerce Department's BEI list.) Of these, the top five accounted for 58 per cent of all bonds issued that year by developing countries.

In addition, in recent years, foreign purchases of bonds have grown to encompass a significant proportion of these emerging bond markets. In Mexico, for example, foreigners held more bonds than citizens in 1992. These international bond issues (a third of the market) as of May 1994, up from $1.8 billion in 1990 - roughly a 1200 per cent increase (World Bank 1994b:13).

The extreme concentration of portfolio flows is only one element of the highly problematic nature of these flows. Since the major source of the stock market booms in several Southern nations has been the privatisation of state enterprises (World Bank 1994b:15), a practice promoted by the World Bank, this source has a finite life given that there is a fixed amount of capital for diversification. In other words, at least some of this privatisation represents a one-time, non-replicable increase in portfolio flows.

Overall, these new private capital sources reinforce the conclusion we reached on GNP growth figures: perhaps a dozen countries are the prime beneficiaries and are not currently suffering a South-to-North resource drain; the rest of the Southern countries have not benefited to any significant extent.

The debt crisis

For the majority of Southern nations left out of the new private flows, do debt obligations still translate into a net negative drain? The evidence suggests that they do.

While the World Bank has proclaimed the "twilight of the commercial debt crisis" (World Bank 1994b:4), a look at the debt situation in developing countries reveals the existence of still burdensome debt stocks. There are three main dimensions to the current debt situation: the debt burden as measured by the ratio of short-term earnings and of debt to GNP; international interest rates; and the changed nature of new debt.

First, a look at the overall debt burden. Let us begin with the relatively good news. Debt-to-GNP and debt-to-export ratios did peak for almost all countries in the late 1980s and are decreasing - except for Africa, where debt as a percentage of GNP is growing, reaching 75.5 per cent of GNP in 1990. However, even those decreasing amounts remain taxing. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the ratio of debt to GNP peaked in 1987 in all developing countries in 42.4 per cent of GNP. By 1990, it was still 32.3 per cent of GNP for all developing countries; in Latin America it was 36 per cent (UNCTAD 1994a:22, Table 5.14).

The difference between the aggregate and regional figures is accounted for partially by East Asia, which has for the last few decades maintained a relatively low and stable debt burden. The East Asian stock of external debt creditors (a variety of official and private creditors) is largely on long-term loans, often to service exports and export growth. Thus, the region brings down the aggregate debt ratios for developing countries.

As also, as some of the above statistics reveal, while it is true that across-time debt burdens are relatively lower compared to the onerous levels of the 1980s, this does not negate the still high absolute levels of debt obligations. The overall stock of Third World debt continues to rise by around $100 billion a year and reached $1.945 billion in 1994 (World Bank 1994b:25). As the 1994 World Bank World Debt Tables noted, even assuming full application of the additional bilateral debt relief offered by the enhanced Toronto terms and Paris Club reschedulings of official development assistance, 29 of the 32 severely indebted low income countries would still have debts-to-export ratios exceeding 200 per cent (World Bank 1994b:43). Commercial banks may no longer totter at the edge of collapse; the debt burden of developing countries, however, continues to exert a cost on their national plans and possibilities as well as on their citizens.

Second, let us look at interest rates. The World Bank emphasises that international interest rates have stabilised at levels that are adequate to service their debts: the Bank predicts that if international interest rates are "...attained for five years at the Bank's forecasted low

**Note:** The document contains a mix of numerical values, foreign currency amounts, and historical data, which might require additional context for full comprehension. The text is focused on the economic and financial flows, debt issues, and projections for economic growth and development.
However, this 1994 assessment of stabilisation failed to foresee events that were then already on the horizon: the 1994 fall of the dollar in international markets, the peso plummet and the bailout of Mexico by the USA. While an appreciation of the US dollar decreases dollar-denominated debt stocks (for example in 1991, by an estimated $24 billion), in 1990 the fall in the US dollar increased dollar-denominated debt stocks by $51.5 billion - a trend that continued with the dollar devaluations of 1993 and 1994 (World Bank 1991:13). Overall, the World Bank's rosy predictions of stabilisation on this front deny the fragility of financial markets. With investors on the market response and computerized trading and speculation, projecting stabilisation over the medium- to long-term seems disingenuous. Debt is not a problem that is going away quietly or smoothly.

In addition, debt is changing in nature, and this portends some new potential problems and challenges for developing countries, as partially discussed above. A new form of debt is becoming prominent in overall debt stocks of developing countries: the issuance of bonds. In 1993, this accounted for 92 per cent of net private debt flows. On one hand, this may be a positive change to the extent that it represents diminished exposure to the vagaries of commercial banks. But, on the other hand, considering the withdrawal of investment from Mexico after the December 1994 peso plunge, switching the vagaries of the commercial banks for those of private investors may not be much of an improvement.

Overall, the ease with which a positive inflow can switch to a net outflow, and the high level of foreign ownership, raise concerns of vulnerability - that questions that are unanswered and unasked in many of the Bank's hopeful projections about capital flows.

Terms of trade

There is another source of South-to-North financial leakage that seldom enters the Bank's calculations of the status of the North-South gap: the diminishing purchasing power of Southern commodities in international trade or the so-called declining 'terms of trade'.

Inasmuch as primary commodities continue to be central to the foreign exchange earnings of most non BEM Southern nations, the prices derived from commodity exports remain the most important terms of trade indicator. In 1992, the overall real price of commodities, with 1985 as the base of 100, was only 71.1. Different regions have been affected to different degrees. In 1991, with 1987 as the base year of 100, the prices of commodities in the USA -85 and in South Asia's terms of trade was 94 (UNDP 1994:168-169, Table 20). These movements can translate into billions of dollars: the 3.5 per cent decline in Africa's terms of trade from 1992-93, for example, meant that the purchasing power of the continent's exports fell by some $3 billion. And this was not an isolated 'bad' year for Africa; from 1991-92, its terms of trade had fallen by 3.4 per cent and from 1990-91, by 7.9 per cent.

Expanding the focus from Africa, if one looks specifically at exporters of non oil primary products, the terms of trade remain dismal. From 1974-80, the terms of trade declined by 5.7 per cent a year; from 1981-86, by 3.3 per cent a year; and from 1987-93, by 1.8 per cent a year (World Bank 1994a:15). Yet, in its 1994 Global Economic Prospects, the World Bank advocated primary commodities as briefly- 'human resources and natural resources. These 'social and environmental' flows have only recently begun to be included in some quantitative assessments of resource flows between the North and South, and they add significantly to the conclusions of such analyses. Notable is the recent work by Keith Griffin and Terry McKinley (1994) for the UNDP.

In terms of human resource flows from South to North, Southern nations invest billions of dollars each year in the education of skilled workers who often leave the country for greener pastures in the North. The UN estimated that between 1961 and 1972 'abroad' - the Philippines, India, China and South Korea - nearly 150,000 skilled and unskilled workers came to the USA between 1972 and 1985 (UNDP 1994:65).

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One final component of the South-to-North resource flow that is difficult to measure, but that will be a crucial determinant of future development problems and possibilities, is the export of non renewable Southern natural resources to the North in the form of forest products, minerals and marine resources. At the economic core of most colonial relationships was the exploitation of silver, gold, timber, fish and other raw products for Northern use; many of these patterns continue to the present.

Analysis by the World Resources Institute indicates that Southern natural resource flows are greatest in petroleum and minerals. One of the least studied South-North flows occurs offshore and hence off camera: the fishing fleets of the North, having depleted fisheries off Newfoundland, New England, the North Sea and elsewhere, have increasingly moved into the richest waters of the South (The Ecologist 1995). While Southern governments receive foreign exchange for their exports of natural resources, the depletion of these resources hurts millions of small farmers and fisherfolk who face falling yields as a result of deforestation and over-fishing.

Sustainability

In the World Bank's 1994-95 World Debt Tables, it put forward the argument that the short-term flows that are the basis of so much of the Bank's optimism concerning the future of the South are 'sustainable', meaning that one could count on them to help fuel growth in years to come. Part of the Bank's argument around sustainability is that changes in the world economy that are beneficial to developing countries are structural rather than temporary (World Bank 1994b:11). The Bank pinpoints 'factors underlying the much higher private capital flows [that] are unlikely to be reversed in the aggregate - the sea change in developing countries' policies that makes them more creditworthy and more attractive to international investors, the integration of global financial markets, and the fall in international interest rates from their highs in the 1980s ... ' (World Bank 1994b:4).

Our analysis of these flows suggests that the Bank's sustainability conclusion is premature. Rather, we would agree with the United Nations' 1993 World Economic Survey's blunt warning: "developing countries are hosting large stocks of volatile funds" (United Nations 1993:104). One cannot help but question the Bank's definition of structured.

The volatility of the dollar has a huge effect on debt stocks held by developing countries. The recent fluctuations in the dollar, where the dollar's value has been falling against the yen in international markets, do not augur well for stable and sustainable debt reduction in the near- and medium-term for developing countries. Another basis for the World Bank's hypothesis of sustainability is its assertion that developing countries are becoming less dependent on the performance of industrial countries (World Bank 1994a:8). Hence, the Bank's argument goes, slower growth in industrial countries should not have much of a negative impact on the South. Yet, elsewhere, the Bank seems to contradict itself by arguing that "if growth in industrial countries were much higher than expected, this would fuel inflationary expectations - pushing up interest rates and slowing growth in these countries. This, in turn, could hurt developing-country growth and erode developing-country sustainability - dampening private capital flows." (World Bank 1994b:18).

In other words, an industrial country-developing country performance link still exists and the South remains vulnerable to growth trends in the North.

Conclusion

The World Bank has long argued that it has the solution to Southern problems. For some 15 years, it has implemented its solution through the vehicle of structural adjustment loans (SALs) in dozens of countries; it has been one of the leading - and most effective - advocates of privatization, freer trade and increased emphasis on exports. Its publications of recent years have declared success. Not only is the South growing, it argues, but the North-South gap is now narrowing.

It is not enough to simply look at aggregate growth rates of developing and industrial countries. Equally important are the disaggregated statistics which offer a strikingly different picture of the dynamics between North and South.

The representation of the South as a monolith was flawed back in the 1960s, but, in light of the discussion above, it is increasingly misleading today. Over the next generation, if current trends continue, some 10 to 12 Southern nations are likely to join the ranks of the North or at least move much closer to Northern levels of economic performance. The remaining 140-odd Southern nations, however, are likely to slip further behind. Yet, since the 10 to 12 rapidly growing Southern nations include some of the largest economies in the world, including those of China and India, aggregated figures of the South's performance will increasingly mask a complex pattern of a few winners and a much larger group of losing nations.

It is ironic that we reach the conclusions we do - conclusions very different from those of the Bank - in large part based upon closer examination of World Bank data. The World Bank provides many of the elements for uncovering the volatility, vulnerability and variability of the increasingly complex South, but neglects to connect the dots that would illuminate the shifting landscape of rich and poor in the global economy.

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Alleviation or eradication of poverty: The changing role of aid

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Official Development Assistance (ODA) is under attack as having lost direction. In addition, there is no clear NGO vision for poverty eradication in the light of ongoing changes in the aid and development world. As we move into the United Nations 'Decade of Action' for the eradication of poverty, serious questions must be asked about what role aid can play - and what sort of role is being carved out by present development assistance theory and practice.

The central argument of this article is that, despite a temptation to see the two terms as interchangeable, there is a significant difference between a programme of poverty eradication and one of poverty alleviation - the latter agenda increasingly favoured by the aid community. A programme of poverty alleviation is particularly problematic because it does not challenge the structures and trends that lie behind systemic international poverty, including the ways in which globalisation has been accompanied by large increases in inequality, and the failure of economic growth to bring about the expected and hoped for benefits for the poor.

The changing face of aid and development

Almost from the beginning of the modern aid and development industry, there have been different conceptions about what aid was for. In addition to the important and relevant critiques made of aid programmes when considered in the international political context (Bello 1994; Escurial 1995), there has been considerable debate within the aid movement itself, mainly in donor nations, about exactly what aid is and what it can, and should, achieve.

This debate has most visibly taken place between the administrators of ODA, and activists and practitioners from NGOs. Thus, the conventional history of the aid industry, as told by practitioners and many academics in donor nations (albeit with slight variations depending upon which side of the debate the historian sided from, and with significant disagreements about the extent of the reform process), is one of the gradual 'softening' of ODA. That is, ODA has been portrayed as moving away from top down, hard edged industrial infrastructure programmes towards a renewed emphasis on people, participation, communities, ecological sustainability, gender analysis, and empowerment. Although many of the most significant moves in this direction were perhaps seeded in the 'Basic Needs' movement of the 1970s, it is generally considered that this 'softening' process is accelerating, and has re-earned even more of a boost with NGO acclaim for the latest World Bank President. In Australia, this 'softening' process is perfectly demonstrated by the increased humanitarion focus promoted by the Coalition Government for the Australian aid programme.

The 'softening' process does not just include changes in technique on the part of ODA administrators. It also means increased cooperation between NGOs and ODA. Virtually all major NGOs are now significantly dependent upon ODA. In Australia for instance, three high profile NGOs, CARE Australia, Community Aid Abroad, and World Vision, take 54, 36 and 20 per cent respectively of their income from different ODA sources. Because ODA grantees have lower overheads than community based NGOs, and are often targeted directly for specific programme or projects, the percentage of NGO overseas programme expenditure originating from ODA is probably even higher. Nor is ODA-NGO cooperation limited to funding NGOs. NGOs are increasingly incorporated into conventional projects, even large-scale infrastructure projects. By 1993, more than half of all World Bank projects involved NGOs (Sandstrom 1994).

Most commentators see this change as the result of an interaction between the innovative people-based development of NGOs and the big business economic development approach of governments and the World Bank. However, there has been insufficient analysis of why and how the World Bank and NGO approaches were anti-parallel to start with, and even less consideration of how a new synthesised approach to aid and development can reconcile goals that 30 years ago were not just contradictory, but seemed to exist in completely different universes.

NGOs and ODA - different goals, different worlds

NGO goals have always been, at best, fuzzily articulated. However, NGO's position in donor societies and their particular histories have perhaps given them their goals can perhaps be defined for them. NGOs rely upon anecdotal evidence and casestudy of rural poverty and/or rural community development to raise money from the public. They emphasise self-help services, although these may be played down in unscrupulous attempts to gain charitable public pity, for instance by depicting African children as helpless victims awaiting Australian charity; bottom up approaches; and 'human scale' development with recognisable immediate benefits for the poor, as opposed to long-term policies of economic growth with questionable trickle down effects. Where they do reflect upon their relationship with ODA, NGOs aim to be innovative and experimental leaders in participation and community development and hope to influence ODA to adopt a similar stance. There has been some attempt in recent years by a number of agencies to conceptualise ways to 'scale up' the impact of NGO activities in developing countries, but this has not so far yielded significant results. Nor can it be expected that, since the fundamental ethic behind NGO aid is incompatible with a...
paradigm of national strategies of long-term development, being based on specific case studies, the meeting of immediate needs, and the humanitarian alleviation of poverty.

ODA activity has historically had a completely different agenda to that of NGOs. Whereas NGOs developed in response to charitable impulses, ODA was a calculated attempt to bring about sustained economic development. ODA was expected to supply much-needed investment that could not be generated locally, in sectors such as infrastructure and the education of workers. The original goal of ODA was to transform pre-industrial nations into complexly different societies with significantly higher standards of living. The mood was one of optimism - a belief that the eradication of poverty was achievable, and that such eradication required only effort and good will.

By the 1970s it was apparent that the ODA project of transformation had failed. There were many causes, including naive underestimation of the complexities of the problems of development; arrogant assumptions about transplanting development models from one part of the world or history to another; the direction of aid to countries or sectors within countries for cold war and other non developmental political purposes; and perhaps the inescapable fact that the amount of ODA actually given was never enough. Compared to the colossal and massive effort that went into the Marshall Plan to reconstruct Europe, ODA has always been a miserable pittance.

Critics of aid began to question the meaning of the billions of dollars given to developing nations in the form of grants or concessional finance. At the same time, institutions such as the World Bank and ODA were valid, and perhaps the inescapable fact that the amount of ODA actually given was never enough. Compared to the colossal and massive effort that went into the Marshall Plan to reconstruct Europe, ODA has always been a miserable pittance.

Project alleviation and NGOs

There are, undeniably, sectors within the NGO community that seek to expand their mandate beyond alleviation of poverty. Any of Australia's Global Education Centres will contain some material from fringe groups, or external to mainstream NGOs, promoting global transformation, 'living lightly' and sustainability, and concepts such as the eco-village or the intellectual descendents of Schumacher's 'small is beautiful' school. Respected commentators, with more or less explicit support from different branches of Australian NGOs, such as Walden Bello (1994:113), push for alternative forms of development such as "alternative socialism, social democracy, democratic capitalism, or people-centred development ... [the name] is less important than its essence: the subversion of the market ... to the community."

However, NGOs are not the public promoters of radical new visions of development. Although de Senillosa (1992) has argued that NGOs are part of a broader activist movement for social change, it is hard to find evidence for this in the pronouncements or activities of NGOs.

The most visible manifestations of NGOs in Australian society are the intentionally pitiful and pathetic advertisements for child sponsorship mentioned earlier. Not only are such images patronising, but they deliberately fail to challenge community prejudices about 'Third World' dependence on charity, and must be seen as the ultimate symptom of the niche NGOs have adopted: humanitarian poverty alleviation for the poor in developing countries.

Projects actually funded by NGOs are still as much the worthy flagships of community development and participation as they have ever been and are probably considerably let down by their own publicity in donor nations. However, such projects remain linked to their fundamental origins in the minds of supporters in NGOs rather than appropriate economic infrastructure were made very convincing indeed by such images and by the never-ending tales of wasted, inefficient, failed and corrupt aid projects. The argument and criticisms were valid, and perhaps ODA is better spent on humanitarian and community projects. Yet if more ODA is spent on such projects at the same time as neocolonial economics and politics of state minimisation prevail amongst elites around the world, the received role for ODA in any nation's development is diminished. The influential World Bank report, The East Asian Miracle (1993), makes virtually no reference to aid. As the World Bank and IMF become more preoccupied with the emerging role of markets and economic development. Such factors include assumed or actual pressure from a growing, and increasingly detached and non activist, donor base that must not be alienated, increasing dependence upon government funds to keep overseas programme-to-income ratios acceptable, and, in some instances, increased implication with government policy through pursuit of its advocacy and lobbying goals.

Community Aid Abroad's Executive Director has written that NGOs cannot afford "amateurish, anecdotal and ideologically driven submissions to the big players" (Hobbs 1996:82-83). Unquestionably this is so, especially if organisations like Community Aid Abroad with their submissions to be influential in the policy debate. However, there is no such thing as an ideology-free document, avoiding 'ideologically driven submissions' simply means that discourse will by default continue to support the ruling ideology.

Conclusion

ODA is increasingly being redefined to the performance of two functions. The first is softening the impact of the globalisation process through the humanitarian alleviation of poverty. The second is supporting frail states while they impose structural adjustment regimes on discontent populations. While publicly critical of the second use of aid, NGOs are content to continue to pursue policies aimed at alleviating poverty at the grassroots level, and are very much implicated in a synthesis of ODA/NGO goals along the lines of the first ODA role mentioned above. This synthesis has taken place despite NGOs and ODA originally having completely different purposes - one for human scale development and charity work, the other for an apparently discredited grand project of economic development.

Endnotes and references

1. NGOs refer throughout to non government organisations based in donor countries.
2. CARE Australia 1995, Community Aid Abroad 1995, World Vision 1995. CARE Australia receives the bulk of these funds from multilateral organisations - as other organisations from AusAID.
3. This is particularly the case in the United States Congress, but trends in this direction can be detected in the Australian political climate.
4. This connection was made explicitly by Alexander Downer, connecting a call for a humanitarian aid programme with a call for it to be funded more by private organisations - as he does the Australian aid programme by more than $100 million.

References

The movement to eradicate poverty began many years ago. Looking back, non-government groups who started to tackle poverty where it is - at the local level - have achieved a great deal. Aid by governments has also achieved a great deal in 30 years. Moreover, developing countries have made great gains:

- average life expectancy has increased from 46 to 62 years;
- child death rates have been halved;
- healthcare now extends to some 60 per cent of the world's people; and
- adult literacy rates have risen from 43 to 60 per cent.

Change is possible, but a lot more remains to be done.

Government commitments

Internationally, governments have acknowledged that dire poverty is unacceptable and can be reduced, and agree on a number of very significant targets for the next 15 to 20 years. Targets were agreed at a whole series of internationally, governments set targets in May 1996 at a meeting of the APEC Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of aid donors.

Developing country targets:

- halve the number of people living in extreme poverty across the world;
- provide primary education to every child;
- empower women - through education;
- ensure provision of education for all girls by the year 2005;
- reduce infant mortality by two-thirds and maternal mortality by three-quarters;
- give every family that wants it family planning services; and
- help all nations develop a national environmental action plan.

In Copenhagen, at the World Summit on Social Development, governments from around the world undertook to develop national action plans for the eradication of poverty. That is partly because of birth rates in the developing world. But it has much more to do with economic development choices being made.

Birth rates can be reduced very significantly. Current expenditure on family planning in developing countries is about $5 billion per year. It costs about $16 a year to provide family planning to each couple. The Cairo Conference called for a total of $17 billion to be spent on family planning each year, of which $5.7 billion was to come from international donors. Currently donors only provide about $1 billion, or two per cent of aid, for family planning purposes. Tackling family planning - or more broadly the whole question of women's reproductive health in the context of their overall health - is an absolute priority. But that also requires setting such assistance in a context of provision of education for women and income security for them. It is the mix of these policies which works.

Investing in women is likely to achieve the best development outcomes. In fact, women's education, especially primary education, is now recognised as the most important investment in development, with the highest social as well as economic returns. And when 70 to 75 per cent of the world's absolute poor are women, it is a matter of equity and justice. We have to address women's problems directly - and that includes tackling things like violence, which leaves them powerless, less able to participate in development decision making or even to find out about services, and which damages their health, and in turn that of their children. In Bangladesh, rates of women's death by violence are higher even than that country's maternal mortality rates.

3. Change economic policies - debt and trade

The international debt crisis has hit Africa hard. The number of people living in absolute poverty will rise from 105 million in 1985 to 304 million in the year 2000. Africa is the only continent where poverty is growing rapidly. By the year 2000 it is expected that 40 per cent of the world's poor will be Africans. Thirty-three of the 48 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa are classified by the World Bank as 'severely indebted low-income countries'. Their debt is largely official bilateral (55 per cent), multilateral (around 28 per cent) and private (around 10 per cent). Debt reduction is an absolute imperative if poverty in Africa is to be stopped growing.

Structural adjustment measures imposed on these countries have brought dreadful hardship on communities. Health and education services, essential long-term investments in countries' futures, have been crippled. The human cost is clear - infant mortality rates (the most sensitive measure of deteriorating conditions) are rising again.

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Africa's total share of world exports declined from four per cent in the 1970s to 1.4 per cent in 1990. Africa has lost its market share in commodities like cocoa, timber and coffee in which it used to dominate. And while private sector flows have been significantly increasing in some parts of the developing world, Africa has been more than bypassed - net flows of finance to Africa have been negative.

International assistance, both in terms of debt reduction and finance for development, is essential to Africa. The World Bank and IMF are currently considering a very limited proposal for debt reduction. This is a very important, if insufficient, first step. It will require the IMF to sell off gold stocks to finance the plan, and currently the IMF is resisting this. It is vital that the IMF be persuaded to support this proposal; countries like Germany and Japan are among the most resistant to this idea. Australia has been saying the right things, but we need to ensure that when the decision is made, Australia sticks to its word and supports the best possible proposal with the maximum financing possible.

Trade liberalisation is being touted by the Australian Government as the solution to economic growth and hence to poverty. I think anyone can see that is this is likely to have minimal impact on Africa. Indeed, any country which has to import food, as do many African countries at present, as well as countries in Asia, such as Bangladesh, will find that trade liberalisation will increase food prices (which is why Australia as a major grain producer is so much in favour of this policy). Trade liberalisation, at least in the short-term, if not in the long-term, will squeeze these countries further. African countries, along with others which do not yet provide enough basic food for their populations, want to be able to control food policy and encourage food production in their countries to a greater degree than current trade agreements will allow. They must be allowed to develop at least basic food security, before being forced to open their economies entirely to food imports. Economic policies which give untrammelled primacy to trade are the very policies which cause poverty.

4. Economics for people

We must shape economic policies to improve human welfare, not allow them to be driven by economic fashion. Globalisation means money flows around the world faster than we can see it, making windfall profits for some. It also means freeing up countries for foreign investment, and leaving those profits free to be repatriated anywhere. The nation state now has very great difficulty in addressing problems of poverty, because it can no longer control flows of finance into and out of the country. Transnational capital, in an unregulated global market, shifts financial rewards from those who do the productive work to those who control the money markets.

Just one example of how global corporations benefit from this is the Nike corporation. Its shoes, selling at around $200 in Australia and other parts of the world, are produced by
5. Changing priorities

Change has to take place in Australia, in our priorities. Why is it that our defence spending has been quarantined from budget cuts? Indeed, that defence cooperation will rise? First, signal - military aid up; development aid down. And this in a region where military repression of citizens, and full-scale civil war in some cases, is adding to the misery and impoverishment of many.

Furthermore, security now has a much broader meaning - threats to Australia’s well-being include global environmental trends; spread of diseases (eg, transmissible diseases); the drug trade (which thrives on repressive governments and poverty - most of the heroin in Australia comes from Burma); and the widening gap between rich and poor, which creates political instability (often temporarily masked by repressive regimes, but which sooner or later explodes: into violence). Increasing military spending will do nothing to counter these sorts of threats.

Aid must play an important part in addressing these problems. Morally we have an absolute obligation to help poor people. The Australian people do care - half a million fasted for 24 hours to show it, during the Forty Hour Famine. Two-and-a-half million give regularly to aid agencies. Aid is working (despite the bad news stories which inevitably hit the headlines while the overwhelming proportion of good news stories never get a run), and it’s in our long-term interest to help. While some 600 million absolutely poor people live in our region, aid is an essential component of our own security, as well as that of the region. Good aid makes good sense.

But I hope we’ve made clear that aid alone is not the solution. We must have macroeconomic policies which stop creating poverty. We must have policies which seriously attempt to address poverty as a primary objective, rather than an assumed flow-on from economic growth. *Adapted from a speech by Janet Hunt to the National Seminar for the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, 3 June 1996.*

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### Poverty, war and peace

**Keith Suter, United Nations Association of Australia, New South Wales**

Poverty is the creation of the global US$25 trillion economy is one of this century’s greatest achievements. But not everyone derives benefit from the global economy - the gap between rich and poor, growing, and that threatens world peace. While poverty alone is not a threat to peace, it does contribute to war. The UN was therefore correct to make 1996 the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. The search for peace must include working for economic-justice.

What are the links between poverty and violence?

**New warfare state**

The Cold War is over, but peace has not broken out. Indeed as many wars today as there were at the height of the Cold War. But war is different now: it is internal, not international; guerrilla, not conventional.

Modern trends in warfare are for secession or insurrection. Guerrilla warfare is the preferred model: it’s cheap, easy, requires little training, and conventional military and police forces have difficulty beating guerrilla groups.

What is the connection with poverty? An example is the growing so-called Islamic fundamentalism in north African countries - notably Algeria, where over 50,000 people have been killed in the past three years. Islamic groups espousing violence do their most successful recruiting among young, unemployed, alienated men, who fear that they have lost out to European and American standards. Islamic groups exploit the fears of their young followers. In earlier years, such alienated people would have turned to communist critics of their governments. But communism is still banned in some countries and is certainly discredited in most because of the USSR’s failure. Therefore, people looking for hope in the future turn to Islam, and mosques are the only place where there is a freedom of assembly and opinion (at least for men).

Third World governments have defence forces not so much to defend their countries from external attack as to defend themselves from their own citizens. Where dissent is prohibited people often feel that they have no choice but to use violence. The Third World has eight times more soldiers than doctors.

An internal war may become ‘internationalised’ by the intervention of other countries or through the deployment of an international force (such as a UN peacekeeping operation). Once again there are problems for the intervening conventional forces because they are not trained in guerrilla warfare. And in any case, the appropriate response to guerrilla warfare is to examine the underlying causes of the war in the first place. A foreign force is an even greater disadvantage in this respect than a domestic conventional force.

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**UN blue berets are no substitutes for blue overalls. Western governments can find some money for UN military operations but they are reluctant to fund long-term civilian peace building projects that may reduce the need for short-term intensive peacekeeping operations.**

Much of today’s conventional military expenditure is wasted. The main challenge does not come from conventional warfare but from guerrilla warfare. The response to guerrilla attacks should not be primarily a military one but one based on trying to find out why the guerrillas are resorting to war. Increased economic and social expenditure may often be a better protection for national security than military expenditure.

The role of the mass media

The prevailing global ideology of ‘economic rationalism’ (advocated by the ‘new right’) means that taxation levels are low and there is more money for private consumption. The down side of this ideology is a lack of government money for public infrastructure, such as roads, hospitals and schools.

But many voters like economic rationalism because it allows them more money for their own durable consumer goods, such as televisions and cars. One recent trip to Bangkok, for example, I was struck by the way in which so many people still live in huts over or near rivers and canals, where they lack adequate roads, clean water and sanitation - and yet they all have small colour television sets.

The ‘global village’ has made the contrast between rich and poor more evident. Now people in Third World villages can see how well Texans live (because of Dallas) and how good life is in Australia (because of Sylvania Waters). Texans and Australians, familiar with the broader social context for these programmes, may not take them too seriously, but for those who lack that broader context there is a tendency to believe what they see on television. Third World governments are therefore under pressure to satisfy immediate consumer demands rather than creating appropriate infrastructure for the long-term development needs of their countries.

There is also the ‘CNN effect’ in determining which conflicts get peacekeeping operations and other international assistance. The conflict in former Yugoslavia received considerable mass media attention because the victims were white and Yugoslavia had been a popular vacation destination. But many more people were killed in, say, Angola and Mozambique during the same time. It seems to take about a million dead Afriicans (as happened in Rwanda) before an African country gets the same political attention as a white tragedy.
Who cares in the developed countries?

Meanwhile, in developed countries, there is a sense of complacency. Politicians in developed countries are usually focused on local and short-term issues. There are few votes in global social development issues. For example, few countries have reached the UN's target of 0.7 per cent GDP for foreign aid - Australia's rate is about the lowest it has ever been (at less than half the UN's target).

Many people in developed countries are basically contented. They do not like being troubled by world affairs. Indeed, it is notable that the pages devoted to world affairs in major newspapers seem to be declining in proportion to the pages on 'lifestyle and leisure'.

The 'new right' economic ideology means that you look out for number one: do unto others before they get a chance to do it unto you. The meek might inherit the earth - but they will not get the mineral rights. Everything is a form of consumable good, even human relationships.

This breakdown in a sense of community is reflected in society's treatment of its vulnerable citizens. In the hospital's gates at night, with all the labels removed from their clothing (so that they cannot be sent home). There are some fifty thousand persons each year in the UK alone转述过 such care centres (so that they cannot be sent home). There are about fifty thousand instances per year of this 'granny dumping'. If a society can treat its own members so badly, then what hope is there for focusing their sympathy on vulnerable people in other countries?

The economic rationalist process of making a virtue out of self-interest is different from the prevailing idealism of the 1940s. That generation had seen what narrow self-interest could do. There was therefore a hope that more could be achieved through the UN, and that the Keynesian economic policies which had contributed to the West's economic revival could be replicated in the Third World. Now much of that idealism seems to have gone. Western governments describe their foreign aid programmes more in terms of what benefits their own country by giving aid; even development NGOs, rarely write of idealism, hope or vision.

How can we help to undo the Gordian knot of poverty and violence?

The triangle of peace

A response to poverty needs a three-sided approach: the triangle of peace, based on disarmament, conflict resolution and the search for economic and social justice.

One side of the triangle is the removal of existing weapon systems: disarmament and arms control. Some progress is being made here, with the US and USSR/Russia having agreed on reducing their nuclear weapons, the creation of the chemical warfare treaty and the move towards ending all nuclear testing. But governments are not going to disarm in a security vacuum - there have to be alternative ways of settling disputes. Hence the second side of the triangle - conflict resolution. Such techniques include diplomacy (with one government talking directly with another government), arbitration (where governments have their disputes settled by recourse to international law and international courts), and mediation (where a third party tries to find a way of settling a dispute through negotiation).

The second side of the triangle, conflict resolution, has a long and distinguished history but is rarely given the attention it deserves. Instead, children grow up thinking of history as the biography of generals and battles.

For example, at public meetings I challenge people to name the two disputes over islands in the South Atlantic involving Argentina. Everyone guesses correctly the Falklands/Malvinas dispute, which resulted in a conflict in 1982. (Having lost that conflict, Argentina is waiting for another attempt to get the islands back.) Very few people know the second answer: the islands are in the Beagle Channel and the dispute is with Chile. Chile was the only Latin American country to support the UK in 1982: it had expected Argentina to move west into Chile and not east into the Falklands. The Pope, five hundred years ago, divided the world between the two super powers of his day - Spain and Portugal - and the border was unclear in the Beagle Channel. Spain and Portugal, and then Chile and Argentina have argued over the islands. In 1985, the current Pope, worried about another flare up and anxious to avoid another conflict, sent in a team of mediators to settle the dispute. This piece of good news got very little publicity; wars get far more publicity. Coincidentally I was in Argentina for the tenth anniversary of the peace treaty and it received very little local attention. It is no wonder that children grow up thinking that war is the only way to settle disputes.

The third side of the triangle is economic and social justice. If you want peace, then you have to work for justice. It is necessary, then, to look at the underlying causes of violence. This work requires attention to such matters as economic and social development, protection of the environment and respect for human rights.

To conclude, there is more to eradicating poverty than just money. There is a need for a more holistic approach. National governments are too fragmented and departmentalised to provide such an approach. Unfortunately, many NGOs are themselves too specialised as well, with a specialisation in (say) development or disarmament or the environment. An holistic campaign for the eradication of poverty would encourage NGOs to coordinate their efforts on development, peace, human rights and so on, rather than simply specialising in their own immediate issues.

In devising their strategies, NGOs could do their part in undoing the poverty and violence nexus by following the approach of the triangle of peace.

### Poverty, development and economic transition in Cambodia

**Peter Anneur, Centre for Health and Development, Deakin University**

"Wealthy as Cambodia" was a Chinese expression that long ago described a land and people blessed by nature (Steinberg 1959:24). But the factors that combined in those days to create ideal conditions for agricultural production - the abundant seasonal rainfall, fertile soil, the unique features of the Tonle Sap (Great Lake), the use of the Mekong River system, a population relatively small in number, and a well-established social system - have, in the second half of the twentieth century, been reversed. Overuse has reduced the fertility of the once-rich soils, increased population has meant less land for rice growers, and silting-up of waterways threatens growing conditions further. The effects of these natural and demographic changes might have been overcome; but social and political disasters have combined with these changes to reduce most Cambodians to a life of poverty (Taylor 1994:14). Will, then, the current process of economic transition in Cambodia help to alleviate long-term problems of poverty, or will the situation of the poor be further aggravated?

### Income and poverty indicators

More than seven million of Cambodia's ten million people live in the countryside, engaged predominantly in subsistence rice farming. Eighty-two per cent of farm households are exclusive owner cultivators. Seventy-three per cent of the energy intake in the Cambodian diet is derived from rice, yet rice yields are among the lowest in the world. From 45 to 57 per cent of Cambodian rice-growing households live below subsistence level, compared, for instance, with 48 per cent for Bangladesh (EO/Tohara 1994:147). Accepting that, generally, those receiving less than one-half of national per capita income are considered to be poor, approximately 40 to 50 per cent of the Cambodian population lives below the poverty line (Table 1).

Cambodia's First Socioeconomic Development Plan 1996-2000 has calculated a rate for the physical poverty line, based on a subjective estimate of minimum daily calorie allowance and a defined basket of food and non-food items. According to this calculation, the physical poverty line in Cambodia is US$148 per capita per month for Phnom Penh, US$88 for other urban areas, and US$74 for rural areas. From these estimates, a quarter of Phnom Penh households, or 19 per cent of its population (as family sizes are on average smaller in the lower income categories), are in poverty. Poverty is greater in other urban areas (25 per cent of households, or 27 per cent of population), and higher again in rural areas (40 and 32 per cent respectively).

By extrapolation, the national incidence of poverty is 38 per cent of households and 30 per cent of population. Moreover, given the demographic and income distribution, more than...
nineteenth century, the lives of Cambodians were relatively free of sustained deprivation. However, the imposition of the Khmer Rouge regime brought a period of unprecedented hardship and deprivation. The Khmer Rouge's attempt to establish an equalitarian agricultural society had profound effects on the lives of Cambodians. The forced labor system, the requisitioning of rice and other goods, and the communal living arrangements created a society in which control and manipulation of the population was absolute. The regime's policies led to widespread suffering and mortality, as evidenced by the large number of people who died as a result of famine, disease, and violence.

The long-term trends in poverty are also significant. In the 1980s, Cambodia experienced a period of rapid economic decline, accompanied by high levels of inflation and political instability. The regime's policies, including forced labor and the requisitioning of goods, contributed to the deterioration of the economy. Since the 1990s, there have been efforts to improve living standards, including the provision of food assistance and the restoration of agricultural production. However, the challenges of poverty and inequality remain significant.

Moreover, the situation of certain vulnerable groups has further aggravated the situation of the poor. The UNTAC transition period in 1991-92 witnessed a sharp rise in lawlessness, banditry, and other forms of violence. Although the situation has improved since then, there remain significant challenges to poverty eradication and development, particularly in the rural areas.

In conclusion, Cambodia's transition from a socialist economy to a market-oriented system has been marked by significant challenges. The long-term trends in poverty and inequality are complex and multifaceted, reflecting the legacy of the Khmer Rouge regime and the ongoing efforts to rebuild and reform the economy. The situation of certain vulnerable groups, including returnees from border refugee camps and disabled and other war-affected individuals, remains a priority for the government and international partners.

Figure 1: Distribution of income for selected countries, 1993 (Lorenz curve)


Table 2: Typical household income distribution by quintiles for selected regions, various years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Lowest quintile</th>
<th>Second quintile</th>
<th>Third quintile</th>
<th>Fourth quintile</th>
<th>Highest quintile</th>
<th>GDP/cap. 1995 US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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</tbody>
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Economic transition

In Cambodia, agricultural production returned to family-based farms when the experiment with krom samaki was terminated between 1984 and 1989, state procurement prices for rice were raised to market levels in 1987, and procurement quotas were lowered and then abandoned. The liberalisation and commercialisation of state-owned enterprises proceeded with control of inflation was achieved after instability in the period 1990-92, with a short-term negative effect on income growth. Cambodia's unusually wide income disparity differs from other formerly socialist countries, as Figure 1 shows.

Formally, social development is considered by Cambodia's Socioeconomic Development Plan 1996-2000 as important as physical and economic development. The Plan argues poverty will not be alleviated by economic trickle down, but will need to be targeted. Rural development is outlined in the National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia. Government officials argue that "rural development is the primary way to alleviate poverty, achieve stability and promote democratic principles" (Houng 1995). However, in practice, the allocation of national resources does not necessarily conform to these stated aims. In the early 1990s, for example, up to 90 per cent of multi bilateral foreign aid has been concentrated in the Phnom Penh area (Council for the Development of Cambodia 1995:14), while the capacity of the social policy ministries, especially rural development, social affairs and women’s affairs, to provide care and protection is weak.

The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) considers the concentration on development in Phnom Penh as the ‘zero option’, or the status quo - that is, what will occur if nothing else changes. Another scenario, would involve a "conscious emphasis on the rural areas, and above all the agricultural sector, with the aim of creating sustainable and comprehensive economic growth" (Ronnas 1995). This would be consistent, it argues, with the pattern of development in Taiwan, China and South Korea. The World Bank (1994:66) writes "There is an urgent need to increase the amount of resources available for investment in raising the living standards and productivity of the rural people of Cambodia" and says aid resources have already been directed to rural development. It claims, too, that until government becomes an active and influential participant in anti-poverty programmes, the more fragmented activities by non-government organisations will carry the weight of rural development. According to the Bank, a significant volume of resources committed by the international community had been directed to rural development. However, the Bank's focus on market-led economic growth overlooks the need to specifically target those who, in the market environment, will inevitably remain poor.

Conclusion

Asian countries at UNCTAD’s Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation in 1995 argued that the approach to poverty alleviation should be a pro-poor approach and that the poor had shown they were capable of working for their own development, provided they were empowered to do so (UNCTAD 1995:10). It recommended that such institutional methods as targeting, decentralization, establishing an enabling environment and sustainability should be considered so that ODA might reach and benefit the poor (and especially women), which delegates from China claimed had alleviated in Cambodia, such considerations will need to be given greater weight in its economic strategy too.

*Peter Annear was Program Manager for Save the Children Fund Australia, Cambodia, 1993-95.

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Grameen Bank: Banking on the poor

David Bornstein*

Buses and trucks barrel down Murad Road, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, blaring their horns and leaving trails of black smoke to settle on Rickshaws and excars. By the side of the road a high brick wall encircles four buildings in a compound, one of which is dominated by a tropical garden that opens to the sky. On many afternoons rain falls into the garden, and at their desks accountants can pause to listen to the sound of water slapping leaves. This is the head office of the Grameen Bank - the Bank that lends millions of dollars to some of the poorest people on earth.

Credit - ‘to believe’

Over the past two decades, the Grameen Bank has extended nearly US$1.5 billion in tiny loans for self-employment purposes to some of the poorest people in the world - landless villagers in Bangladesh. It has lent half that amount in just the past two years. Today, through a network of more than 1,000 branch offices, the Bank serves more than two million clients, 94 per cent of them women. Each month, it adds thousands of new members. Each month, it extends new loans totalling US$50 to $40 million. With loan repayments exceeding 99.5 per cent, it outperforms all other banks in Bangladesh and most banks around the world.

‘Grameen’ comes from the Bangla word grameen, which means village, and true to its name the Grameen Bank works only in villages, which is one of many ways it has re-invented the idea of a bank - turned it on its head, so to speak. Another is that it lends money mainly to women in small amounts - one-year term. Yet another is its method of screening borrowers: to qualify for a loan, a villager must show that her family’s assets fall below the Bank’s threshold. She will not be required to furnish extratraditional, demonstrate a credit history, or produce a guarantor; instead, she must join a five-member group and a forty-member centre, and attend three meetings every year, and she must assume responsibility for the loans of her group’s members. This is crucial, because it is the group - not the Bank - that initially evaluates loan proposals. Defaulters spoil things for everybody else, so group members must choose their partners wisely. If all five repay their first set of loans in one year, each is guaranteed access to credit for the rest of her life - or as long as she elects to remain a customer. In this fashion Grameen is faithful to the Latin word from which ‘credit’ derives: credere, ‘to believe’.

Credit - not just for a fortunate few

*The myth that credit is the privilege of a few fortunate people needs to be exploded,” explains Muhammad Yunus, the founder of the Grameen Bank. “You look at the smallest village and the tiniest person in that village - a very capable person, a person desperate to work. You have only to create the proper environment to support these people so that they can change their lives through their own efforts." Pure idealism? Perhaps. Nonetheless, these words come from a man who has designed a bank that enables its borrowers to save money for emergencies, provides them with health insurance, and in the process of instituting a village-based healthcare and insurance programme, which will be self-financing. Today, against the backdrop of two-and-a-half decades of often-wanted international aid, Grameen’s entrepreneurial approach stands out as singularly effective and sustainable. Up to 1994, the Bank had revolved its loan capital more than five times. Along the way, it helped millions of villagers to move from one or two meals a day to three, and to accumulate assets for old age, and for the weddings of their sons and daughters.

The history of Grameen

Yunus, an economist, founded the Bank in 1976 while teaching at a university in southern Bangladesh. His "action research" in villages near the campus, revealed that the landless poor paid as much as 10 per cent a day interest on tiny working capital they borrowed from the money-lenders, and therefore remained trapped in grinding poverty. A woman he met had superb skill in finely woven bamboo stools. As she had no working capital, a trader sold her the raw material on credit and bought the final product at a price that barely covered costs. She worked very hard, seven days a week, and she and her two children lived in a state of semi-starvation. Yunus related the story to graduate students and together they designed an experimental credit programme to assist her and others like her in that village.

The experiment spread from half a dozen villagers to a few hundred to a few thousand, and it still held. Yunus quit teaching. A cadre of graduate students abandoned their career plans to join him. At 50,000 clients, things were still so primitive that Yunus raised millions of dollars and set up four franchisees. As a point of pride the Bank switched from banking with men to banking almost exclusively with women.

After several years, inspired and assisted by Grameen, similar banks spread out in Malaysia, in the Philippines, in Malawi, and in dozens of locales in Africa, South America, and even North America.

Poverty: A solvable problem

As Yunus saw it, poverty was not the complex, insuperable problem it had been made out to be. The process of impoverishment was quite predictable, and the way to arrest it was also quite predictable. The Grameen Bank was an attempt to prove this thesis.

Bangladesh was certainly an appropriate place to try. Stricken by floods, droughts and cyclones, the country was so poor it had been dubbed the Fifth World and labelled by diplomats an ‘international banana republic’ and twenty million people, the vast majority of them malnourished, illiterate and desperate for work.

Each day, thousands of villagers flooded into Dhaka, Bangladesh’s choking and wheezing capital city, seeking employment. Millions were poised to follow in the coming years. But this problem was not unique to Bangladesh. Throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America, urban populations were skyrocketing as cultivable land grew ever more scarce and tens of millions could no longer survive in their villages.

Robert Kaplan, writing in The Atlantic Monthly in 1994, envisioned that in the coming decades, "an increasingly large number of people ... living in shanty-towns where attempts to rise above poverty, cultural dysfunction, and ethnic strife will be doomed by a lack of water to drink, soil to till, and space to survive in."

Could development along the lines of the Grameen Bank offer an alternative to this grim scenario, a means of helping people by providing them with opportunities for self-employment where they lived? How many of the Grameen Bank's borrowers would have moved to a slum in Dhaka had the Bank not granted them a loan?

These questions prompt a broader inquiry: does helping people stay in their villages represent economic progress? Two centuries ago Adam Smith wrote that the "greatest improvements in the productive powers of mankind were attributable to the division of labour. And has this not led to industrialisation, urbanisation, factories, assembly linesawn and in the end, greater wealth for all? Look at postwar Japan, look at the Asian 'tigers'.

Yet, here in 1976, was a twentieth-century economist, one of the most highly respected voices in world development, arguing that the best (in fact, the only) way to combat the world’s worst entrenched poverty was to create the conditions where millions of tiny entrepreneurs spread in hundreds of thousands of villages and small towns could support themselves through self-chosen pursuits. Not wage-employment, but self-employment; not giganticism, but gradualism; no cities, but villages; not men, but women.

Don’t move the villagers to the capitalists - move the capital to the villagers

According to Yunus, "Wage employment is not a happy road to the reduction of poverty. The removal or reduction of poverty must be a continuous process of creation of assets, so that the asset base of a poor person becomes stronger at each economic cycle, enabling him or her to earn more and more." He doubted that the developing world was capable of creating wage employment for the estimated 38 million people who, each year, enter labour forces in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

In the age of the Internet why did people have to leave the countryside for cities? Because that’s where the factory jobs were. So, rather than move the villagers to the capitalists, move the capital to the villagers.

The Grameen Bank was the first step in this process. By placing resources directly into the hands of poor people, it got them involved in myriad businesses - providing services, trading, processing, manufacturing, and shopkeeping - while gradually expanding the economic role of women. In time, many village-based entrepreneurs would upgrade their skills and management abilities. It might take decades or generations but eventually they would be able to carve out profitable niches in the world economy. In the meantime, although they remained extremely poor by international standards, they would enjoy more options and hopefully lead more satisfying lives.

Trickle down versus bubble up economics

One could think of the Grameen Bank as a version of supply-side economics: Reaganomics, with a twist. Rather than injecting capital into the economy from the altitude of corporate investors, as tax cuts or special incentives, it was injected at ground level, as loans to the poor. Call it trickle up - or better, bubble up - economics.

What did bubble up economics promise? In the short run, modest but measurable improvements for the poorest segment of society: better food, shelter and clothing; some basic healthcare; opportunities for education; more control, less anxiety; and the ability to plan, within a limited range, for the future.

In the long run, everyone, including the wealthy, would benefit. These small-business people would eventually reach a point where they had more spending power, where they could earn better, and afford a few bars of soap each year, a few tubes of toothpaste, an extra sari.

Across Bangladesh, this would translate into a demand for millions of bars of soap, millions of satchels of toothpaste, and millions of saris. And then, although they may have no idea why soap or sari demand is up, those in the business of producing these items would experience the pleasant sensation of being able to turn profits from them. In short, all these loans finally reaching the surface.

Bubble up seemed infinitely more attractive than trickle down for the simple reason than it started with, rather than ended with, the people who needed assistance most. But could it really change a national economy? Or would it remain, as some predicted, mixed in low productivity and ever-diminishing returns? And what was the alternative for

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Bangladesh? Since 1971, the country had absorbed more than US$25 billion in foreign aid and the majority of its citizens had grown poorer. Here was an organisation producing results where so many others had come up empty.

In 1991, the Grameen Bank surpassed one million borrowers; in 1994, it surpassed two million (since each borrower represents one family). Grameen's outreach is 10 to 12 million people in 33,000 villages. In the four years since its first visit to Bangladesh in 1992, the Bank's annual disbursements have increased 450 per cent. Microenterprise banks and programmes have since opened shop throughout the world, with hundreds in the United States and Canada. Their systems vary according to context and culture, but their objectives are the same. Like Grameen, they view poor people as clients, not beneficiaries, and they seek to provide them with the means to support themselves through dignified self-employment.

Grameen is a pure meritocracy, providing opportunities for self-advancement based not on class or race or inherited privilege but on character, imagination and hard work. Only those who belong to the poorest 50 per cent of the population are eligible to join. But Grameen does not demand loss of its clients because of their circumstances; it demands more of them. Wealthy Bangladeshis often get away with defaulting on their bank loans, Grameen clients are not permitted to miss a single installment. Only those who repay their loans promptly are granted subsequent loans, and only those judged trustworthy by their neighbours are accepted into borrowing groups in the first place.

Capitalism re-invented

Grameen is also a political chameleon. From the right, it appears to be an enlightened social welfare programme. Grameen bankers provide bits of useful information to millions of villagers, chipping away at old habits and attitudes, slowly turning the tables of one of the world's poorest nations. Few have called Grameen a development 'miracle', but the jinx misses the point. Miracles by definition occur once. Grameen has extended its services to 33,000 villages. Yunus likes to compare it to McDonald's. "People know the quality of our service," he says. "Our job is to make sure it doesn't deteriorate in any corner of the country."

This article is derived with permission from The Price of a Dream by Edward Bernstein, Simon A. Schuster, 1996.

Endnotes

1. In 1987, Mrs. Hillary Clinton approached Grameen Bank and sought their assistance to set up a Grameen Bank 'replication' in Arkansas, where her husband was governor at the time. Soon after, Grameen Trust, a separate institution, was founded to assist municipalities to "help local Grameen Bank replicators in all countries of the world where poverty exists." The Trust is funded by the Grameen Bank, and draws from its resources. The Trust provides seed capital to micro enterprises from all over the world to "revolve" the Grameen model for their specific conditions.

2. In the late 1980s, the Grameen Bank began helping villagers with intermediate-level technology in agriculture and fisheries. In the early 1990s, the Bank began helping thousands of its poorest-borrowers market handmade cots and silk to manufacturers producing shirts for export to Bangladesh to be run by thousands of his borrowers (business name: Grameen Telecom). It began exploring the commercial possibilities of data- and business to the women in Bangladesh villages over the Internet. A partnership of The Australian National University and Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) provides expert consultancy to this business (Grameen Cybers).

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The legacy of apartheid

The demise of apartheid is certainly one of the most momentous developments of recent years, and its significance transcends South Africa, or even Africa as a whole. The whole world held its breath as South Africans, in their multicoloured diversity, queued to vote for a government of their choice, most of them for the first time. It was a decisive watershed marking the end of one era and the beginning of another.

It was a time for euphoria, and legitimately so. It was also a time of great expectations. For the millions who had at last broken the shackles of apartheid, it meant they could dare to hope as they had never hoped before. Who would therefore fault them for expecting the new order to deliver jobs, housing fit for human beings, greater access to health, better schools, and all the other things that make the good life?

Yet the tasks awaiting the new Government were truly daunting. It inherited a society and an economy gripped by striking contradictions. Part of the legacy was an economic, infrastructural and technological base that would compare favourably with that of any European country. But the flip side of the coin was a degree of poverty as appalling as one would find in the poorest parts of Africa. This economic base supported a structure of inequality unique in the modern world. The uniqueness lies in both the magnitude and the nature of inequality. On the one hand, it exhibits a degree of affluence that would rank white South Africa among the most prosperous countries in the world; on the other, it has been a breeding ground for degrading poverty for millions of Black people. Even more striking is the neglect of inequality was not a spontaneous outcome of market forces but one that was systematically created and fostered by deliberate public policies. And finally, the face of inequality had, and has, a clearly racial configuration.

It is this legacy that the first democratically elected Government of South Africa inherited.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme

To tackle this immense backlog of accumulated poverty and inequality, and to translate political freedom into economic and social prosperity, the Government needed both a vision and a plan of action. Vision it has, thanks to a leadership that has been steered in struggle and committed to make reality out of the dream of a free South Africa. And the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was to provide the plan of action.

In his introduction to the Government White Paper on the RDP, President Mandela described it as “an integrated and coherent growth and development strategy”. In the words of the White Paper, RDP “seeks to mobilise all our people and our country’s resources toward the final eradication of the results of apartheid. Its goal is to build a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future and it represents a vision for the fundamental transformation of South Africa…”

The White Paper was a fairly detailed document which articulated, inter alia, the raison d’être behind the RDP, the role of the Government, the economic policy framework, within which the RDP was to operate, fiscal policy and the budget, and public sector restructuring. It also identified several ‘lead’ projects. The RDP was therefore clearly intended as the Government’s framework for redressing the gross injustices of the apartheid era and for moving South Africa forward to an era of equity, stability and development.

However, as noted by Deputy President Mbeki in his address to the Development Planning Summit (27 November 1995), “despite its almost biblical character, the RDP Base Document did not provide us with all the answers. We have always known that its many priorities and programmes need to be distilled into a series of realistic steps, guided by a long-term vision and surmounting constraints.” Hence the initiation of a process for drafting a National Growth and Development Strategy (NGDS).

The NGDS was proposed to rest on six pillars, namely: investing in people; creating employment; investment in household and economic infrastructure; a national crime prevention strategy; building an efficient and effective government; and social security and social development.

Drafting the NGDS turned out to be a protracted process, with progress in some areas being checked by setbacks in others. While it assumed an integrated draft form by February 1996, it had established certain targets, some of which are:

- a six per cent rate of economic growth by the year 2000;
- creation of 300,000 to 500,000 new employment opportunities annually by the year 2000;
- doubling the national income share of the poorest 20 per cent of the population by year 2005;
- ensuring basic levels of infrastructure, including housing to all households by the year 2005.

It appears that the NGDS had not gone beyond the draft stage when a decision was taken to close the RDP Office (which was run by a Minister Without Portfolio in the Office of the President) and to distribute its various functions between different Government Departments. This has generally been interpreted as the end of RDP (as well as of the NGDS), but the official view counters this interpretation and maintains that the move was dictated by considerations of efficiency. In other words, according to the Government, the RDP is still very much in place, and has been mainstreamed into the functions of all Departments and Ministries. In other words, it is not being seen as an independent programme.

Whatever rival interpretations may be and regardless of the final fate of RDP, it is important to pause and reflect on its strengths and limitations. Perhaps its greatest strength lies in its recognition of the legacy of apartheid as a point of departure; the imperative of redressing historical wrongs; and most importantly, its attempt to fuse issues of growth and development in one comprehensive strategy. A theme that emerges again and again in RDP documents and others related to it is that the central task in South Africa is one of bringing about growth and development. This is a point that needs to be underlined as supremely important in the context of South African realities.

Perhaps the major failing of the draft NGDS was that it was not cast within a coherent macroeconomic context. Although the RDP White Paper had a chapter dealing with the economic policy framework, NGDS had no such framework. This was a fundamental weakness because a macroeconomic framework indicates the possibilities and constraints within which programmes for human development can be designed and implemented. Moreover, different sections of the draft NGDS are not linked by a common conceptual framework, which means they tend to stand almost independently of each other.

Enter GEAR

It is against this background that the Government’s Microeconomic Strategy for Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) must be considered. As the title indicates, the focus of this document is macroeconomic strategy. Although employment and redistribution occupy prominent places in the title, their discussion is less developed.

The major strength of GEAR is that it provides the macroeconomic framework which was conspicuously absent in the draft NGDS. All the major aggregate economic parameters are discussed, and a prognosis for the short-term future (to the year 2000) is presented in terms of two alternative scenarios.

However, GEAR is exclusively focused on growth issues to the virtual neglect of human development concerns. While the RDP went to great lengths to pose the task facing the new South Africa as one of delivering both growth and development, GEAR mentions the word development only two or three times, and even then merely as a synonym for growth. The fundamental assumption of GEAR appears to be that economic growth will translate into human development (in the sense of a better quality of life for the vast majority of the population, a quality of life whose ingredients are better health and nutrition, better education, better housing, clean water and sanitation, to name only a few). Unfortunately, as abundant experience has demonstrated, this is not an automatic outcome. Also, although GEAR begins with a short section entitled ‘A long-term vision’, it fails to project this.

Looking ahead

It would be unfortunate if GEAR were intended as a substitute for NGDS. In principle, there is no necessary conflict between growth and human development. In fact, the two can be complementary and mutually reinforcing. If GEAR is conceived as a substitute for NGDS, as is commonly perceived, it would be a setback for human development in South Africa. Given the breadth and depth of poverty and inequality in the country, it would be unwise to think that growth will address these issues adequately.

NGDS should therefore not be abandoned. There is much in it that needs to be salvaged: first and most important, its vision; second, its perception of synergies between growth and human development; and third, its focus on human development issues.

What is required, therefore, is a process of fusing NGDS and GEAR to formulate a strategy for economic growth and human development. Taking GEAR as a given, it is necessary to design a companion human development strategy for South Africa, not as an alternative to it but as its complement in a more comprehensive strategy for uplifting the quality of life of the vast majority of South Africans. South Africa can—and must—deliver both economic growth and human development.

*Eshetu Chole is the Regional Economic Adviser for UNICEF in Eastern and Southern Area Office (ESARO). He writes in his personal capacity. This article is reprinted from UNICEF South Africa’s Children of the South, Vol. I, No. 1, where it appeared under the title ‘From RDP to GEAR: Observations from a human development perspective’.*
Economic adjustment and trends in socioeconomic indicators in Papua New Guinea

Azmat Gani, National Centre for Development Studies, Australian National University

The economic performance of Papua New Guinea (PNG) has generally been sluggish and disappointing since its independence in 1975. For example, PNG's average annual GDP growth rate for the period 1975-93 was 3.1 per cent compared to the world average of 4.0 per cent for all developing countries, and 7.5 per cent, on average, for East Asia and the Pacific. Negative or very low growth rates were witnessed by PNG during the period 1975-93, while other countries in the Asia-Pacific region showed positive and high growth rates during the same time (World Bank 1995). In response to the decline in economic activity particularly in the 1980s, PNG implemented macroeconomic adjustment policies to achieve an improvement in the balance of payments, price stability and resumption of higher rates of economic growth. Such policies have included strong fiscal and monetary measures; for example, cuts in government expenditure, depreciation of the kina, (demand management policies) and monetary measures, for example, cuts in expenditure, depreciation of the kina, (demand management policies) and .current and credit availability. It is natural to ask whether encouraging macroeconomic performances have resulted in improvements.

While the United Nations Development Programme (1995) concludes that PNG has been exposed to a cumulative amount of 18.9 per cent, indicating no contribution of adjustment measures (World Bank 1995). It is expected that high growth rates would also have meant a consequent drop in real wages would also have meant a consequent drop in the purchasing power of wage earners and employment, access to public goods like health and education, food availability and nutrition. It is worthwhile to investigate the trends in these indicators.

Real wages

Real minimum wages declined from 26.5 kina per week in 1980 to 25.0 kina per week in 1992 (Bank of Papua New Guinea, various issues, Table 10.2). Data on real earnings per employment for manufacturing activity show that, during the period 1980-87, the real earnings index declined and fell by a cumulative amount of 18.9 per cent, indicating no positive contribution of adjustment measures (World Bank 1995). A fall in real wages would also have meant a consequent drop in the purchasing power of wage earners which would then force them to alter the composition and size of their basic consumption basket. Given the unprecedented decrease in real wages, this would have had a demonstrated effect on consumption patterns.

Food prices

Real incomes can also be affected by changing food prices. Several components of economic adjustment are likely to lead to rising food prices. These include devaluation, rising producer prices, price decontrol and reduced food subsidies. There is no comprehensive information for changes in food subsidies or price decontrols in PNG. However, according to the food price data published by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (1994), during the period 1982-92 food prices increased at an annual average rate of 0.6 per cent, indicating no positive effect of adjustment measures in terms of controlling rising food prices.

Per capita GNP

According to the World Bank (1996), PNG is a lower-middle income country (LMIC) and its per capita income of US$1,240 in 1994 was above the average for all LMICs.

Following independence, real GNP per capita grew steadily, peaking at US$250 in 1981 (World Bank 1995). Since then it has followed a downward trend, reaching a low of US$760 in 1987, providing sufficient evidence of the impact of world economic recession and domestic economic decline. However, GNP per capita has been on the rise since 1988 largely due to the minerals boom. GNP per capita figures, although they provide a useful indicator of aggregate output, and the standard of living, do not provide a sufficient indicator, as they do not capture such dimensions of welfare as wages, employment, access to public goods like health and education, food availability and nutrition. It is worthwhile to investigate the trends in these indicators.

In view of the above, this paper analyses the trends in these indicators.

Further insights are gained from Table 10.2 which shows that the purchasing power of wage earners has declined over the period 1980 to 1992. This decline in real wages is likely to have had a substantial impact on the living standards of PNG's population, particularly the poor. This has contributed to poverty which is much higher than in the neighbouring countries of Malaysia and Indonesia, and significantly higher in the rural areas. In PNG, the primary means to enhance the overall development are job opportunities. The lack of access to the services offered by the Labour Department, particularly for the large rural population, means that the rich benefit the most from investment in health services. A drop in real wages (as discussed earlier) would have also affected the real wages of employees in the public health sector. The impact of wage reductions on the quality of the health service is difficult to estimate. However, if the levels of remuneration for those working in public health ended up being much lower than wages paid in private practices, or overseas, the more qualified would tend to leave the public sector over time.

Income distribution and poverty

PNG has a large and persistent difference in income between the rich and the poor. This has contributed to poverty which is much higher than in the neighbouring countries of Malaysia and Indonesia, and significantly higher in the rural areas. In PNG, the primary means to enhance the overall development are job opportunities. The lack of access to the services offered by the Labour Department, particularly for the large rural population, means that the rich benefit the most from investment in health services. A drop in real wages (as discussed earlier) would have also affected the real wages of employees in the public health sector. The impact of wage reductions on the quality of the health service is difficult to estimate. However, if the levels of remuneration for those working in public health ended up being much lower than wages paid in private practices, or overseas, the more qualified would tend to leave the public sector over time.

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## References


### Estimated Absolute Poverty, 1970-90: Selected East Asian Countries

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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Poor in Rural Areas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Six Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1067</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>1057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Poor in Rural Areas</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Note: Except for China, estimates for 1990 are projections. The incidences are based on an official poverty lines for China, Indonesia, Korea and Malaysia: official subsistence lines for the Philippines and lines slightly lower than the official ones of Thailand. Absolute poverty lines allow 2150 calories per day, 90% from grains, and non food basic needs or other baskets costing the same.

a Based on 1988 incidence and distribution of poverty and 1990 population estimates.
Taking action to reduce poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa

Findings of the World Bank’s Task Force on Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa

Principal findings

• Poverty is pervasive
  On average, 45 to 50 per cent of Sub-Saharan Africans live below the poverty line - a much higher proportion than in any other region of the world except South Asia.

• Government commitment to poverty reduction needs to be strengthened
  Poverty is not likely to be reduced in Sub-Saharan Africa without considerable improvement in government commitment to and ownership of programmes to support this goal. Only about a quarter of all African governments have made a strong and explicit political commitment to reduce poverty.

• Economic growth rates are generally too low to reduce poverty significantly
  Growth rates of at least 5 per cent per year are necessary if typical Sub-Saharan African countries are to reduce poverty at an acceptable rate. But growth alone is insufficient without a pattern of growth that allows for increased production, expanded employment opportunities for the poor, and better access to social services for the poorest groups.

• The World Bank’s lending has emphasised growth
  Of the Bank’s assistance to African countries, about 55 per cent has been focused on creating the enabling conditions for growth through policy change and large-scale investments.

• The World Bank must intensify its emphasis on poverty reduction in programming and lending
  Achieving poverty reduction should be the Bank’s central theme. The Bank should establish stronger linkages among poverty assessments, country assistance strategies, and lending programmes for all countries.

• Stronger partnerships for poverty reduction are needed
  Increased participation and strengthened collaboration among all development partners are essential to the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts.

Causes of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa

The consequences of poverty often reinforce its complex causes, exacerbating the problem. The World Bank’s Poverty Task Force identified as the main causes of poverty:

• Inadequate access to employment opportunities;
• Inadequate physical assets, such as land and capital, and minimal access by the poor to credit even on a small-scale;
• Inadequate access to the means of supporting rural development in poor regions;
• Inadequate access to markets where the poor can sell goods and services;
• Low endowment of human capital;
• Destruction of natural resources, leading to environmental degradation and reduced productivity;
• Inadequate access to assistance for those living at the margin and those victimised by transitory poverty;
• Lack of participation;
• Failure to draw the poor into the design of development programmes.

Some reasons why ODA doesn’t touch poverty

Terence Murphy, Consultant, Fremantle

Having begun my career in development as a volunteer teacher in Cambodia in 1963, followed by a rather unproductive stint teaching English in a Vietnamese teacher training college (unproductive for my students - it was profoundly educative for me), I have always approached development with high hopes but with critical faculties on alert. I learned then to look for the real meaning behind the flood of words that were used to rationalise development as it was what was already a wane zone.

Thirty-three years on I still believe there are opportunities for effective, equitable development which address the issue of poverty. However, after extensive research on ODA policy and programmes and nearly a dozen years spent in residence in developing countries in Asia and the Pacific working on development problems, I find it increasingly difficult to identify where those opportunities lie. In reviewing the environment of the last two decades, I have encountered many impediments and constraints to successful implementation of poverty programmes. The following assertions are personal ones. Others may have found opportunities where I have seen obstacles.

Theoretical constraints

Economists don’t really understand how to foster development, nor apparently does anyone else. The development model which prevails in official development assistance, and which has been little changed since the 1950s, is generally inappropriate for addressing poverty related issues. The model is based on rational analysis and planning, followed by logical, sequential implementation. The model assumes that problems which can be analysed can be solved, and that a solution that can be described can be implemented. The model fails to accommodate the political and bureaucratic realities of both donors and recipients. Such misplaced hubris can only encourage failure.

Even assuming a benign political environment, the solutions to poverty-related problems usually have a long time horizon. Development programmes almost always have a short one. Most technical assistance projects which purport to address the issues of poverty have a limited duration, say two to five years, based on donor budget cycles. Given that political regimes, development staff and economic fashions can change during even a two-year project, the skill and commitment to carry a project through in the long-term are simply not available.

Political/strategic constraints

Aid is provided primarily to promote the strategic objectives (security, economic or both) of donors. If these objectives are achieved, then there is little incentive for donors to pursue effective development. The inherent difficulties of addressing poverty makes it easy to gloss over lack of success. When strategic/political considerations have priority, successful implementation will be a matter of indifference to the politicians who vote the funds, except where obvious failures lead to public embarrassment.

The myth of sovereignty is used by developing country elites to block programmes which would threaten their privileged position. These same elites are willing to compromise sovereignty when it is in their interests.

The reality is that national poverty is a domestic issue and it is seldom possible to have any meaningful impact on it through externally funded and/or managed programmes or projects. It is also essentially a political issue. That is to say, poverty results from a distribution of power which excludes significant numbers of people from decisions about the distribution of wealth. Poor people generally remain poor because they lack the power to negotiate a more equitable distribution.

Internationally, the same principle prevails: nations without significant economic or military power have little leverage in international fora when questions of the global distribution of wealth are raised.
Since the poor appear to be unable to help themselves, it may seem feasible to offer outside assistance. However, donor nations in their relationships with recipients are, as noted, invariably interested in first promoting their own wealth and security (this is not always reprehensible; it is how the system works). Therefore donor projects which are not seen to be in the interests of recipient elites will not be proposed or at least not pursued. Poverty alleviation is generally in this category.

To avoid the political issues, poverty is usually approached as a series of technical problems, it is then possible to offer technical assistance. For example, in the case of agriculture, it is seen sensible to offer outside assistance. However, donor agencies and the World Bank have had a predilection for viewing the terms of its aid but cannot normally dictate those terms. Effective fieldwork is often discussed in terms of maintaining the political balance. The World Bank must always be aware that its aid bureaucracy to control the outcome of a project may be that the poor will be richer than they would have been otherwise. The UN figures show that the poor will be richer than they would have been otherwise. However, the system promotes those who are most successful, who are often slowed to a crawl by the need to maintain international political balance.

The quest for the failure of aid to alleviate poverty, as aid critic Francis Moore Lappe along with many others, has pointed out, is the difficulty of directing funds to the poor through the hands of the rich: US foreign assistance fails to help the poor because it is, of necessity, based on one fundamental fallacy - that aid can reach the powerless even though channelled through the powerful. Official foreign aid is administered necessarily through the recipient governments, and too often (particularly in those countries to which the United States confines most of its aid) these governments have narrow, elite economic interests (Lappe et al. 1981:110). Wealth is seen by the rich as a natural right. Those who have it are seldom willing to part with it voluntarily. Even Robert McNamara, the World Bank's best known poverty warrior, has no illusions that channeling funds to fight poverty through the hands of urban elites will not engender success (IBRD 1975:vi). In every case, it is clear that even Philip Habib's efforts to reverse the political situation are an unmistakable sign of the low commitment of the international community where it must seek funds.

For richer or for poorer
Vitor Keegan, The Age, Melbourne

Inequality has grown not only between countries, but within countries too. In Australia, the top 20 per cent account for 40 per cent of the wealth, while the bottom 20 per cent hold 7.8 per cent.

Economists measure inequality by the so-called Gini coefficient, which measures how close to perfect equality (0) or complete inequality (1) a society is. Normally, movements in inequality happen slowly, and may not be hard to detect. But Anthony Atkinson, the professor of Oxford University's Nuffield College, a leading expert in this area, has noted that between 1977 and 1991 the coefficient for the UK rose by a very sharp 10 percentage points (much more than in other countries) and by three points in the United States.

Meanwhile, billionaires are changing. Old-fashioned magnates - who inherited from dad or who borrowed someone else's money before just a boom - are yielding to digital billionaires who make fortunes faster than anyone else in history. These rich really are different. Previously ambitious businessmen would make their fortune by building something like a car, or by acquiring an assembly line; the manufacture of thousands of spare parts generation by generation of thousands of jobs around the world. Not any more.

All the digital billionaires do is manage the 1s and 0s of computer code into expensive software packages. At least Microsoft (whose founders, Bill Gates and Paul Allen, are both in the Forbes top 10) had the decency to put programmers such as Norman and to death, property), and Paul Allen, another founder of Microsoft.

The movements of the Forbes table are unmistakable signs of the times. On the up are the giant corporations, accompanied by scores more by billionaires whose colossal wealth and the destitution of the world's population is, as noted, a disaster of global proportions, where it must seek funds.}

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first company in history to be worth US$5 billion by giving away its product.

The stock markets go along with this because they reckon that one day Netscape will start charging for the browser and associated products: and with an installed base of 50 million (and rising), it hopes eventually to clean up.

Netscape's wealth creation activities also turn economics upside down: for the first time an infinite number of its product without using any extra labor, machinery or transport resources. Users simply download millions of copies from the central source.

What the Third World makes of these new companies, which can become richer than whole developing countries in a single year, can only be guessed at. In theory, the digital revolution ought to be a liberating force for poorer countries. The empowerment of information could enable poor people in deprived countries to leapfrog out of poverty without, as in the past, having to lay down expensive new infrastructure such as networks of cables. It is now theoretically possible to gain low-cost access to the Internet - the world's biggest single store of knowledge of practically any subject - from small mobile computers with built-in phone connections needing no wires.

It won't happen - not because it can't, but because there aren't enough people wanting it to happen. All computers do for the Third World these days is to chronicle their decline more efficiently. As the Human Development Report notes, total economic wealth in the world (global GDP) is US$23 trillion, of which only US$5 trillion, or 22 per cent, is accounted for by developing countries, even though they have nearly 80 per cent of the world's population.

And it's getting worse. By 1991, more than 85 per cent of the world's population received only 15 per cent of its income.

The tragedy is that the theory of trickle down economics is being proved to be a blind alley by the experience of the Asian Tiger economies, which have combined very strong growth with much fairer distribution of income. The Human Development Report concludes that the assumptions of the 1980s and early 90s - that more equal distribution of income would destroy incentives and that the rich needed special encouragement to save and invest - have proved false. The key to growth is investment in education. Increasing worker education by one year raises gross domestic product by nine per cent and better worker nutrition can increase productivity dramatically.


Women, democracy and global 'real life politik'

Extracts from Hillary Rodham Clinton's Remarks to the Women of Australia, Sydney, 21 November 1996

...Despite the thousands of miles of ocean that separate your country and mine, we are bound together in friendship and partnership based on common experiences.

We are united, not least, by our commitment to democracy and the values that democracy seeks to uphold. As proponents of freedom, we rejoice in recent developments around the globe: there is no Iron Curtain any more. In country after country, dictatorships have crumbled and democracy has come alive. The threat of nuclear war no longer looms over us. ...[O]pportunities for peace and prosperity are greater than ever before. And the prospect of a new and even more dynamic century beckons us.

Yet at the same time, many people in our countries and around the world feel the strains caused by global competition and the rapid pace of change. The superficial cultural homogenisation of the world means that people from Boston to Brisbane, Paris to Perth, and Moscow to Melbourne wear the same jeans, eat the same fast food, and listen to the same music. But these surface similarities do not override a longing for identity and meaning in their lives. Despite improving material conditions in advanced economies, families seem under stress. The gap between rich and poor grows wider. Even in the United States and Australia, the social safety net - health care, education, pensions, good wages and good jobs - is in danger of fraying for those less able to navigate this new world.

These pressures pose unavoidable questions for all of us as we approach the twenty-first century: questions about how to balance individual and community rights and responsibilities; about how parents will raise children in the face of the influences of the mass media and consumer culture; about personal identity and work in an age of globalisation, information overload and high technology; about the roles of women in society; about how people will preserve their ethnic pride and value their national citizenship; about how nations will protect their sovereignty while cooperating regionally and globally with others.

Thinking about these challenges, and how free nations like ours will respond to them, we may need to be reminded that democracy is not just about our legally protected rights, elections or even free market economies. It's about the internalisation of democratic values in people's hearts, minds and everyday lives. It's about how, in the absence of either hot or cold wars, democracy is rooted in the experiences of our young people. It's about developing among democratic nations what I call 'an alliance of values' that withstands tyranny and terrorism. Such an alliance is based on the shared values of freedom, opportunity, responsibility, community and respect for human rights.

Building and sustaining democracy has always required a balance of power that allows those values to flourish: a balance of public political power, private economic power and the power of civil society, the formal and informal networks that bring people together to make decisions for themselves and for the common good.

Democratic values are at risk when that balance shifts to the extremes: when government becomes too cumbersome or too intrusive or too restrictive. When the marketplace, which by definition knows the price of everything but the value of nothing, lures citizens into becoming merely consumers who care about satisfying their personal wants. When civil society, which consists of local organisations, philanthropies, volunteer associations, neighbourhood groups and individual families, is weakened by larger political and economic forces.

Every generation faces the task of achieving the proper balance of power so that democratic values can survive and thrive.

Whether we succeed at this task is particularly important for women, whose voices are still too often silenced in too many parts of the world. It is equally important for women in countries such as ours who still are striving to attain and define their rightful place in government, the economy and civil society and claim their share of personal, political, economic, and civic power.

During the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, I said that women's rights are human rights - and human rights are women's rights. One would think that at the end of this century that should be an unremarkable statement. I have been overwhelmed by the response that speech received. And also bewildered that the proposition should be open to question.

A few months ago I appeared on a radio programme for the Voice of America. I fielded questions from all over the world. Many callers referred to my Beijing speech. And one male caller asked what my statement about women's rights really meant. I told him to imagine the rights men had and wanted and to apply them to women: the right to be valued as a member of a family, to be protected from violence and exploitation, to be assured equal access to the tools of opportunity - health care, education, legal rights, political participation, economic empowerment - that equip an individual with the capacity to make responsible decisions for one's life. Where women are given human rights they
help create conditions in which they, their families and communities flourish.

Yet we know that even in advanced democracies such as ours, where these conditions are present for the vast majority of women, women’s roles and rights are still being debated. They are being debated among women as well as between men and women, with implications for whether our democracies will meet the challenges of the future.

... Many critical issues were raised during the [recent electoral] campaign in the United States. ... For the first time a new set of concerns took on political importance - concerns above enhancing the quality of our lives, about raising children, about meeting the demands of work and family. Why were these issues suddenly at the heart of American time a new set of concerns took on political importance - concerns above enhancing the quality of our lives, about raising children, about meeting the demands of work and family. Why were these issues suddenly at the heart of American time a new set of concerns took on political importance - concerns above enhancing the quality of our lives, about raising children, about meeting the demands of work and family. Why were these issues suddenly at the heart of American...
The community as researcher: Local research teams in Guatemala and Colombia

Norah Espejo

Local research teams (LRTs) comprising community members have been set up in seven communities in Guatemala and Colombia with the aim of producing community-based methodologies through an action research process for water and sanitation projects. All the teams have been created within the framework of the four-year International Water and Sanitation Centre inter-institutional project.

These community research teams were not merely considered a 'methodological step' to ensure community involvement. Rather, they are indispensable actors and agents of change at multiple levels, and refined by the communities. While each community has its own criteria, three were common to all seven communities: the candidates come up voluntarily; literacy is not a prerequisite; and the teams comprise both men and women.

In La Sirena, decisive criteria for membership were experience and affinity with community work. In Ceylan, it was the training and potential of future leaders. This led them to select a 16-year-old student, who they felt would develop into a community leader. In the Quiche zone of Guatemala, where the level of schooling is low, the most important criteria was the willingness to participate. In these cases research teams will play the leading role in supporting the water committees to realise their capacity to produce statistically comparable results. In Ghana, Zambia, South Africa and Mozambique, fewer communities were covered but in more depth and with a more open-ended approach.

The objective was to provide local research teams with the experience and training required to implement the process. Experience has shown that in all communities training provides a lot of useful information for the diagnosis and that it is necessary to find a methodology that integrates these two processes better.

How are LRTs formed?

Once communities agree to participate in the project, they select an LRT. Selection criteria were established at the project level, and refined by the communities. While each community selected its own criteria, there were common to all seven communities from both countries:

- The candidates come up voluntarily;
- Literacy is not a prerequisite; and
- The teams comprise both men and women.

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LRTs: Main facilitators for the diagnosis

During community diagnosis, researchers take up tasks such as: summoning communities; conducting and facilitating community meetings using the PAR techniques; translating native languages; taking notes and reporting on activities; searching for secondary information in the community, health centres and other communities; and putting together all information and preparing the first draft of the diagnosis report.

The diagnosis report may also comprise short-term improvements related to water and sanitation, which arose during the process. In these cases research teams will play the leading role in supporting the water committees to realise these improvements.

Increased community capacity

The creation of LRTs and the capacity and creativity shown during the process of learning social research methods and techniques, as well as the efficient and enthusiastic way in which the teams undertake their responsibilities, is proof of the capacity that arises within the communities when they feel part of their own project. When they intervene between the community and the project, the LRT is a community group that serves as a sieve for the adaptation and acclimatization of project proposals before they are implemented in the community.

In smaller rural communities with low literacy level, the training workshop was integrated with the diagnosis activities. In Barre Chiquito, Guatemala, for example, the LRT initiated the workshop with very practical discussion and clarification of the concepts: What is diagnosis? What is it needed for? How does it work? Realistic examples, like coyote fighting with the coffee plant diseases, were used. Subsequently, with support of project team members, the 'talking map', the Mayan calendar, and the wheelcart were used. The map was elaborated together with other community members and served to represent the natural, social and cultural resources existing in the community.

The calendar shows the year's main events and fiestas, and using the wheelcart the main water and sanitation-related problems and causes were assessed. Discussing and evaluating their own experience using these techniques was the most useful source of learning for the LRT in Barre Chiquito.

After training, the local research teams are involved in activities related to planning and implementing the diagnosis. Experience has shown that in all communities training provides a lot of useful information for the diagnosis and that it is necessary to find a methodology that integrates these two processes better.

The process brought out important aspects of poverty and vulnerability which conventional analyses had ignored. The disabled and sick, for example, were often identified as a particularly vulnerable category, while food security emerged as a prime indicator of poverty. Other common findings were the significance to poor people of:

- the sharp seasonality of poverty, sickness, stress and demands for money (such as school expenses);
- the isolation of rural communities, and the importance of all-weather roads and transport;
- access to healthcare, and how user fees and rude staff keep poor people from using health services;
- differences in perceptions, realities and priorities between women and men;
- the value of safety nets in bad seasons and bad years to supplement peoples' coping strategies; and
- having multiple sources of food and income, including part-time agriculture and home gardens.

The richness and diversity of the findings posed problems when it came to synthesising the information. It also raised questions about how insights covering such a broad range of issues could be translated into practical policies. But the general consensus was that use of participatory methods had greatly improved the value of the exercise.

* Reprinted from Water Newsletter, No. 243, August 1996, pp. 2-3

Using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in Poverty Assessments*

Participatory methods have been increasingly used in the national Poverty Assessments promoted by the World Bank. This has stemmed from concerns about the limitations of conventional methods used in earlier Assessments, including their failure to capture aspects of the complexity and diversity of poverty.

So far, variants of PRA have been used in 'Participatory Poverty Assessments' in six African countries. Different approaches have been tried. In Kenya and Tanzania, the approach included sampling a larger number of communities, using predesigned scoring cards and categories, the aim being to produce statistically comparable results. In Ghana, Zambia, South Africa and Mozambique, fewer communities were covered but in more depth and with a more open-ended approach.

The objective was to enable poor people to express and analyse their realities and priorities, so that these could be fed into the design of anti-poverty policies. Local teams of researchers and facilitators were first trained in participatory techniques. Fieldwork was then conducted, in some cases in communities where NGOs in the team already had working relations. This helped establish rapport and provided an avenue for follow-up later on.

It quickly became clear that poverty and vulnerability are not static concepts, and that perceptions of need vary from one community to another. This led to the use of focus groups and key informant interviews to reach a general consensus on poverty.

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* Extracted from IDS Policy Briefing Issue 7, p.3, August 1996, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex

January 1997
In my hand is a large tin of mackerel

Christopher Hershey

In my hand is a large tin of mackerel

The mackerel come from Chile
12 thousand kilometres east
but much closer
than the closest Papua New Guinean fish canneries.

In my left hand is a large tin of Chilean mackerel
sesame crackers from Tokyo
Louisiana hot sauce
English sweets
split peas from India
New Zealand apricot jam
and powdered milk from Singapore
produced no doubt
from Singapore’s famous powdered cows.

My shopping basket is a lesson
in the high cost of free trade.

This is the country where people fed themselves
for 30 centuries.
This is what remains in the mouth
after swallowing the wisdom of the wise guys of the west
for 30 years.

Does it matter
that our pockets rattle with our own coins
when our stomachs
are slaves to distant shopkeepers?

The Pacific is pregnant with fish
but the local canneries are on the other side.

The gardens are choking with sweet potatoes
but our children see the coloured posters
and their tummies ache for food wrapped in plastic.

The plantations are heavy with coconuts
but such savage food
must first be educated overseas in cooking oil
only then can it be sold
to the wives of the plantation workers at a profit.

Behind me, basketless,
a family of 7 makes its own charitable contribution
to the starving economies of the industrialised world:
2 small girls clutch packets of Australian white rice
and a tin of chopped ham from Denmark.

Sharing a Pepsi
they drink in the lessons of the market.

© 1990 Christopher Hershey, Papua New Guinea

World poverty facts

* Of the 5.7 billion people in the world, 1.5 billion are desperately poor. Today 20 per cent of the world’s population survives on a daily income of less than US$1.

* The income ratio between the richest 20 per cent and the poorest 20 per cent of the world’s population was 30:1 in 1960. By 1991 it had doubled to 61:1.

* Africa is the region where poverty is most rapidly increasing. South Asia, home to 21 per cent of the world’s population, hosts the largest concentration of severely impoverished people - half the world’s total.

* Pockets of poverty exist even in the most affluent countries. While OECD countries have only one per cent of the world’s poorest people, over 15 per cent of the population in the US and Western Europe now live below the national poverty line.

Agenda for Action, ACOSS and ACFOA, 1996, p.2

Poverty-free world

The total credit need of all the world’s poor is estimated to be somewhere between US$30 to 60 billion, while at present worldwide, US$75 billion changes hands every year in the name of helping the poor. How little of this trickles down to the poor and how much dependence and corruption it creates is vividly documented in numerous research reports.

Australian Health and Development Newsletter, No. 51, Nov-Dec 1996, p.2

Child poverty in Australia - second worst in the Western world

According to a study by the Bread for the World organisation, Australia has the second worst level of child poverty in the industrialised world. The poverty rate for Australian children was 14.1 per cent, worse than any other industrialised nation except the United States at 21.5 per cent. Twenty per cent of Aboriginal children under the age of two in the Northern Territory were malnourished, the report said, and the Aboriginal infant mortality rate was three times that of the nation as a whole.

About two million Australians lived below the poverty line between 1990 and 1992, and many of them still relied on charitable food assistance, the study found. Some of Australia’s poor “periodically go without food in order to obtain shelter or clothing”.

The Canberra Times, 17 October 1996, p.5
Debt package plan farcical

Debt relief for some of the world's poorest countries is being heralded as one of the major achievements of the recent Washington meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Heavy indebted countries, most of which are in Africa, will soon have access to a rescue package which, if it is hoped, will reduce their share of the US$160 billion (Au$170 billion) or 3 billion) in official debt to donor governments, international financial institutions and foreign banks. World Bank President James Wolfensohn, who has taken the credit for the current relief strategy, was not willing to suggest that the Bank write off the debt of the most severely indebted nations. This would threaten the Bank's triple-A credit status. Instead, a fund, to which the Bank and other creditors contribute, will be established. Indebted countries that comply with an economic reform package administered by the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility will be able to get access to the loans, which provide longer repayment schedules and lower interest rates. Thus there remains a farcical situation of indebted countries borrowing from the banks and the IMF to pay back loans owing to the same institutions. Most countries will have to endure six more years of 'conditionality' to prove that they are worthy to receive the debt-relief loans.


Child poverty: Some facts and figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>% children in poverty*</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* refers to children under age 16

The Canberra Times, 17 October 1996, p.5

Farmers and builders suck India dry

India's Supreme Court recently ordered the government to draw up plans to regulate the use of groundwater. The ruling came after a case brought by an environmental lawyer, Mahesh Chander Mehta, who warned that the lack of regulation was causing groundwater levels to fall dramatically and wells to dry up. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people were going short of water. Attempts to regulate the use of groundwater date back to 1970. Three years ago, the previous government produced a draft bill that could have tightened controls over the use of groundwater. But its passage through the parliament was blocked. Mehta blames this obstruction on "rich people, contractors and farmers' lobbies."

New Scientist, 9 November 1996, p.9

First South African aid talks

In October 1996, representatives of Australian and South African Governments met in Pretoria for the firstever government-to-government aid consultations. Prior to the South African elections in April 1994, Australian government aid to South Africa was directed to non-government and international organisations through the Special Assistance Program for South Africans (SAPSA). Following the elections, Australia announced a new three-year programme of Au$30 million developed jointly with the South African Government. The new bilateral aid programme, worth a total of $10.9 million in 1996-97, focuses assistance in the areas of public sector reform, education, health, water management, and statistics.

AusAID News, October 1996, p.1

Projected increase in total demand for food, 1990-2020

Food aid to World Food Programme

China, Bangladesh and India will be among the main recipients of Australian food aid this year provided through the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), as a result of new pledging arrangements. Until now, Australia's annual pledge of development food aid to WFP has been completely untied to any activity in any country, but this year Australia is able to direct about half of its $54 million contribution of food aid to specific development projects in particular countries. As well as supporting development projects, a substantial amount of Australian food aid is also used in emergency and relief operations.

This year, under the new agreement with WFP, AusAID will provide all of its emergency food aid in the form of a direct cash contribution to WFP for a selected group of emergency and protracted relief operations. Worth an estimated $28 million, these are expected to include operations in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Ethiopia and Sudan.

Focus, December 1996, p.5

Growth of world population

World Bank News, 7 November 1996, p.2
Populate and perish

According to two eminent biologists who spoke at the 65th Congress of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, the Australian continent is environmentally stressed and over populated. They predicted a drop in living standards within 20 years and, in the worst-case scenario, cannibalism and extinction over the horizon. Their claims are complemented by a report by Barney Foran of the CSIRO’s Division of Wildlife and Ecology that Australia’s population of 18.3 million is already close to consuming all the continent’s life-supporting resources: the food will probably hold out until 2050 but energy, water and forests will be exhausted before then.

What about the less extreme case scenario? Doug Cocks states in the New Scientist that no foreseeable combination of events would make Australia uninhabitable for up to 36 million people by 2045. Race is not the problem: humans are. We need an ecological policy that maintains a balance between what the country can produce and what the population can consume.

Weekend Australian, 16-17 November 1996, p.26

Aid policy shift sparks outrage

The Government MP responsible for Australia’s $1.4 billion overseas aid budget, Andrew Thomson, has outraged the aid community by signalling a major policy shift to link aid with business opportunities. A former golf course developer and investment banker, Mr Thomson has contradicted his portfolio minister, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, by declaring that village level aid projects did not serve the national interest as well as scholarships and training. Mr Downer has on several occasions committed the Government’s aid vote to poverty reduction at the village level with health, sanitation and basic education projects especially for women and girls.

“I have reached the view that worthy as they are, the smaller aid projects such as village development, family planning clinics, women’s rights awareness programmes, or other so-called ‘grassroots’ activity carried out by the curiously named non governmental organisation, do not serve this national interest with the same efficiency as does the sort of aid that strengthens the government institutions of these countries - the scholarships and the training.”

The Canberra Times, 26 October 1996, p.5

Unhealthy on-screen diet for kids

Australian children sit through more food advertisements than any of their industrialised neighbours. A survey of 13 countries found that Australian children sit through 231 food ads over 20 hours of television - an average of 12 an hour. The types of food promoted included fast-food restaurants, savoury snacks, desserts, soft drinks and confectionary. “Most of these foods are high in sugar, fat or salt and who’s eaten in excess are a potential health hazard for our kids”, dietitian and food policy officer for the Australian Consumers’ Association Matt O’Neill said. It is no wonder that 30 per cent of Australian school children aged 10-15 are overweight or obese, 50 per cent have high cholesterol levels and 25 per cent of 12 year-old boys show higher than recommended blood pressure levels.” No ads for fruits or vegetables were recorded. The survey, by the United Kingdom company Consumers International, found that children’s programming in six countries - Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Greece and the UK - had commercial sponsors, most of whom were food companies.

The Canberra Times, 11 November 1996, p.2

China Poverty Incidence, 1978-94

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Incidence (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1994</td>
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* Chinese household surveys introduced a more accurate pricing convention in 1990’s resulting in a discontinuous series.

World Bank News, 24 October 1996
• establishing adequate criteria for determining where aid is delivered, and to whom, with a special focus on future assistance to PNG;
• providing effective management and delivery of the aid programme and how to ensure transparency and accountability; and
• the role of the aid programme in achieving and maintaining a well informed public and bureaucracy with a focus on creating a constituency for the aid programme and the values which underlie it.


There was general agreement among Forum participants that Australia’s aid policy should be based firmly and unequivocally on overcoming poverty and that this should be a major determinant in allocating assistance. This will require a re-examination of current Australian development philosophy.

It was agreed that Australia’s aid policy should support and encourage the achievement of basic human rights, and the role of the aid programme in achieving and maintaining them. The Forum considered that clear criteria should be established for determining where aid programme against political misuse and to ensure adequate development assistance programmes.

The Forum agreed that there is a need to establish criteria to be used in considering the allocation of donor assistance to aid programmes, in order to ensure that aid is used for the purpose for which it is intended.

The Forum considered that criteria should be established to guide the allocation of Australian assistance to safeguard the programme against political misuse and to ensure adequate planning, implementation and evaluation.

The Forum supported the view that the Australian aid programme should, through its policy and practice, support social, economic and gender equity. It was agreed that the role of the aid programme in achieving and maintaining a public that is well informed about the causes of poverty, global interrelationships, the Australian aid policy and programmes.

It was recommended that particular emphasis be given to providing greater support for development education in primary schools.

It was agreed that research, evaluation and information sharing were critical to maintaining an effective aid programme and that current work in these areas be expanded to include regular discussion between government, non-government, academic and commercial organisations involved in all aspects of development and development assistance.

While there was no agreement on the optimum level of development assistance to PNG, it was widely acknowledged that greater consideration must be given to PNG’s capacity to effectively manage project aid and that greater care had to be exercised by Australian Government to ensure that a higher proportion of assistance benefited those outside Port Moresby.

Pamela Thomas, Australian Development Studies Network

Developing The Mekong sub-region

Melbourne, 30 September 1996

Development opportunities and constraints in the Mekong sub-region (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Yunnan Province of China) were the key themes for this conference which was supported by the Japanese Government, AusAID, the Asian Development Bank, Thai Airways and Maunsell Pty Ltd and attended by business, government, academia and international organisations from both Asia and Australia.

Mr Akira Nakajima from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed the theme of 'From river to region' in giving an outline of Japanese policies in the sub-region. He was the chair of the Greater Mekong Task Force (whose membership was drawn from both the private and public sectors) which submitted a policy report, Strategies for Development of the Greater Mekong Area, in July 1996. That paper attempted to forecast scenarios for social and economic conditions for 2020 - with/without regional cooperation. The 'with' scenario was claimed to offer Cambodia and Laos accelerated economic growth. Its conclusions strongly supported such cooperation, particularly in energy, transportation and water and agricultural development, while noting possible negative environmental impacts and the need for private sector involvement.

An update on priority projects in the Greater Mekong sub-region (following the decisions of Ministers at the September Kunning meeting) was provided by Dr Filo Pante from the Asian Development Bank, with major focus on transport, energy and telecommunications sectors. Interestingly, the Bank is turning to address the 'software' issues of regional cooperation - customs, non tariff barriers, harmonisation of regulatory regimes - rather than simply producing a list of possible projects. The view from the Bank in the energy sector was that it would concentrate on playing an enabling and policy role, leaving major investment to the private sector and lending only in the less attractive areas.

Regional views on development issues were provided by speakers from Cambodia, Vietnam, and Yunnan Province of China. It was clear that the needs are great and the plans extensive; however there are significant shortfalls in terms of available human and financial resources. Dr Mok Mareth, the Cambodian Minister for Environment, made a plea for consideration of environmental issues, especially those relating to the Tonle Sap and the Mekong River. The need for balanced economic and social development, and proper management and planning, especially in the Mekong River Basin, were taken up by other speakers.

Of particular interest were 'Lessons from experience' offered by Australian businessmen, with Ray Miles stressing the need for patience and for building up skills and confidence of local counterparts and David Iverach providing a rare inside account of the development of a controversial hydropower project in Laos. Ironically, on the same day in Bangkok the Thai electricity authority was putting the project on hold.

Overall the conference successfully brought together a wide range of key players and interests in what continues to be a very dynamic and volatile part of the world. Conference proceedings will be published early in 1997 by the Monash Asia Institute.

Bob Stensholt, Geography and Environmental Science, Monash University

Development dilemmas in the Mekong sub-region

Melbourne, 1-2 October 1996

The Melbourne Mekong Workshop brought together nearly 100 researchers, NGO representatives and senior officials to discuss over 30 papers on various aspects of development in the Mekong sub-region. Just over half the papers were provided by Australian institutions, with the remainder ranging from the ABC to the Cambodian Ministry of Environment.

Presenters were asked to provide short papers (around six pages) which were pre-printed as Proceedings. This greatly facilitated discussion and interaction between the participants.

In terms of content and quality of presentations and discussion it rivalled the Wye Workshop held in December 1995 in Washington DC.

The workshop pursued four themes: Managing the Mekong; Sub-regional economic cooperation; Development options, impacts and constraints; and The forgotten majority. This choice of topics proved to be largely interlocking themes produced a succession of high quality sessions.

Of particular significance was the strong representation from the Mekong sub-regional countries and organisations themselves - largely due to the generous support of the Japanese Government and AusAID. A strong delegation from Yunnan Province was led by Mr Liu Shisong, the deputy head of the Provincial Science and Technology Commission, and Professor He Darning from the Yunnan Institute of Geography. They were happy to present and discuss openly their programme of dams on the upper Mekong. This made for several lively sessions about the Mekong, particularly as the head of the Mekong River Commission, Mr Matoba, and several of his key advisers, as well as representatives from the Laotian, Cambodian and Vietnamese National Mekong Committees, also attended and made presentations. There was also a paper on the upper third of the Mekong River in the Tibetan regions which is rarely included in any discussion of the Mekong. A key issue was the likely impact of the Chinese dam construction, with one analysis suggesting that there would be an increase in dry-season flow by over 150 percent.
Environmental Transformations in Developing Countries

The conference was organised by the Royal Geographical Society and the Institute of British Geographers. The conference examined the current state of ‘environmental development research’, and had three agendas: challenging and refining ‘environmental orthodoxies’ prevalent in the policy community (such as Hawaiian theories of development and ecological dynamics); and the widespread desertification of arid lands; to provide examples of environmental histories, assembled from both scientific monitoring and local knowledge and perceptions; and updating the research and policy communities with extremely diverse and broad range of ranges dealing with contemporary environment and development issues. The conference focused on change in four ‘critical zones’ of developing countries: drylands, forests, mountains, and urban/industrial areas. The speakers were geographers, planners, anthropologists and economists, drawn from Britain and North America.

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advances in theoretical debates and practical management to the real world problems raised at this and other meetings.

Simon Tatterbury, Geography and Earth Sciences, Brunel University; and Tim Forsyth, Geography, and Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics

Australian Population Association

Adelaide, 5-6 December 1996

The Australian Population Association (APA) held its 8th National Conference at the University of Adelaide in early December 1996, under the theme ‘Australia’s population into the next millennium’. The APA’s conferences occur every two years, and bring together a mixture of academics, students, and public servants (federal, state and local), with a sprinkling of private sector and NGO representatives interested in population issues. The list of attendees for this conference came to over 240 names, with 62 of them being students, of whom 50 were enrolled in either the Flinders or Adelaide postgraduate programmes in population studies, with a high proportion of these being from developing countries.

The conference also attracted a number of speakers from developing countries, which was reflected in the proportion of papers devoted to development issues. Of the 96 papers and plenary presentations, 21 focused on developing countries (12 on Southeast Asia, four on South Asia, four on the Pacific, and one on China), and a further six on the demography of Australia’s indigenous population.

Two concurrent sessions, with three papers in each, were titled ‘Indonesia in focus’, with paper titles such as ‘Young people and their parents in Jakarta: Generational differences in sexual attitudes and behaviour’, ‘Female employment and gender differentials in work in Jakarta’, and ‘Migration to a newly growing industrial area in Indonesia’. Another session was on ‘Population perspectives in Thailand’, with papers on HIV/AIDS in the north, consequences for families of out-migration associated with labour contracts, child labour, and ‘Beyond the reproductive revolution’.

The three plenary sessions attracted excellent presentations by major speakers in the respective fields. The plenaries dealt with the conference theme in interesting and provocative ways, one being on future scenarios for Australia’s population (population policies, population growth and distribution, and demographic ageing), another on dimensions of inequity in Australia, and the third on the implications for Australia of international population trends, particularly the implications of the human resource changes now occurring in Asia.

A nice touch to the conference was the presentation on the opening night to Professor W.D. (Mick) Borrie, the Patron of the APA, of the 1996 Laureate from the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. In the absence of the current IUSSP President, Professor Jack Caldwell, the award was presented by Professor Dirk van de Kaat. Professor van de Kaat then presented the Borrie Lecture, which traditionally opens the APA conferences, on the topic of ‘The second demographic transition’, which refers to the causes and consequences of sustained below-replacement fertility, as currently experienced in many developed countries.

Paul Meyer, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Beyond Beijing: From words to action

Washington, 5-8 September 1996

As an Australian involved in the impressive NGO and government advisory preparations for the Beijing Conference I have been extremely disappointed at the poor implementation of the final documents both by the Government and by NGOs in Australia. Over 500 Australian women had attended the Huairou NGO Forum, many of whom were also active at the UN Conference in Beijing. Yet it almost seems as though Australian women have forgotten the passion, and ignored the significance of this Conference. Instead of the anticipated increase in strategic follow-up there has been a rapid and astounding decrease, to the extent that there are now only a handful of individuals monitoring the lack of implementation of the International Platform for Action (PFA). It is time now to increase the energy and strategic planning to ensure the national implementation of the PFA, so that all our preparatory work is brought to fruition.

On the anniversary of the Beijing Conference, 9 September 1996, very little happened in Australia but the rest of the world appeared to be very active, celebrating the achievements of governments in implementing the Platform for Action. The Women’s Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) released their report ‘Beyond promises: Government action one year after the Beijing Women’s Conference’. This report detailed (WEDO Press Release, 9 September 1996):

- first ever action plans for women in Pacific Island States;
- legal measures to formalise the recognition of family violence in Latin America;
- a draft bill to correct gender bias in property rights in Nepal; parliament proposals to give women a third of the seats in parliament and state legislative assemblies in India; and
- moves to legalise abortion in South Africa.

The Association of Women In Development (AWID) held their annual conference in Washington in September with over 1,200 women and men from all corners of the globe converging to discuss and compare strategies for the national implementation of the PFA. There were national reports presented from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and the newly independent States, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, North America and Western Europe.

Apart from discussion of PFA implementation, many other workshops were held at the AWID Forum, on subjects as diverse as reproductive health, education, reproductive health for refugees, introducing gender into engineering, cultural and religious fundamentalism, women’s access to information technology, and many other issues.

International Implementation: Reports

Australia (excerpts from paper delivered at the AWID Conference)

The lead up to the Beijing Conference was a highly successful process for the Australian government, NGOs and individual women and men throughout Australia.

Although the Australian government pioneered the concept of the Beijing Conference, 9 September 1995, and instigated many other initiatives to ensure that Australian women were heard at Beijing, it can be said that their representation was extremely weak. The Women’s Parliamentary Lobby (WPL) released a press statement on this issue at the Beijing Conference which stated that Australian women were tired of tinkering at the edges, with the government releasing disappointing and inadequate reports.

It is interesting to note that the first working women’s resource centre was established on 15 September 1975, with Australia reporting on this centre in its report to the First UN World Conference on Women held in Mexico City in 1975. Carmen Lawrence stated in Australia’s speech to the FWCW two decades later:

We have already established what we call Working Women’s Centres in some of our States ... As part of our commitment to assisting working women the Government will extend the Working Women’s Centres to all Australian states (Lawrence 1995:4).

But given that this initiative was instigated 20 years earlier, the extension of these services could hardly be perceived as a very progressive commitment from the Australian government to the FWCC.

Cathy Piccone and Yumi Lee from the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom point to the embarrassment of having the peak body of women in business touted as a step towards ‘women in decision making at all levels’ (Piccone and Lee 1995:11). They suggest instead a policy of gender balance within government bodies, committees, public entities, the judiciary and representation to the UN and other international fora.

January 1997
USA

The United States of America has established a Presidential Commission to oversee the implementation of the PFA. This Agency coordinated a National Summit on 29 September 1995 to discuss plans to implement the PFA with women across the country. Downloadable sites were made available at sites with individuals and NGOs able to sit and discuss issues for women and girls in the USA.

WEBDC and the Centre for Women's Policy Studies in Washington also developed a Correspondence with Women of the USA. This campaign outlined a set of 12 features of the PFA which were presented to the needs of American women. These are:

- empowerment of women;
- sharing family responsibilities;
- ending the burden of poverty;
- high quality, affordable healthcare;
- sexual and reproductive rights;
- workplace rights;
- educational equity;
- ending violence;
- protecting a healthy environment;
- women as peace makers;
- honor commitments to and rights to ECDWA;
- a long-term plan to achieve equality.

Arab countries

An official Government meeting and an NGO a set of 12 features of the PFA which were presented to the needs of American women. These are:

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- a long-term plan to achieve equality.

China

The Beijing Bureau Chief for the Baltimore Sun reports that the 1995 Conference inspired an awareness amongst many women and women's support groups have been formed. The writer states that (Translated in International Women's Tribune Global Net):

... many women say the (Beijing Conference) opened their eyes to the needs of rural women. The meetings were watersheds in understanding how far they lag behind men and how wide the gap between reality and the male dominated Communist Party's claim to be women's best friend ... The home for migrant workers, set up since the Conference, may be the one of the first time But i nternal organisations in China. Meeting every two years in events, censored from a local newspaper, the home is a discussion group made up of women contacted through employment agencies that hire migrants. Eventually the group plans to build a real home for the women, with training courses included.

Where to now?

Many women around the world have been working hard to consolidate the gains made at the Beijing Conference and NGOs in 1995. Others have been busy building on these gains, setting for strong language at the United Nations Habitat II Conference in 1996 in Istanbul, or at the First Summit recently held in Rome. Neither of these international events have attracted much attention or interest from the Asian population, media, or the women who returned to Australia after the Beijing Conferences.

What has led to this lethargy in the Asian women's movement? Obviously the change of government has led to financial and moral NGOs, but when has that ever stopped these women before? The mobilisation before Beijing was a phenomenon in Asia. There was much funding and government support for preparatory activities, but this was not the only reason for over 200 women to fundraise and awareness raising tasks across the Pacific. The experiences and skills that Australian women gained from this movement Conference need to be translated into action for the continued implementation of the PFA.

*Adapted from an article by Sabine Mitchell which first appeared in the CAP-WC Bulletin. Sabine is currently doing her PhD in the Beijing Conference, Human Rights and the role of NGOs. She returned from the AWH Conference with many resources detailing what other countries are doing. For more information please Sabine at OS 207 494.

Conference calendar

The Institute of Australian Geographers/New Zealand Geographical Society

Hobart, 28-31 January 1997

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

For more information contact: Environment and Development Bulletin 40; January 1997

NGOs, Sciences and the Poor: Competitors, Contractors or Collaborators?

Canberra, 8 April 1997

Funds for humanitarian aid are dwindling worldwide. This conference comes at a time when both the scientific and NGOs communities are asking: Are we competitors for overseas development assistance? Are we redundant in delivering humanitarian aid? Can we operate side by side? The challenge has never been greater. Efforts to alleviate poverty and meet global goals needs in the face of destroyed natural resources, and a growing population, are frustrated by donor fatigue and worldwide complacency. The seminar will explore the overlapping roles and strengths of NGOs and scientists and consider opportunities for more effective collaboration for poverty alleviation.

For more information contact: Environment and Development Bulletin 40; January 1997

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 lives of the world's poorest people. The Summit will be the first step of a decade-long campaign to ensure that 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially those of women, will be receiving credit for employment by 2005.

For more information contact: Microcredit Summit of the United States Educational Fund 230 Main Ave NE, Suite 500 Washington, DC 20002 USA Tel: (202) 544 1900 Fax: (202) 544 2282 E-mail: info@microcredit.org

Management of Health Care in Developing Communities and Emerging Populations

Melbourne, 2-3 February 1997

This two-day workshop is aimed at health professionals who work with women, considering working overseas or in Australian indigenous communities.

For more information contact: Trish Clarke & Mike Toole International Health Unit Macquarie University Centre PO Box 254 Fairfield, VIC 3870 Australia Tel: (03) 9222 3277 Fax: (03) 9442 3123

Gender and Democratization: International Perspectives

Warwick, UK, 15-19 April 1997

The seminar aims to bring together women (and men) in the area of democratization, to share their experiences, to form networks and to highlight the issues they are facing. The seminar topics include: the intellectual grid of politics of location, social and historical; and outcomes of democratization. The program will be of particular interest to those of the sciences, NGOs is grassroots level, policy-makers, policy institutes and researchers, as well as women, the former USTR, the Middle East and South Asia.

For more information contact: Environment and Development Bulletin 40; January 1997
Crossing Cultural Frontiers: 
The Communication Industries in the Asia-Pacific Region

Canberra, 28-29 April 1997

This conference is being jointly organised by Thammasat University and University of Canberra. The theme of the conference is Impact of the New Communication Industries and Technological Changes on Regional Cultures. The conference aims to: identify business opportunities and business operating environments in the Asia-Pacific region; identify the cultural environment in which communications investment operates; and examine how to minimise the negative impact and maximise the benefits of these emerging technologies. Speakers and participants are expected to come from a number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region including Malaysia, Indonesia and China.

For more information contact:
Dr Helen James 
Faculty of Communications 
University of Canberra
PO Box 1
Belconnen, ACT 2616
Australia
E-mail hjames@eiceserve.canberra.edu.au

Cultural Heritage in Islands and Small States

Valetta, Malta, 8-10 May 1997

This international conference aims to: bring together scholars and practitioners from different parts of the world to discuss the cultural heritage and cultural identity of islands and small states; to identify new directions for research; and to promote networking between scholars and institutions operating or researching on themes relating to islands and small states. Some of the topics that will be covered by the conference include: the preservation of artistic and archaeological heritage; access to information relating to the cultural heritage of islands through electronic communication; insularity and uniqueness of cultural traits; prospects for cultural tourism in islands and small states; and small states and the globalisation process. The conference convenors are inviting papers on the above themes. The deadline for submission is 1 March 1997.

Sustainable Urban Food Systems

Toronto, 22-25 May 1997

This international conference will have paper and poster sessions, panel discussions and workshops dealing with different aspects of food security issues within an urban context. Session topics include: workshop proposals and individual paper abstracts are invited on topics dealing with food security, food policy, urban agriculture, distribution and food access systems, health and nutrition issues, and hunger.

For more information contact:
Dr Mustafa Koc
Dept of Sociology and Centre for Studies in Food Security
Ryerson Polytechnic University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K3
Canada
Tel (1 416) 979 5000 ext. 6210
Fax (1 416) 979 5273
E-mail mtkoc@acs.ryerson.ca

AIDS Impact, Biopsychosocial Aspects of HIV Infection

Melbourne, 22-25 June 1997

The conference themes include: culture, community, care; developing and sustaining prevention; cultural representations, media and positive bodies; HIV/AIDS and mental health; indigenous communities responding to AIDS; social and ethical dimensions of drug and vaccine trials; euthanasia; emerging epidemics; the increasing internationalisation of HIV/AIDS responses; cultural responses to grief and loss; stigma, discrimination and denial; AIDS and development; changes in patterns of risk; and politics and HIV. In addition to keynote addresses, proffered papers and posters, the conference will also have workshops which will provide opportunities to reflect upon, and to develop and advance strategies in current treatment, education, care and practice. Topics aimed at stimulating ethical and cultural debate will be encouraged.

For more information contact:
The Secretary
International Conference
Cultural Heritage and Small Island States
Islands and Small States Institute
University Building
St. Paul Street
Valetta
Malta
Tel (356) 248218, 234121/2
Fax (356) 230551
E-mail hbrg@cis.uam.nf.mt

Rethinking Development and the Role of Development Cooperation

Sida-Sandy, Sweden, 14-18 June 1997

This international conference is the latest in a series in which the Development Areas Research Group has linked with their counterparts in the Netherlands and Nordic countries. The conference is intended to focus on the meaning of development and the contribution that geography can make to increased understanding of current debates and reinterpretations among theoreticians and practitioners alike. As part of the programme, representatives of Nordic development cooperation agencies and NGOs will be invited to participate in a day of discussion based on the proceedings of the previous days, while a field excursion to explore the historical development context of the region around Sandy is also planned.

For more information contact:
Dr Mustafa Koc
CEDAR
Dept of Geography
Royal Holloway
University of London
Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX
United Kingdom
Tel (44 1784) 443 651
Fax (44 1784) 472 836
E-mail d.simon@rhbc.ac.uk

The Economies of Greater China: Growth, Opportunities and Risks

Perth, 7-8 July 1997

The aim of this international conference is to bring together economists from academia, government and the private sector to promote stimulating discussion on the major issues of relevance to the economies of mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The conference also provides an opportunity for PhD students to present their work.

For more information contact:
Dr Yuren Wu
Dept of Economics
University of Western Australia
 Nedlands, WA 6007
Australia
Tel (09) 380 9664/2918
Fax (09) 380 1016
E-mail ywu@ecel.uwa.edu.au

Environment and Development in Africa: An Agenda and Solutions for the 21st Century

Midrand, South Africa, 29 June - 4 July 1997

This conference is being organised by The Society of South African Geographers in association with: The Association of African Geographers; The International Geographical Union; and The Commonwealth Geographical Bureau. The official languages for the conference will be English, Afrikaans and French.

For more information contact:
Dr KK Mekelbohr
Dept of Geography
University of Pretoria
0020 Pretoria
South Africa
Tel (27 12) 420 2489
Fax (27 12) 420 3284
E-mail ggy@science.up.ac.za

IV International Conference on Geomorphology

Bologna, Italy, 28 August - 3 September 1997

This is the annual conference of the International Association of Geomorphologists. The conference intends to collect the new results in all the morphological research sectors. It intends also to focus on some topical problems and on the contribution of geomorphological studies to an understanding of these problems.

For more information contact:
Wendy Gardiner
ACITHN
The University of Queensland
Medical School
Herston Road
Herston, QLD 4006
Australia
Tel (07) 3365 5599
Fax (07) 3365 5599
E-mail W.Gardiner@mailbox.sq.edu.au
Towards the close of the twentieth century, feminist studies have moved beyond documenting the consequences of male dominance and female subordination to an interpretative, theoretically grounded understanding of the complexities of gender relations and identities. Two trends are of significance here. The first focuses on how gender as a category is being (re)constructed as a result of the countervailing forces of globalisation as time and space compresses on the one hand, and the assertion of local identities and cultures in order to maintain diversity and difference on the other. The second trend attempts to link gender relations to a wider framework of social relations where questions of gender intersect with other asymmetrical relations pertaining to race, class and citizenship rights.

For more information contact:
Dr Peggy Teo
International Conference on Women in the Asia-Pacific Region
Centre for Advanced Studies
National University of Singapore
10 Kent Ridge Crescent
Singapore 119260
E-mail geoteop@nus.sg

The Fifth Women in Asia Conference
Sydney, 3-5 October 1997

The aim of this multidisciplinary conference is to promote the study of women in Asia by providing a forum for scholars from Australia and overseas for the presentation of their research. The conference is being jointly organised by ASAA Women's Caucus and the School of History, University of New South Wales. Group discussions and panels will be organised around six broad themes: the search for the individual; women in public/political life; women and literacy; women and the home; women and religion; and women travellers.

Offers of papers and/or suggestions for panels are invited, and may be submitted up until 3 March 1997. Abstracts of papers should be no more than 100 words.

For more information contact:
Heather Barker
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
University of New South Wales
Sydney, NSW 2052
Australia
Fax (02) 9385 1566
E-mail h.barker@uns.w.edu.au

Health in the City: A History of Public Health
Liverpool, UK, 4-7 September 1997

This is the second conference of the International Network for the History of Public Health and the annual conference of the Society for the Social History of Medicine. This joint meeting will explore the history of urban public health from its origins to the present day by addressing a variety of key themes: the urban/rural divide - changing patterns of demography and public health; 'in the beginning there was dirt and disease ...' - origins of urban public health; moving people - moving diseases; comprehending the masses - ordering the public for the public health; and centres and peripheries.

For more information contact:
Dr Peggy Teo
International Conference on Women in the Asia-Pacific Region
Centre for Advanced Studies
National University of Singapore
10 Kent Ridge Crescent
Singapore 119260
E-mail geoteop@nus.sg

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The huge challenge facing the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) - the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund - is captured by James Wolfensohn in his 1996 'Message from the Chairman of the Executive Board':

We still live in a world where 1.2 billion people live below the line of what the World Bank considers absolute poverty - $1 per day - and in Africa the number of poor people is expected to continue growing into the next century. A quarter of the developing world’s population lacks access to safe drinking water, and almost half of it has no electricity. One hundred and thirty million children, most of them girls, are not getting the chance to go to school. In too many places the poor - and most particularly women - are shut out of the opportunities that would allow them to improve conditions of their lives.

Despite the explosive growth of the world economy, many countries are being left behind. Seventy-five per cent of private capital flows to the developing world are concentrated in just 12 countries (and East Asia receives 60 per cent of the total). At the same time, official development assistance - which might have filled the gap - has fallen to its lowest point in real terms ($59 billion) in 23 years. And many of the world’s poorest countries are so deeply in debt as to make it practically impossible for them to sustain vital economic reforms.

A 1994 Washington conference with delegates from 27 countries marked the 50th anniversary of the Bretton Woods Conference. The preparatory papers make up five books, of which *The World Bank - Lending on a global scale* is the third. It is a timely contribution to the ongoing debate about what development is, or should be, and the role of the BWIs.

The first chapter of this well written and edited book is highly critical of the Structural Adjustment Programmes of BWIs in Africa designed to inculcate a market orientation in macroeconomic policies. The conditionality of the assistance is likened, by the chapter’s author, Teriba, to the imposition
of colonial power. At the same time the debt burden continues to stultify fresh capital inflow and has resulted in major reductions in spending on important public sectors. It is argued that democratic governance is too narrow a criterion for lending and that a broader framework should be developed for a new lending policy that focuses on human resources.

The logical format of the book is evident in the next chapter, by Chandrasekhar. It takes up the argument against structural adjustment, and for programmes that focus on equity and human development, citing the cases of Sri Lanka and of Kerala in India, where government intervention assures basic needs are met even though per capita income is relatively low. Policy ingredients include government activity in guiding the economy, and land reform to ensure an equitably-based economy.

Chapter 3 argues that fighting poverty should be the primary objective of the World Bank, and laments that this goal was put on the backburner in the 1980s. Like other contributors, de Vries calls for more allowance in lending programmes for the cultural and social characteristics of a country and to this end suggests Bank staff spend considerable time in individual countries instead of being rotated. Local involvement of people is important in poverty alleviation programmes because it is the local people that will be shaping and using them. The theme of social impact assessment that included specific criteria to incorporate an adequate level of public participation in development planning and funding is taken up by Cock and Webster in Chapter 4. They cite some development failures in South Africa but express optimism in that the new government in that country recognises the potential participatory role of the large number of NGOs that grew out of the anti-apartheid struggle.

Gillies, in Chapter 5, asks the World Bank to pursue a policy of addressing popular participation in design and implementation of its projects and, moreover - in a departure from the first chapter - to "stirch the frontiers", and to explore new fronts for civil society capacity to hold governments accountable. He suggests freezing loans to states that persistently abuse fundamental human rights and engage in anti-democratic actions. To achieve this, the appointment of an independent panel, reporting directly to the Executive of the Bank, is recommended. In conclusion, Milder criticises NGOs' role in exacerbating conflict by going to extremes in discounting neoliberalism and not understanding the effectiveness of coalitions in achieving harmony between empowerment through "bottom up" approaches, and economic adjustment processes. Foreign aid should be a catalyst to coalition building to increase the distribution and productive use of resources.

The World Bank Annual Report is at pains to illustrate that the Bank has indeed reoriented itself, with its major focus being human capital development, poverty reduction, the mainstreaming of gender issues and the environment and the strengthening of partnership with NGOs. The recent announcement that debt burdens will be comprehensively addressed suggests that the new leadership is taking the Bank down new roads. These signs will be welcomed by the Bank's trenchant critics. But Africa will be a test for the new policies and only a long-term perspective of development is valid for most of that turbulent continent.

The major themes tackled by the authors include commodity dependence, price fluctuation, international price control, unequal market power, market access and control, trade blocs, trade control and GATT, economic liberalism, alternative trading practices, and action for fairer trade practices.

Sixty-six per cent of developing country exports are destined for developed country markets including Europe, the United States and Japan. With recession in these countries, demand falls while the commodity producers maintain (or increase) their output. This has the "most profound influence on the prices of developing-country commodity exports". The effect is exacerbated by the shift from manufacturing to services industries, the move from metals to electronics, technological changes that reduce the levels of raw material inputs, and continuing agricultural protection in industrialised countries.

The trade trap is unavoidable because the more primary commodity exporters produce in the attempt to increase total income, the lower the price falls on international markets. The 1980s debt crisis accentuated this trend by requiring Third World producers to increase export incomes despite falling commodity prices. Moreover, following the "lost decade" of the 1980s, commodity prices were at their lowest since the 1930s, taking US$553 billion from Third World exporters between 1981 and 1985 (mostly due to falling export prices, but a problem for other commodity producers too).

Third World primary producers living in poverty remain in the trade trap despite the transition to the WTO, Caroline LeQuene argues. The estimated fortunes to be made from increased trade following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round will go mainly to Europe and the United States, while Sub-Saharan Africa will actually lose income. Even within developing countries that see an increase in trade, the benefits will accrue not to the poor but mainly to powerful commercial interests. One victim, for example, will be the Multi-Fibre Arrangement that has protected the Third World textile industry's exports to Europe. Neither environmental standards nor labour standards are protected under the WTO agreements. Added by TRIPs and TRIMs, the real winners of the Uruguay Round are the TNCs which control much of world trade.

Alternative trade organisations (ATOs) have, in a small way, taken off where traditional trade has failed. Export of Third World handicrafts like jute products from Bangladesh through Oxfam's Bridge Oxfam's questionnaire...
University Economics Department acting to help relieve villagers' suffering as a result of floods in 1974. He concludes that, even in abject poverty, if people are given the respect due to a human being, the best of their humanness comes out.

Part III continues with case studies, under the subtitle 'Creating spaces to change the structures'. The struggle to maintain group energy and vitality in tough situations is highlighted from these chapters, particularly Kari Lande's 'Coalition-building in diversity'. Part IV builds on issues which arose at the Rio Summit.

This is an excellent book. Those who work for or study development from any disciplinary perspective will be both more motivated and wiser as a result of reading it. It would be an excellent book - perhaps along with Robert Chamber's rural development: Putting the last first - on which to base a course on people's development.

Geoff Harris, Department of Economics, University of New England

Video review

Viewing women/viewing development through the half-the-sky series

Women of Thailand, 1995 (30 mins); Women of the Philippines, 1995 (23 mins); Goddess of food - Women of India, 1995 (30 mins); Women of Africa - Gertrude Mongella, 1995 (28 mins); and Behind the smile, 1995 (45 mins)

Half the sky is a series of educational videos that feature the lives and work of women around the world. Produced by Eagle Vision, USA for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, each video is now available for purchase at A$178. The geographical settings range from Thailand to Canada to various Third World locations. The topics are no less varied: in the case of the video reviewed here, the programme considers women students and workers in Thailand, the medical and other welfare needs of women in and around Manila, the activities of a women's credit cooperative in Bombay, and the development efforts of a leading Tanzanian feminist. The series is ambitious. The quality, though, is not always there.

Behind the smile gently conveys the harsh realities of life for most women in Thailand. The women are expected to contribute selflessly to family merit and national development and do so by working for minimum wages (or less) in city factories, living in the types of barracks that drew the wrath of the world when the setting was South Africa. This video shows, brilliantly and unflinchingly, that 'behind the smile' of a privileged journalism student is a ThaiThailand that mocks efforts of women to improve their own, let alone their families', lives. Rather than dreamy landscapes, we see the machines and hear the monotonous din of textile factories. We consider paucity company provisions to entertain the workers in off-hours. We glimpse dreadfully cramped communal living areas. We hear local industrial captains of industry drone on cynically about the 'unavoidable' consequences of Thailand's fast and impressive growth.

Behind the smile also takes us to a high-rise building site in Bangkok, where male and female construction workers are policed by a veritable security army; where flogging structures tremble and sometimes collapse in work sites; where, for all their hours of pounding labour, workers are irregularly paid. We see the dangerous work and hear from women workers themselves about the threats to marriages that the dangers bring. The film shows women, often non-citizens, in remote rural areas that are becoming dependent on wage support by absent young women, areas where men can still fulfill family expectations by becoming temporary monks while the women in the cities, who work barefoot, earn blood-sweat tears that only partially mask the pain, humiliation, loneliness, and sheer drudgery of their lives.

Behind the smile is exemplary in all regards. It is well-filmed, edited and paced and free of gloss. It follows the lives of several Thai women and records their feelings as they speak. It lets the unfortunate catch up in modern growth speak through images and words. At the same time, women do not refuse people dignity and pleasure; nor does it portray women workers as simple victims of a development machine - rather people who endeavour to plan their lives, who often reflect on their circumstances, and who fight ways of resisting what can seem an overwhelming set of constraints.

The remaining three videos fall somewhere in quality between Women of Thailand and Behind the smile. Women of the Philippines is a somewhat inept effort to portray two welfare activities undertaken by local women in Manila. The first short half of the film features a woman from a family talking about an all-purpose clinic for middle class Manila women amidst a medical system that confines its attention to pregnant women or those 'in need of family planning'. Oddly, the only patient we hear from is at the clinic for prenatal care.

The second half of the video jumps to three nuns who have forsaken comfortable convent life for work in areas of extreme poverty. In both segments, the magnificence of need stands out against the vanguard and the virtue of those who seek to ameliorate it. Sometimes that valiance takes too much pride of place in the film. In the second half, nuns talk for a fair portion of the short segment about how the work has enhanced their own lives; there are no interviews with the people presumably assisted by them. The two halves of the film are choppy and spliced together in a way that denies the viewer a chance to appreciate the magnitude of the problems being addressed.

Goddess of food - Women of India and Women of Africa are better. Both enable the viewer to enter, albeit briefly, several working women's daily lives. The women portrayed in the first video work exacruatingly hard to make a go of their small Bombay food business, in part by organising a credit cooperative that expands possibilities for production. Ingeniously, they are able to acquire something of a half-way house for women who need to live away from their homes but have no income to do so. Such women gain self-respect and self-confidence working alongside other women in the food service business and their work helps the business itself to flourish. The credit cooperative even makes loans to women street vendors. All is nosy and romantic in this video though, despite the notable achievements of the women. There is a balance to this film that affords us that rare opportunity to glimpse the simultaneities of hardship and gain that mark so many people's lives.

Women of Africa traces the career of a remarkable Tanzanian feminist from secondary school to a leading role at the Beijing Conference. The series is structured as the sit next to Madeleine Albright, the new US-Secretary of State, then US Ambassador to the UN. While heroine worship is not my favourite mode of entry into feminism or development issues, it is undeniable that this woman's intellect, charm and commitment to women stand as lessons to all of us. Unfortunately, though, the focus on Mongella is diluted by an effort to cover too many topics and historical contingencies in a short film. We learn a little bit about Tanzanian colonial and immediate post-colonial history, a little bit about the northern region from which Mongella hails, and a little bit about the law in contemporary Tanzania, as it affects women. In a short 24 mins of viewing this potpourri diminishes the message of a woman's peerless strength.

All the films can be screened for undergraduate or late secondary school students. I plan to show Women of Thailand and Behind the smile, back-to-back, to the 'Women, gender and development' MA class at the Australian National University, with the idea that advanced students can appreciate how at odds the films are in presenting development issues in Thailand. Two final points about screenings. First, all viewers should also consider the impact of western film-making on the content of the videos, for even when we see local women before us, we often hear the voice of a western interpreter and glimpse the local work through the lens of western frames. We ought to ask whether the culture producing the film matters. Second, such video starts from the position that everyone knows a woman who has glimpsed anywhere in the world. 'There is no need to identify or carefully define 'woman' before talking about or to her. Yet is this always so? Gender and development literature asks us to consider the social context of 'women' and 'men' in various societies. It suggests that permutations within gender assignments, diversities of desire and identity - of difference - may be more useful formulations of women. It might be useful, therefore, to query the term 'women' in each context viewed in these videos. I worry that the quick judgment about who or what is inside and outside this category can limit the script of social possibility for people called or self-identified as women.

Christine Sylvester, Development Administration, National Centre for Development Studies, Australian National University.

January 1997
New Books

Vietnam assessment: Creating a sound investment climate
Suwah Leung (ed) 1996, ISEA, ISBN 961 305 54 5, 466pp., A$59.95
Vietnam embarked on doi moi or 'renovatio' of its economy in 1986. Since then, its economy has made a dramatic turnaround, achieving a non-inefficient sustained growth for most of the 1990s. However, even at the current high rates of growth, it will still take Vietnam some 15 years to reach the standard of living that Indonesia currently enjoys. Furthermore, decades of sustained growth will require higher rates of investment than in the past, as excess capacity created under central planning is being utilised. A sound investment climate is essential for the fullfilment of Vietnam’s ambitions to catch up with other rapidly growing countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Maternity and reproductive health in Asian societies
Prattie L. Rice and Lenore Manderson (ed) 1996, Pine Arts Press, ISBN 90 7021 021 1, 328pp., A$70.00
This book examines enduring and topical questions in sexual and reproductive health in a range or contemporary Asian cultures. Beliefs and practices surrounding conception, pregnancy, birth and confinement are studied in ethnocentrically culturally specific contexts in Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Indonesia. Important and widely applicable health issues are also addressed, including the perception and management of HIV/AIDS, experience of menopause and the introduction of cosmetics (western medicine with traditional healthcare).

Cultural identity and urban change in Southeast Asia
What is happening to Southeast Asia’s urban places and traditions as its societies ‘modernise’, ‘industrialise’, and ‘globalise’? What is the impact of international tourism on the cultural life of the regions’ cities? Many commentators expect a massive destruction of traditional cultural landscapes within the next generation. On the other hand, some Southeast Asian governments as well as the United Nations and its regional agencies are placing a new emphasis on the need for ‘structurally vibrant urbanisation in the region’. But who will decide what is culturally meaningful and worthy of protection? This book is offered as a part of the wider discussion about development and the role of urban places in it, picking up on those themes of ‘cultural resources’ and ‘identity’ which are central to the debate and to the thinking of those engaged in formulating development strategies and policy responses to economic change in Southeast Asia. These themes are interpreted in 11 Southeast Asian city contexts by contributors from a range of backgrounds.

Anthropology and Third World development
This book is aimed as students in Development Studies programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels as well as practitioners who need an anthropological background to inform their policies and implementation of development programs. It is seen as a background to anthropology, so interested readers will find it a very accessible introduction to key anthropological issues related to Third World Development. Topics covered include: ethnicity and history; a description of the enduring nature of ethnic identity and understandings; emphasis on the consequences of these understandings for involvement in development programs; and a comparison between, and contrasting of, the central understandings of non-industrialised and western industrialised people. It provides a survey of developments in international health, and examines problems in the burgeoning problem of poverty in the Third World.

Crossing the borders of empires: Culture, capitalism and identity
Selma Ong and Ninomi Donald 1996, Routledge, ISBN 0 413 91543 0, 256pp., A$35.95
This book examines Chinese transnationalism as a distinctive domain within the new flexible capitalism emerging in the Asia-Pacific region. Interweaving anthropology, cultural studies, and interpretative political economy, essays in this book are based on new ethnographic research.

Prospects of democracy: A study of 172 countries
This book provides the most extensive comparative study of the state and conditions of democracy ever made. It covers 172 countries around the world, with historical data on the measures of democracy and on explanatory variables extending back to the 1850s. It presents a comprehensive exploration of democratisation, its successes and failures, making predictions on the prospects for democracy for single countries and for seven regions of the world. This book includes contributions from 11 commentators: Mitchell Seligson on Latin America; Samuel P. Huntington on Africa; John O’Loughlin on Europe; and Iain MacIntyre on the Middle East. It is the first comprehensive study of the state and changes in Southeast Asia. These themes are interpreted in 11 Southeast Asian city contexts by contributors from a range of backgrounds.

The business of Japanese foreign aid: Five cases from Asia
This book analyses the impact of environmental constraints on the patterns of development in both the North and the South, and on the relations between the two. Current egalitarian ideologies, the strategies of the rich countries, and patterns of income, resource use and consumption mean that constraints will have very different implications around the world. Experts from the South and the North assess the kinds of economic institutions, policies, and international arrangements that are needed in order to achieve sustainable development in both the industrial and the developing world, and a just and economically viable relationship between them.

The rise and fall of development theory
This book is a 'stock-taking' of development theory at the end of the twentieth century. It argues that the assumptions on which development theory has rested since the 1950s no longer holds. The ex-colonial 'Third World' for which development theory was originally developed has fragmented into increasingly diverse regions, while the end of the post-war regime of regulated international trade and capital movements has drastically curtailed the scope for state economic intervention. A much broader-based, multistoried and more explicitly political theoretical effort is now called for. New chapters and articles include: an extended review of the genesis of the weaknesses of contemporary development theory; commentary on some of its most characteristic currents; a critique of the current vagaries of national development theory; and a reflection on practical and theoretical issues posed by the African tragedy.

Managing water for peace in the Middle East: Alternative strategies
This book evaluates some non-conventional approaches to resolving water resources issues in the Middle East. It outlines a plan for joint national basin development of the Jordanas and the Dead Sea for sharing of resources. The plan takes into account the conservation of clean energy and water, the strategic use of non-conventional water resources for sustainable development, and water resources planning to help promote peace in the area. This book draws on studies involving Kuwait, Jordan, Palestine and Israel.
Africa now: People, policies and institutions

Stephen Ellis (ed) 1996, Heinemann, ISBN 0 433 08970 0, A$35.55

This book examines the changes which are affecting the whole continent, from Algeria to South Africa, as the century ends. It examines the relations between citizens and their governments, not only in nationalism, ethnicity and development, but also in youth and violence, religious revival and public morality; policies to start growth; institutional response to the informal economy; the diversity of adjustment in agriculture and the constraints on manufacturing; Africa in the world as reflected in the crisis of the state, regional integration, and the politics of aid effectiveness and of migration.

Recent approaches to participatory forest resource assessment


This book analyses recent experiences in participatory initiatives and participatory forest resource assessment, from mapping to complex inventories of many species, for use in the study of rural development forestry up to university degree level. Chapters in the book provide detailed case studies from Nigeria, Ecuador, Mexico, Ghana, Nepal, Indonesia, and Uganda and are supplemented by discussion chapters. The introduction sets the need for participatory forest resource assessment in the context of general developments in forestry, while the concluding chapter draws lessons from the case-study material and from other documented field experience.

Participatory forest management in South Asia: The process of change in India and Nepal

Mary Hoby 1996, ODI Publications, ISBN 0 85003 204 0, 150pp., £14.95

Over the last decade there have been significant shifts in forestry practice in South Asia, away from protection of forests from people, to inclusion of people in their management. The book discusses an analysis of the development of these participatory forest management approaches in India and Nepal. The rich diversity of ecological, social, political and institutional conditions in this region allows for the derivation of generic principles that are widely applicable outside South Asia. Material drawn from participatory forest management practitioners in both countries, from the editor's work and from the many reports, notes and papers that have been written over the past ten years documenting the process of change.

Racism and society


This book provides an original and challenging account of racism and social and political relations in contemporary societies. Drawing upon their own research and that of others, the authors seek to provide an answer to some of the most difficult challenges that arise in the analysis of race and racism in contemporary societies. They point to the complex forms which racist discourses and mobilisations have taken in recent decades in a wide variety of societies and suggest that there is a need to rethink and go beyond existing theoretical perspectives. The authors offer a critical examination of the disturbing reality behind current trends and the challenges ahead in confronting the dangers of racism.

Governments, farmers and seeds in a changing Africa

Elizabeth Cromwell 1996, ODI Publications, ISBN 0 86198 8976 4, 77pp., £30.00

There is a growing awareness of the need for a deeper understanding of the relationship between governments and farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nowhere is this awareness growing more rapidly than in the seed sub-sector. Here the quest for alternativs to the large-scale government seed organisations of the 1970s and 1980s is becoming urgent. This book presents the results of the first study to investigate structural and organisational issues in the African seed sector in detail, using case study material from Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. It assesses the likely impact on the seed sector of the two trends of structural adjustment and greater emphasis on community participation.

Speaking to power: Gender and politics in the Western Pacific


For nearly 50 years, US Government officials have identified the Micronesian islands of Belau, also known as Palau, as the key to strategic planning in the Western Pacific. When women have placed themselves in the forefront of opposition to US military plans that would permit the US to gain permanent access to the land, reef and water of Belau for military purposes, they have sought to be part of the process of opposition.

Resources, nations and indigenous peoples: Case studies from Australasia, Melanesia and Southeast Asia

Richie Howitt et al. 1996, Oxford University Press, ISBN 0 195 53758 0, NZ$24.95

This book details the impact of resource-based development, and look at the reasons for the opposition to resource-based development, in a changing cultural and political environment. It also contains a contribution from Paul McHugh.

Environmental change in Southeast Asia: People, politics and sustainable development

Michael Parry and Raymond Bryant (eds) 1996, Routledge, ISBN 0 415 12933 3, 296pp., A$34.95

This book brings together scholars, journalists, consultants and NGO activists to explore the interaction of people, politics and ecology. Highlighting radical flaws in exclusively economic or ecological approaches, the authors stress that neither the pursuit of sustainable development nor the process of environmental change itself can be understood without reference to political processes.

First World hunger: Food, security and welfare policies


This book examines the ways in which the politics of food security, and welfare reform (1990-95) in five 'Western' welfare states (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA). Through national case studies it explores the depoliticisation of hunger as a human rights issue and the failure of New Right policies and charitable emergency relief to guarantee household food security. The need for alternative integrated policies and a radical restructuring of the public policy approach are considered essential if hunger is to be eliminated.

Submission to the Review of Australia's Aid Program

Australian Council for Overseas Aid 1996, Development Dossier No. 38, ISBN 0 908931 77 9, 140 pp., A$14.95 (including postage in Australia)

Formed in 1965, The Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) is the coordinating body for some 90 non-government organisations (NGOs) working in the field of overseas aid and development. The ACFOA Submission to the Review of Australia's Aid Program sets the case for reshaping Australian aid to focus on tackling poverty and promoting sustainable human development - especially in Africa and South Asia.

The first section examines the role of the Australian community in the development assistance programme and the attitudes of the community to development issues. The second section outlines the international framework in which development cooperation has evolved. The third section addresses the trends in international financing of development - aid, trade, debt and assistance. The fourth section discusses the particular programmes on which the Australian aid programme should focus. The fifth section outlines the recommended geographical focus of the programme. The sixth section looks at the various delivery mechanisms utilised in the aid program, their relative effectiveness and the circumstances in which each should be used.

Foreign direct investment in a changing global political economy


This book examines foreign direct investment in a changing global political economy. It offers case studies of this investment in different national and industrial contexts. Firms and countries have encountered mixed results in using this investment to further their foreign leverage. Conversely, potential host countries have faced different opportunities and constraints in attracting or utilising foreign capital for their development. Although some countries have been relatively successful, most do not appear to be well positioned to take advantage of the ongoing processes of globalisation of national economies.

International relations and the limits of political theory


This book shows how the traditional concerns of political theory push it increasingly into the study of international relations. It is done, first, by demonstrating how many of the issues dealt with by political theory, such as democracy and justice, are just as important in the international arena. Then, it is shown that contemporary theories of international relations, such as realism, institutionalism, and liberalism, are inadequate for understanding the interaction of international relations, the world economy, and the world polity. The book suggests that political theory needs to be reconceptualised to deal with these issues.

Development Bulletin 40
January 1997
Arrows for Change

Published three times a year, this newsletter is a bulletin primarily for Asian-Pacific development workers and that seeks to act as a focal point for the burgeoning literature on transnational phenomena and cross-cultural encounters.

What's New

The new publication is a medium for sharing these materials with health communication professionals throughout the world. Each issue of What's New will cover a special subject and will list and describe each item, including photographs of most of the material, and provide an address for more information. This newsletter will replace an older publication, The PCS Packet Services.

For more information contact:
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Population Communication Services
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Australia
E-mail bamyehm@woods.uml.edu

Asian Women

This is a journal devoted to global business and political economy and examines the changing nature of business organisations in a highly competitive global economy.

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CRES Bulletin

This is a newsletter of the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (CRES) at the Australian National University. CRES is a research and postgraduate training centre which focuses on issues from local, through to national, international and global scales. The CRES Bulletin appears twice a year and reflects some of the most important aspects of research at CRES. Available free of charge from the Publications Section of CRES

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Survival

The need for forward-looking analysis is essential during times of rapid political change. Survival is a leading voice in the field of strategic studies, featuring original research and innovative assessments of current international problems. The Winter 1995/96, issue of the journal analysed the role of the United Nations in conflict-mediation, assessing its record during the last 50 years and its involvement in Yugoslavia. The Spring 1996 issue was devoted to an examination of European security and transatlantic relations.

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Journal of International Development

Published on behalf of The Development Studies Association, the journal publishes the best research on development issues in a form which is accessible to practitioners and policy makers as well as an academic audience. The focus is on the social sciences - economics, politics, international relations, sociology and anthropology. It also publishes work by researchers who are not specialists in development studies and related fields, which seeks to promote a scholarly understanding of developments and change in Asia.

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New political Economy

The reason for the launch of this major new international journal is the belief that a change in the discipline of the world economic and political system has commenced, a new world order. Understanding it will require new models of analysis and new theories, and a new readiness to tear down intellectual barriers, bringing together many approaches, methods and disciplines which for too long have been separated. In short, what is needed is a new political economy, which combines the breadth of vision which characterised the classical political economy of the eighteenth century with the analytical advances of twentieth century social science.

The aim of New Political Economy is to create a forum for work which seeks to bridge past empirical and conceptual divides. The emphasis will be upon exploratory and innovative work which draws on different disciplines and which addresses core issues in the emerging research agenda.

New political Economy

This is a new interdisciplinary journal of research and writing in the human sciences - economics, political science, international affairs, military strategy, modern history, law, sociology, education, industrial relations, urban studies, demography, social anthropology, literature, development studies and related fields, which seeks to promote a scholarly understanding of developments and change in Africa.

For more information on the above journals contact:
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CRES Bulletin

This is a new interdisciplinary journal of research and writing in the human sciences - economics, political science, international relations, sociology and anthropology. It also publishes work which blends the approach of the natural and the social sciences in resolution of developmental problems. The journal does not represent any particular school, analytical technique or methodological approach, but publishes any work which shows promise in confronting the problems of poverty and underdevelopment in low income countries.

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This is a new interdisciplinary journal which seeks to act as a focal point for the burgeoning literature on transnational phenomena and cross-cultural encounters.

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Monographs and reports

The Oxfam Poverty Report

The report identifies the structural forces which deny people their basic rights. It outlines some of the wider policy and institutional reforms needed to create an enabling environment in which people can act as agents of change to reduce poverty. Chapters include: poverty and livelihoods; a world at war; structural adjustment; international trade; ecological footprints; aid, debt, and development finance; and an agenda for change.

Rwanda: Which way now?
David Walker 1996, Oxfam, ISBN 0 85598 534 K, 72pp., £5.95

In this book, David Walker, Oxfam's former representative in Rwanda, explains the build-up of pressures in this small, desperately poor, and densely populated country. An eight-page preface summarises the period of 1994 and Rwanda's subsequent efforts to reconstruct its devastated economy and reconcile its bitterly opposed communities.

Development in states of war

Humanitarian relief has always focused on meeting the needs of people affected by war and armed conflict. Today, the response is increasingly based on development programming. This book focuses on the issue of war and armed conflict, and how the management and staff accountability for ensuring participation of all stakeholders in the formulation of assistance strategies and for achieving the Bank's stated mission of poverty reduction.

Opportunities for non formal education in Melanesia

The provision of adequate and appropriate education is a challenge faced by all governments. The particular challenge faced by both government and non government policy makers in Melanesia is to ensure that where 'mainstream' education is inappropriate or unavailable, opportunities for self-improvement exist alongside the formal education system. There is a clear need for non formal education in Pacific Island countries but it must be focused in order to satisfy the needs of the people it is intended to target. Here, local success stories highlight the potential benefits of an integrated non formal education system. This monograph examines the need for non formal education to become an integral part of education planning in Melanesian countries and offers guidelines for decision makers.

Catalogue of the Aid, Debt and Development Encyclopaedia

This is a comprehensive list of donors and agencies that have made grants and loans to developing countries. It includes details of organisations' activities, special conditions attached to loans, and the amounts involved. It is an invaluable resource to development practitioners and researchers and contains extensive information on all of Oxfam's donors, including contact details.

Voice for the Poor
Kevin Watkins 1996, Oxfam, ISBN 0 85598 555 9, 90pp., £4.95

This book provides an overview of the work of the Oxfam Poverty Commission. It examines the contexts within which poverty exists, the nature of the challenges facing poor people, the policies and practices that sustain poverty, and the need for social change. It includes case studies from three U.K. regions and three overseas countries: Bangladesh, Nigeria and Malawi.

The international response to conflict and genocide: Lessons from the Rwandan experience

The essays in this volume were prepared in honour of the late Professor Ronald Henderson and address many of the key economic and social issues facing Australia. Though in the first part debate issues such as the rise of the online economy, the apparent dominance of global financial markets over national policy and Australia's links with Asia. In the second part, six policy issues are considered including the deregulation of wages, the role of technology and industry policy and Australia's environmental commitments. The final set of essays address the rise of inequality in Australia and the role of the quality of life and the national interest in economic policy.

A sustainable future for Melanesia? Natural resources, population and development

This is a new report in the Pacific 2010 series published by the National Centre for Development Studies of the Australian National University. The countries of Melanesia have reached a crossroads in their development. Melanesia is resource rich but the long-term economic viability of the region depends on the governments of those countries recognising the immediate necessity of planning their natural resource use in a way to sustainable development.

The Synthesis report draws together the executive summaries of the four studies and provides the overall findings and recommendations of the joint evaluation.

Each recommendation is addressed to particular groups or organisations within the international community.

Available from: ODI Publications Overseas Development Institute Regent's College Inner Circle, Regent's Park London NW1 4JS United Kingdom Tel (44 171) 487 5741 Fax (44 171) 487 5790 E-mail publications@odi.org.uk

The Oxfam Poverty Reduction Network, which includes distinguished African government officials, academics, and representatives of NGOs, has raised many issues for non-government organisations and for project workers and health professionals in Australia who have been involved in the projects. In the On the Level looks at round population control, confronting cultural difference, delivering appropriate sexual health services and social services for the poor.

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Financing private infrastructure


This publication examines the rationale for privatising infrastructure for governments: changing policy, legal and regulatory frameworks; designing and implementing privatisation and concession programmes; and negotiating a division of risk-taking with the private sector in infrastructure projects.

Privatising Africa's infrastructure: Promise and challenge


This report examines the potential of infrastructure privatisation in Sub-Saharan Africa, emphasising power, telecommunications, water, rail, ports and airports. It focuses on mobilising private investment in infrastructure.

Infrastructure delivery: Private initiative and the public good


This monograph presents seven essays addressing the forces of change behind the delivery of infrastructure services as it moves from public to private control. These forces include technological change, advances in regulatory design, and the evolution of financial markets. The first half of the book reviews the interplay of private initiative, competition and regulation. The second half traces the ongoing evolution of the financial tools used to fund the world's growing demand for infrastructure.

Suppliers to multinationals: Linkage programs to strengthen local companies in developing countries


This report examines and compares the recent experiences of a number of developing countries in encouraging "backward linkages", the purchasing of goods and services from locally-owned suppliers by companies controlled by foreign firms. The authors argue that economic liberalisation helps rather than hurts domestic suppliers, that institutional support focusing on upgrading the capabilities of domestic suppliers is critical, and that promotional programmes combining private and public resources can accelerate linkage development.

Private sector participation in the water supply and wastewater sector: Lessons from six developing countries


This report describes and draws lessons from the experiences of six countries in using both the private and public sectors in water supply and wastewater management. The countries studied - Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Quivora, Mexico and Poland - represent a wide range of social, political, economic and institutional conditions. The case studies illustrate various options for private sector participation, from service and managerial contracts to leases and concessions.

Banking with the poor in the South Pacific

Foundation for Development Cooperation 1996, 24pp., A$7.00 (plus postage)

This is the fourth and final publication to appear as an outcome of the Third Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Banking with the Poor, conducted in Brisbane in 1994. The report presents several case studies of local microfinance institutions, financial markets, the evolution of the financial tools used to fund the world's growing demand for infrastructure.

Valuing families: National opportunities through local strategies


This monograph discusses initiatives taken by the Family Resource Centres to bring about positive change within the communities in which they work. Although each initiative was conceived in the context of unique local circumstances, the case studies offer ideas that other communities and services might replicate and build upon.

Accounting and reporting standards for microfinance institutions

Paul B. McGuire 1996, Foundation for Development Cooperation, 15pp., A$5.00 (plus postage)

This report was prepared for a meeting of the Banking with the Poor Network of microfinance NGOs and commercial banks, held in Singapore in July 1996. It recognises the work done by the Committee of Donors for Small Enterprise Development and the Donor's Working Group on Financial Sector Development in prescribing and promoting appropriate standards for the microfinance institutions.

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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, RSFAS, ANU.

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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 ‘preformal’ 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 cleoeps.anu.edu.au machine.

To post your contribution to the forum send e-mail

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/anonymous/ww/www on the coombs.anu.edu.au system.

If in doubt how to interact with any of the coombs.anu.edu.au lists, end a message ‘help’ to: majordomo@coombs.anu.edu.au
Deakin University

International Relations

The Master of Arts and Graduate Diploma in International Relations are designed to assist students in developing systematic understandings of the international forces shaping their environment, and skills in analysis and interpretation of international relations. They enable those who have already graduated in a wide range of fields, and who have practical experience, to develop an academic background in this area. The courses contain a mixture of theoretical and empirical analyses, with opportunities to examine historical as well as contemporary issues and developments in world politics.

The Master of Arts is a postgraduate degree by coursework and consists of units to the value of eight credit points with an optional research project. All students take the unit Theories of International Relations which is worth two credit points. Students choose from a series of elective units to make up the additional required credit points. The elective units include: Human rights in the international system; Australian perceptions of Asia; Asian defence politics; United Nations; International humanitarian law; International political economy; and Refugees in global politics.

The Graduate Diploma is also a postgraduate coursework qualification. All students study the units: Conflict management - Contemporary international politics; and Australia in the world. Elective courses include: Strategic studies; Australia and Asia; The media and international politics; and The colonial experience - Gender, power and social change.

For more information contact:
Reply Paid AAA
Postgraduate International Relations Program
Academic Administrative Services Division
Deakin University, VIC 3217
Australia
Tel (052) 271 1328
Fax (052) 27 2017
Email tod@deakin.edu.au

The Australian Centre for International and Tropical Health and Nutrition (ACITHN)

Program Planning and Evaluation for Developing Countries

This unique three-week short course, to be offered from 18 August - 6 September 1997, is a realistic simulation of the project design process. Participants will take the roles of a project design mission to Freedonia and will complete a full project design document. The short course is being offered by the ACITHN’s Tropical Health Program, based on the
Australian National University

Managing Public Utilities: Developing Efficient Infrastructure Delivery

The rapidly developing countries, particularly of the Asia–Pacific region, are facing a huge demand for improved services in energy, water, telecommunications, and transportation. The course is aimed at managers (both government and private sector) who are involved in the planning and management of delivering these public utilities efficiently, and regulators who provide the framework within which infrastructure is provided. It will cover crucial areas of decision making - pricing, investment, financing, benchmarking, corporatisation, and privatisation. As well, it will consider what is involved in providing an appropriate legal framework. Managers who have completed this course should have greatly enhanced their understanding of "best practice" infrastructure delivery and be able to communicate their proposals more clearly to government, bureaucrats and private contractors. In addition their skills in dealing with funding agencies should be greatly improved. The course aims to help managers to manage infrastructure as a business, not as a bureaucracy.

Coursework will be provided through formal lectures in four areas: pricing of services; general regulatory policy; infrastructure reforms in electricity, gas, telecommunications and water; including issues such as vertical separation; and specific applications to developing countries. The course will be offered from 16 May to 13 June 1997.

Macroeconomic Policy and Implementation

This course has been designed to develop analytical skills to raise participants' awareness of policy development and implementation in countries undergoing rapid economic change. Being able to present coherent advice to government and to negotiate policy outcomes, is an important objective for each course participant. The course will acquaint students with the analytical tools of modern macroeconomics and focus on strategies for macroeconomic management through enhanced understanding of macro and sectoral policy linkages. It will examine the role of governments in managing the economy and the major fiscal, monetary and regulatory policy tools available to them. Course work will be provided through formal lectures in three areas: introductory macroeconomics; money, banking and prices; and developing economic statistics and an introduction to economic modelling. The course is scheduled from 21 July to 15 August 1997.

Women, Gender and Development

The course is scheduled to run from 3–31 October 1997, and aims to follow the evolution of the interdisciplinary field of women and development that began by examining the priorities and practices of development agencies, was then influenced markedly by feminist concerns with identity, knowledge, theory and practice, and now integrates feminism with issues of development management.

Other short courses offered in 1997 include:

- Macroeconomic Policy and Implementation
- Introduction to management and organisational change
- Trade policy and structural adjustment

For more information contact:
Mona Nair
Special Courses Administrator
National Centre for Development Studies
Australian National University
Canberra, ACT 0200
Australia
Tel (06) 249 4351
Fax (06) 248 8005
E-mail mona.nair@anu.edu.au
The organisation is also an international master contractor for population research, global technical assistance and education in order to gain an understanding of the immediate and long-term consequences of the use of family planning methods and services, with the aim of strengthening reproductive health programs. As part of this effort, FHI works to expand the research skills and repertoire of local investigators and encourages them to work with family planning professionals, non-governmental organisations and women's health groups in studying women's perspectives. All studies involve local women's organisations and women's health groups in studying women's experiences. The research and development organisation specializes in family planning, contraceptive technology and family health education. It has also completed a comparative study of the South Pacific and Caribbean economies for the South Pacific Forum Secretariat.

Another current project, being carried out in conjunction with the International Development Research Centre in Canada, is to define principles and priorities for promoting development cooperation through the APEC process. This project is proceeding through a series of policy dialogues involving prominent intellectuals from APEC member countries. The Foundation has also completed a comparative study of the South Pacific and Caribbean economies for the South Pacific Forum Secretariat.

The Foundation has developed close working relationships with its overseas counterparts, the Overseas Development Institute in the UK, the Overseas Development Council in the US and the North-South Institute in Canada. In order to ensure its role as an independent policy research organisation, the core budget is derived entirely from private sources.

For more information contact:
Foundation for Development Cooperation
PO Box 10445
Adelaide Street
Brisbane, QLd 4000
Australia
Tel (07) 3236 4637
Fax (07) 3236 4696
E-mail ffdcforemail.com.au

The Centre for Strategic Economic Studies
The Centre was established in 1993 by the Council of Victoria University as a University Centre within the Faculty of Business. The mission of the Centre is to address long-term, strategic, economic and social issues of international concern and significance; to consider, in doing so, the role of both general ideas and specific institutions, and the relationship between ideas and institutions; to develop a special focus on basic issues relevant to Australia’s future, with special reference to the Asian region; and to develop and train a body of graduate students with the motivation and skills to address these strategic issues in the future.

For more information contact:
Centre for Strategic Economic Studies
1500 University Street
Melbourne, VIC 3001
Australia
Tel (03) 5307 5300
Fax (03) 5307 5333
E-mail cse@comp.vu.edu.au

The World Wide Web Consortium
The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is a unique international collaboration between research organisations, whose goal is to guide and accelerate the evolution of the World Wide Web. Directed by Tim Berners-Lee (inventor of the Web), with a full-time staff of 35, the Consortium works with member companies to refine and revise the technical specifications of the Web (URLs, HTTP, HTML) as well as to create pre-competitive joint projects that extend the application of the Web into new domains.

The Consortium is just a year old. Already it has changed many aspects of the World Wide Web by collaboratively developing standards which support the needs of users. Large- and small-scale organisations join the Consortium and participate in decision making, early access to new standards and their implementations.

W3C provides a number of public services including: a repository of information about the World Wide Web for developers and users, especially specifications about the Web; a reference code implementation to embody and promote standards; and various prototypes and sample applications to demonstrate use of new technology. All products of the Consortium are available during development and on initial release to members. One month after formal internal release, all software produced by or officially contributed to the W3C is available for general public use, commercial or otherwise. Membership is open to any organisation which signs a membership agreement.

For more information contact:
World Wide Web Consortium
1515 Massachusetts Institute of Technology Laboratory for Computer Science
545 Technology Square
Cambridge, MA 02139
USA
Tel (617) 253 2637
Fax (617) 258 9999
E-mail admin@w3.org
Web http://www.w3.org
In pursuing these activities, the Centre seeks to operate at the highest level of excellence, and be recognised internationally as doing so. It also cooperates closely with other groups within and beyond Victoria University, and will enter into collaboration with interested research, business and government organisations in Australia, and with similar bodies overseas. The Centre's research is published in the form of books, monographs, reports, working papers, discussion papers and journal articles.

For more information contact:
Centre for Strategic Economic Studies
Victoria University
PO Box 14428
MCMC
Melbourne, VIC 8001
Australia
Tel (03) 9248 1024
Fax (03) 9248 2048

Vanuatu Women's Crisis Centre
The Vanuatu Women's Crisis Centre was established in 1993 because of concern among Ni-Vanuatu women about gender violence, which is estimated to affect 80 per cent of Ni-Vanuatu women. In 1994 the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) provided funding to the Centre for a three-year Program Against Domestic Violence. The project objectives include: to provide counselling and support services for women and children survivors of gender violence; and to increase the awareness of issues relating to gender violence through community education, research and lobbying for law reform.

The Centre is promoting women's rights in a complex political environment. A mid-term review of the project conducted in early 1996 found that the Centre is held in great respect. Its chiefs. The review also found that attitudes towards violence against women and children are changing. The most effective strategies for change are counselling, legal advocacy, awareness workshops and the radio programme. Community organisations reported that increasingly women are talking about how they are affected and are asking for help.

All those involved emphasised the need for the Vanuatu Women's Crisis Centre's services to be maintained for at least another four years, to ensure changes in attitudes and behaviour are sustained. IWDA is recommending to AusAID that additional funding be provided to ensure maintenance of these extremely successful services.

For more information contact:
IWDA
PO Box 1600
Collingwood, VIC 3066
Australia
Tel (03) 947 1388
Fax (03) 9416 0519

Materials

World academic database

This database available on CD-ROM provides all the information contained in the two well-known academic directories - The International Handbook of Universities and the World List of Universities - as well as additional information provided by TRACEx, an international higher education data collection and sharing consortium. The database hence comprises a wealth of comprehensive, authoritative data with the powerful software capabilities of a CD-ROM, enabling easy searches in a range of fields.

Available from:
Macmillan Education Australia
107 Morey Street
South Melbourne, VIC 3205
Australia
Tel (03) 9669 8622
Fax (03) 9608 6918

Perspectives on violence

This database is a major effort to identify documentary films and television images of Africa, with a view to create a new reference database by identifying, indexing, and reviewing all existing films and videos on Africa released between 1937 and 1996. These reviews, with filmographies, will be published in CD-ROM and print formats and disseminated electronically via the Internet.

For more information contact:
African Studies Centre
Michigan State University
100 Centre for International Programs
East Lansing, MI 48824-1035
USA

Perspectives on violence

This film deals with violence in South Africa, where - in the home, in the streets, on trains and in the workplace - many are assaulted, raped or mentally abused. Perspectives on violence shows five different scenes of violence - political violence, family violence, violence against women, gang violence, and violence in schools.

For more information contact:
Development Through Self-Reliance, Inc. (DSR)
9111 Guilford Street
Columbia, MD 21046
USA
Tel (1 (301) 490 3500
Fax (1 (301) 490 4146
E-mail dsr@fas.net

For more information contact:
Development Through Self-Reliance, Inc. (DSR)
9111 Guilford Street
Columbia, MD 21046
USA
Tel (1 (301) 490 3500
Fax (1 (301) 490 4146
E-mail dsr@fas.net

Half the sky

This is a series of nine original films on women throughout the world, produced to coincide with the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Each episode has been produced by women and represents women in their country of origin. Viewed as individual episodes or as an entire series, Half the sky is a valuable resource, illustrating the richness and diversity of lives of women around the world.

Women of Thailand - One day in the lives of Thai women: This 30-minute film follows a Thai student of journalism as she explores the side effects of development - poverty, unfair working conditions, drugs and prostitution - and how they are eroding the status of Thai women.

Women in nature - Women of Latin America: This beautifully photographed 22-minute film uses the analogy of the four natural elements - earth, water, wind and fire - to express the fundamental nature of Latin American women.

Women of Africa - Gertrude Mongella: Tanzania's constitution declares equality for all citizens; however, customary practices deny women this right. This 28-minute film highlights the challenge to traditional practices based on patriarchal traditions and focuses on efforts to set the global agenda for women in the next century.

Godmother of food - Women of India: This 28-minute film documents the efforts of a women's credit cooperative which aims to improve the living standards of women who run kitchen services in the slums of Bombay.

Women of the Philippines: This video is divided into two segments, Doctors and Breaking the habit. Doctors shows how four female doctors are bridging the gap in women's health by running their own low-cost clinic in Manila. Breaking the habit focuses on the social work of three nuns who are trying to introduce a new political consciousness and activism into traditional religion.

Portrait of a Polish woman: This film features the tireless efforts of humanitarian Janina Ochojda. Travel with Janina and her Foundation members as they try to give relief, without political discrimination, to victims of civil war in former Yugoslavia.

Other films in the series include: Women of Jordan; Women of Portugal; Women of Russia; and Women of Canada.
Breaking the mould: Beyond media images

Media Switch recently released an innovative resource package promoting critical analysis of the portrayal of women in the media. It aims to raise awareness, develop media literacy skills, and encourage consumer action. The package is designed as a workshop tool for facilitators and educators; it is a useful reference for schools, libraries and community organisations. The resource pack contains ten background sections on a range of issues related to portrayal of women in the media; over 40 workshop activities; a quick reference Guide to Decoding Media Images; tips for workshop design and preparation; and extensive resources, statistics and contact lists.

To order contact: Noela Quadrio
Media Switch
PO Box 1321
Toowong, QLD 4066
Australia
Tel/Fax (07) 3395 1114

Planet Earth

Oxford University Press 1996, AS17.95

This is a fascinating resource for secondary students and teachers. It uses breathtaking photographs, detailed maps, colourful illustrations, and clear text to present an exciting overview of the world's geography.

Dictionary of the modern politics of South-East Asia


This work supplies comprehensive descriptive and analytical coverage of the political history of this important region since the end of World War II. It contains over 400 alphabetically-organised entries. Individual entries provide detailed information and authoritative commentary for the central figures, political parties and organisations, political systems and structures, major events and key documents including constitutions and treaties, of the region, as well as clarifying the terminology, acronyms, abbreviations and non-English terms in use. Additionally, for each state covered, an extended narrative analyses its history and political and social development. The dictionary will be of wide general use in the fields of politics, modern history, economics, international relations, strategic studies, political geography, area studies and development.

Doing social research in Hong Kong: The Poverty Research Project

The Poverty Research Project has been chosen as the focus of a student training manual and film documentary on social research methods with the idea of giving students a taste of the actual research process. The design of the Poverty Research Project combines theoretical principles and the use of both qualitative and quantitative applied social research methods. The intention is to enable students to follow the development of research from the research question, through study design and methodology, and onto the analysis and interpretation of results.

The film is presented in two 30 minute parts, and is designed as a valuable teaching device which can be used independently as an educational tool to demonstrate key research principles. Part One deals with the issue of poverty in its social context and Part Two deals with research design, implementation, analysis and the role of research in society. The film is available in PAL VHS, at a running time of 60 minutes. It is priced at US$25.00 for individuals (for private viewing only) or US$290.00 for institutions and libraries.

The accompanying 179 page manual provides further context and clarification of the research concepts and techniques that are covered in the film. The paperback edition is priced at US$15.00.

Cheques should be made payable to: Asia Pacific Social Development Research Ctr Ltd.

For more information contact:
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H-Africa

This is a network of electronic discussion groups and other services for scholars (including students), teachers, librarians, and others interested in the serious study of Africa, and especially the humanistic study of the entire continent. Part of the H-Net (humanities-on-line) family of electronic networks, H-Africa encourages informed consideration of teaching and research about Africa at all levels of interest and complexity. At the core of these activities is the H-Africa discussion forum for those desiring a source of regular and open communication of ideas and information regarding the study of Africa. The forum welcomes research reports and inquiries, bibliographies, syllabi and course materials, listing of new sources, library and archive information and other relevant information. The discussion forum can be found at:

http://h-net.msu.edu/africa

January 1997

Electronic Fora

DARG goes global

There is now a World Wide Web site for DARG (Developing Areas Research Group of The Royal Geographical Society and the Institute of British Geographers). Comments and ideas about what members would like to see on these Web pages are welcomed and should be directed to David Simon of the Royal Holloway College. The Web site can be accessed at the following address:

http://glacier.gg.hnc.ac.uk/DARG.html

New Biodiversity Web site

The purpose of this site, the first in several World Resources Institute (WRI) "thematic" sites to be posted, is to weave WRI information on biological resources into the fabric of the Internet. The site includes extensive information on the sustainable use, conservation and equitable distribution of the benefits from genetic, species, ecosystem and cultural diversity. The site seeks to provide useful background information and tools for governments, researchers, students and the general public. The site can be accessed at:

http://www.wri.org/wri/biodiv/

For more information contact:
Laura Lee Dooley
World Resources Institute
1709 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006
USA
Tel (1 202) 638 6300
E-mail laurende@wri.org

EDI Forum

The EDI Review, a quarterly newsletter of the Economas Development Institute of the World Bank, has been replaced by EDI Forums. The first issue of the Forum is now available on the Internet. To subscribe send a message to: listserve@tome.worldbank.org with the following command in a single line in the body of the message: subscribe EDIREVIEW (first name) (last name). To get a list of all articles in the archive send message to: listserve@tome.worldbank.org with the following command in a single line in the body of the message: get EDIREVIEW index. To receive articles send message to listserve@tome.worldbank.org with the following command in a single line in the body of the message: get EDIREVIEW file name (filenames are listed in the index of articles, see above).

New Pacific media listserve

A new independent e-mail listserve has been established to carry news and information about news media freedom, ownership, professional and development issues. The listserve has been set up by a network of journalists and media academics known as Pacific Media Watch based at the University of Papua New Guinea's South Pacific Centre for Communications and Information Development. The listserve is for independent journalist at the University of Technology, Sydney. The listserve can be accessed at:

http://www.pactok.net.au/docs/plus

If you would like to join the listserve or post information or news on it, please contact one of the following: PCronan@uex.edu.au or David.Robie@uex.edu.au or robie@pactok.pg.pac.org

EUFORIC

EUFORIC is the homepage for information on Europe's development cooperation. The site provides a focal point for information on European development cooperation, particularly the Lom Convention, as well as management of development cooperation, aid effectiveness, decentralised cooperation; technical cooperation; capacity building; and development policy management. It is bilingual in French and English, with individual resources also in German, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese. More recent additions to the site include materials from Brussels-based umbrella groups - APRODEV, EUROSTEP, EURODAD, and the Liaison Committee of development NGOs to the European Union. The site can be accessed at:

http://www.eone.world.org/euforic
Cafe Pacific

This is a new hyperlink springboard for a variety of news on media, environmental issues, progressive movements, research resources and alternative information sources in the region. It also includes an updated country profile resource drawn from the text published last year, *Nias Bilong Pasifik: Mass media in the Pacific*. This contains socioeconomic indicators, a brief political profile, news media data and hyperlinks to newspapers and magazines that have online editions. Cafe Pacific also has a link to an Asia-Pacific network article archive on human rights, environmental, cultural, political, social and media issues in the region site can be accessed at:

http://acij.uts.edu.au/cafepacific

IFC on the Internet

The International Finance Corporation has announced opening of its World Wide Web site. It contains information about the Bank's private sector affiliate - the world's largest multilateral source of equity and loan financing for sector projects in developing countries. The IFC site contains thousands of pages of information on topics as diverse as investment guidelines and application procedures; work with IFC; daily and weekly stock market state detailed project descriptions; public information searchable archives of press releases and other documents by region, country, sector and industry; listings of publications and ordering information; IFC e-mail addresses; and links to IFC activities and partners worldwide. The site can be accessed at:

http://www.ifc.com

Women of Africa Resources

Women of Africa Resources brings together bibliographies, articles and other information on African women. For more information contact:

http://www.lawrence.edu/~bradleyc/war.htm

Sawnet

This is an electronic forum for those interested in South Asian women's issues. It provides information on South Asian women's organisations, books by and for South Asian women, children's books, cinema - reviews and literature, recent news about South Asian women, information on women's health, domestic violence issues, grants and funding, as well as links to homepages of Sawnet members. Sawnet can be accessed at:

http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/sawweb/sawnet

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Manuscripts

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 an 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.